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Spirit of Shekinah

Shekinah Homeless Services
38 Willoughby Street
Reservoir Vic 3073

Tel: 9462 3933
Fax: 9462 4980
Mob: 0448 211 225
Email: shekinah@shekinah.org.au
www.shekinah.org.au

Shekinah News for June

Well, winter is really here – the past couple of days have been very cold, and in my newly renovated office, I'm really feeling it as the heaters are not working at full pace yet. However, I'm lucky! I know that they will work soon – but there are many people this winter who won't have the luxury of keeping warm indoors. It's perhaps timely for us to remember how fortunate we are and to reflect on the work we do with people who are so well cared for by all the Shekinah member organisations.

As usual, it has been a busy three months since I last communicated with you via the newsletter – as I'm sure it has been for you too. The turmoil of renovations here is almost a memory – still a few things to finish off – but worth the inconvenience.

Another successful evening was held on Wednesday 9th June at Bethlehem Community where four women aspiring to volunteer at Mercy Care attended an information evening. As always, input was given by Marita the Co-ordinator, Kirsty the Children's Worker and myself on what is actually involved in becoming a volunteer in a service such as Mercy Care.

It's been 'raining' volunteers these past few weeks. I placed a couple of ads on Seek Volunteer and the response has been quite extraordinary.

At the beginning of June I attended the Communities in Control Conference at Moonee Valley. The conference 'theme' was **Power Up – who has the power, how to get it and how communities can use it.** Speakers such as Christine Nixon, Anne Summers, Mary O'Hagan from New Zealand and other notable presenters shared their collective wisdom. As always there was a large crowd, although it was down on last year's numbers. I recommend it if you have not ever attended.

I did say that I would include some historical background to the word *Shekinah*, however, I haven't. Sorry – I could rattle off excuses, but won't. Suffice to say that the following paragraph may explain why.

I will be on annual leave from the second week of June until the first week of July. I am frantically trying to tie up loose ends before I go, but as always, some things are always left undone – the days are never long enough. If any of the loose ends affect you in any way I apologise. I am really looking forward to a break and trust that when I return I will be newly energised and ready to 'get back into it'!

Until then, keep warm and well.

Marg Casey

Volunteer Program Co-ordinator

Around the Network

Renovations to the administration house are pretty much complete. As always there are some hiccups along the way – and there's been a fair few. The furniture arrives this month and everyone can finally settle into their new space.

Work is almost complete in the residential area and the women have been amazing – their home has been completely turned upside down, but they have soldiered on. Eating outside on the deck, or inside amongst stacked furniture and fittings has become 'the norm' – their resilience is wonderful.

During the worst of the building works, the women had a few days at

Balnarring but they are almost ready to settle back into their beautifully renovated home as the builders prepare to move out. Building is moving on at a pace at Bethlehem's new social housing project at Thomastown. We are very excited.

Bethlehem's **Starworks** program held a successful sausage sizzle at Bunnings in Thomsastown in May. Not only were some much needed funds raised, but the women also had a great time serving on the stall – as you can see below.

Make a note of 2nd April 2011 when Bethlehem will conduct an **Event** at Crown. It will be a fundraising 'spectacular' not to be missed!



Thomastown project rising from the ground



Chris, Jenny, Jenny & Anna with Bunnings' staff

Briar Terrace

The friends from Briar Terrace had a five-day holiday at the Presentation Sisters' holiday house in Balnarring. It's definitely a winner among the friends who can't wait to go back again.

There have also been excursions to the Zoo, Port Melbourne, Eureka and Montsalvat artist colony at Eltham.

Two new volunteers will be commencing soon at Briar Terrace, however, there is always space for more. If you have any friends or family who may be interested please contact Marg Casey on 9462 3933.



McAuley Community Services for Women

McAuleyWorks – Working for Wellbeing

McAuley Community Services for Women would like to announce the commencement of their new initiative, an employment program, *McAuleyWorks – Working for Wellbeing*.

McAuleyWorks is a targeted employment program, which is open

to all women recovering from homelessness, family violence, or mental health issues who are seeking assistance to obtain employment or vocational training.

If you would like further information on how this program might be able to help a women you know, please contact McAuley's Employment Worker, Tenar Dwyer on 03 9296 6826 or mobile 0417 252 444.



Good Samaritan Inn

One day conversion from corporate work into gardening and painting

On the 14th of May 2010, about 15 women and men exchanged their corporate dress for gardening and painting attire.

This group generously "gifted" a day to the Good Samaritan Inn. There was a great team spirit throughout the day and by the end it was a pleasant sight to look at the two freshly painted rooms, a tidy back garden and to see all the new plants.

Over lunch, the volunteers were given, an insight into the work done at the Good Samaritan Inn.

Throughout the day there was an enriching exchange among those who were present. It was rewarding to see how the change of role for the corporate workers was as an eye opener for them. Most of them have never heard about Good Samaritan Inn and the wonders that happen there.

At the end of the day all the workers left the Good Samaritan Inn convinced that it was worth leaving the office to be converted as a painter and gardener and also that one day is not enough, but like Mahatma Gandhi said: " *Whatever you do may seem insignificant to you, but it is most important that you do it*".



Danielle Laville Coordinator at Good Samaritan Inn (centre) with Amanda and Georgie from United Way.





Corpus Christi Community

Earlier this year Corpus Christi Community commenced with a program funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services which is directed at residents less than 50 years of age.

Known as **My Future My Choices** the program provides funding to enable residents to undertake activities which might otherwise not be possible. To date there have been ten residents participating in the program with activities including cooking classes, dancing lessons, computer classes, attending the football, gym classes, attending gym sessions, bike riding and, soon, lawn bowls.

In part what has made this initiative quite remarkable is not one of the initial ten participants has lost interest in what they are doing. Some of the participants are more energised and involved than has ever been observed in the past. Pleasingly the behaviour of some has improved very markedly over the past few months.

Corpus Christi Community will soon apply for on-going funding given the success of the program to date.



Shekinah

Some photos of our 'new space'.



Renovated office and new furniture waiting to be put in its new home



Renovated kitchen and new board/meeting room

