

S H E K I N A H



**H O M E L E S S
S E R V I C E S I n c**

**SHEKINAH VOLUNTEER
NEWSLETTER**

March Edition 2006

Shekinah Homeless Services Inc.
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Volume 5 Issue 1

March 2006

Shekinah Homeless Services Inc:

- **Bethlehem Community**
- **Briar Terrace**
- **Corpus Christi Community**
- **The Cottage**
- **The Good Samaritan Inn**
- **Mercy Care**
- **Prague House**
- **Regina Coeli Community**
- **St Mary's House of Welcome**
- **The Way Community**

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A word from the Co-ordinator of Volunteers

Dear Shekinah Volunteer

I do hope you had a wonderful Christmas and New Year – it all seems a long time ago now, unfortunately. I was very lucky in having a trip to France, which was great.

Shekinah Ball – CHANGE OF DATE!! URGENT NEWS!!

The date for the Shekinah Ball has changed from Saturday 8th April to **FRIDAY 7TH APRIL**. I do hope this will not cause any inconvenience to anyone. Please mark this date in your diary now! Flyers and posters are already out and tickets are available through your agency. Prices are \$25 if you are waged, \$10 for students and \$5 concession/pension. It is a wonderful night – lots of dancing, good food, a raffle, prizes and joy. There will be prizes for the best Easter Hats, so be as fanciful as you like.

Your Contributions

I am again very happy to have received pieces written by volunteers. The feedback from the articles in the last newsletter was very heartening (people found the pieces moving and informative), so please keep them coming. It's a very good way for volunteers to learn something about the other agencies and what it's like to work there. Many thanks to the contributors.

Shekinah Training

The Shekinah Training Schedule for 2006 is included in this newsletter. Please do attend as many sessions as you can. As well as learning more about the issues of many of our clients, it is also a great opportunity to meet volunteers from other agencies and do some networking. Supper will be provided, as always, so let the thought of that yummy food entice you out!

STOP PRESS!! GE Commercial Finance STOP PRESS!!

GE Commercial Finance have just raised over \$12,000 at their conference to donate to Shekinah projects. A heartfelt thank you to all at GE Commercial Finance from all the Shekinah agencies with especial thanks to Daniel Blizzard whose energy and commitment are outstanding. Thank you also to Connie and Emily at Pacific Premium for their help with the Shekinah Ball!

With thanks and kind regards to you all
Gill

SHEKINAH TRAINING: MARCH - OCTOBER 2006

To enrol, please either complete and return the form at the end of the newsletter or contact Gill Sealby to book a place.

Tel: 9287 5568 / 0422 266 122 Fax: 9287 5567 Email: shekinah@pacific.com.au

Venue: Cathedral Room, CSSV, Albert St, East Melbourne, Vic 3002. Please enter via the car park off Lansdowne St. The Cathedral Room is first door on the right.

Parking is available - car park entrance in Lansdowne Street.

	DATE & TIME	TOPIC	FACILITATOR
March	<i>Monday 27th March 6.30 – 9.30pm</i>	De-stress and enjoy life: how to care for yourselves as carers working in the welfare sector	Facilitator: Gill Sealby Including a free massage and meditation session.
April	<i>Wednesday 26th April 6.30—9.30pm</i>	Introduction to Cultural Awareness and Working with Interpreters	Joan Cooney of ADEC (Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities).
May	<i>Monday 15th May 6.30—9.30pm</i>	How to offer a massage to a client How to do a hand & shoulder massage Relaxation for volunteers	Elizabeth McKenzie of Prague House
June	<i>Thursday 8th June 6.30—9.30pm</i>	Drug & Alcohol Abuse	Mal Doreian, Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre
July	<i>Wednesday 12th July 6.30—9.00pm</i>	Police Code of Practice on Family Violence, the Cycle of Violence & some info on Intervention Orders	Sergeant Jane Walsh, Family Violence Advisor
July	<i>Monday 24th July 6.30pm – 9.30pm</i>	Understanding Aboriginal Culture	To be confirmed
August	<i>Monday 14th August 6.30 – 9.30pm</i>	Depression and Anxiety	Marion Wilde, Program Manager, Community Education & Training, beyondblue (The National Depression Initiative)
Sept	<i>Tuesday 12th September 6.30 - 9.30pm</i>	Mental Health – An Overview	Gerard Reed, Mental Illness Fellowship
Oct	<i>Tuesday 10th October 6.30 - 9.30pm</i>	Communication Skills	Gill Sealby

Shekinah Training has been generously supported by Auseinet.

INFORMATION ON THE SESSIONS AND TRAINERS

De-stress and enjoy life! How to care for yourselves as carers working in the welfare sector

As you know, it is really important to look after yourselves as carers when working in the welfare sector. This is a FUN session with lots of activities. Included is a free massage for all participants, a brief meditation and consideration of ways to de-stress, de-brief and enjoy life!

Gill Sealby will facilitate the session, with guest presenters, and masseurs from Victoria University.



Introduction to Cultural Awareness and Working with Interpreters

Australia, as we all know, is a multicultural society which provides us with wonderful opportunities to learn about other backgrounds, beliefs and ways of viewing the world. With that also comes the opportunity for unintentional misunderstandings. Joan Cooney, a very experienced trainer from ADEC, will guide us through strategies to increase our understanding in a gentle and unthreatening way. She also includes a section on how to work effectively with interpreters so that the client is still the focus of the interaction. I was a participant in this workshop last year and found it invaluable.

How to offer a massage to a client /How to do a hand & shoulder massage/Relaxation for volunteers

Elizabeth McKenzie, who works at Prague House, is an experienced masseur who has been working with Shekinah clients for several years. She will offer training in the techniques of hand and shoulder massage and also, equally importantly, will cover how best to offer these massages to clients in a sensitive way. The session will be very practical and will conclude with a relaxation for the participants.

Please bring a towel. All other materials provided.

Drug & Alcohol Abuse

Mal Doreian, from Turning Point Drug & Alcohol Centre, ran a session for us last year on The Methadone Program. Those of you who attended know what a great trainer Mal is. He will give an overview of the topic and focus particularly on alcohol abuse and how volunteers can best understand and support the clients they work with.

Police Code of Practice on Family Violence, the Cycle of Violence & some info on Intervention Orders

The above Code of Practice is fairly new (2004) and is much better than the procedures the police used to follow when attending to an incidence of family violence. Sergeant Jane Walsh will take us through these topics and will answer questions. I attended this presentation last year and found it very interesting and useful. An important session for those working in this field.

Depression & Anxiety

As you probably know, depression and anxiety affects almost every family in Australia either because individuals themselves suffer or people are related to, or friends of, sufferers. It is a growing problem and one that certainly affects Shekinah clients. Marion Wilde, Program Manager for Community Education & Training for beyondblue, will present this interactive session.

Communication Skills

One of the most important tasks which you, our volunteers, fulfil is communicating with clients. This session will consider how to improve our communication skills and will focus particularly on listening.

The 2 sessions which have not yet been confirmed will cover the following topics:

Understanding Aboriginal Culture and Issues

An overview of Aboriginal history, attitudes and culture which will also cover the complex issues facing Indigenous people today. As many of our clients are Aboriginal, this is an important session.

Mental Health: an Overview

Gerard Reed, an excellent presenter, will cover a range of mental illnesses and how they impact on people, affecting their thought processes and behaviour. He will focus on increasing our understanding and our capacity to provide support to the people we work with.

VOLUNTEER ARTICLES

Here are 3 articles from some of our wonderful volunteers who, between them, have contributed many years of help and support to the agencies where they work. Their generosity and commitment are absolutely representative of you, the Shekinah volunteers, who are an incredible group of people – warm, dedicated, friendly and giving.

Tona Bushmann has been helping out at Bethlehem Community for many years. She has written the following account of her experiences there:

Hello, all you avid readers! Gill has asked me to submit an article for this journal, and I'm sitting here, wishing I had the journalistic skills that I've detected in my two sisters. Alas! inspiration won't come, so I'm going to write a few words about my experience as a volunteer for the Shekinah Homeless Services at Bethlehem.

A few years before I retired, I decided I was not going to spend my Saturday afternoons at home doing housework while my sociable partner George was off playing bowls. I had this vague idea that it might be nice to do a bit of volunteer work, though what? I had no idea.

Anyhow, as luck would have it, the next Sunday there were a few lines in our Church newsletter asking for volunteers at some of the Shekinah agencies. I rang Bernadette the next week, and made an appointment to meet her at Bethlehem in Fitzroy which was then very close to my home and work.

Now, at that time the hostel was staffed by only two permanent staff during the week and the weekends and evenings were covered by volunteers, so I just fitted in as a volunteer to assist the volunteers. Liz Cieslar was a university student and a volunteer who was there most of the times I arrived, and just by working with this amazing young woman, I found a whole new world. Here was a young woman, barely past 21 years who could supervise a group of people who had vast and complicated needs. She seemed to work with them rather than for them. She was able to share their fun times, help them through some of their trials, discipline them when the need arose, but most times there was wonderful companionable air encasing the hostel. I still remember her nonjudgmental way of dealing with things when I see altercations around me in my everyday life. (Since then I've encountered a lot more people of that unselfish calibre).

It took very little time before I felt I had become part of the community. After a few weeks I found I was welcomed by the staff and the ladies living in the hostel as if I were an old friend, and over the years I have watched and been a part of that hospitality. As I go about doing a few chores, I realize the ladies have determined my role, and that to me has been my acceptance into the sisterhood of Bethlehem.

After a few years, my partner George has joined us, so maybe we have to use the brotherhood term as well. I know my life has been enriched by the ladies of Bethlehem. I've watched them look after their weaker sisters, seen their capacity for forgiveness, shared their mourning of lost ones, joined in their festivities, swapped our stories, and learnt a lot more about cooking and gardening than one could ever do at a C.A.E. Course.

My weekly trip out to Bethlehem is just part of my life now, and I hope I can go on visiting for a long time to come.



Kim Wright has been volunteering at the Good Samaritan Inn for almost 2 years now. Recently she attended a training session on domestic violence and has written the following excellent account:



I'm very glad to have had the opportunity recently to attend a talk given by WIRE and presented by Carolyn Stewart on family violence. It addressed many of the usual questions such as: 'what are the signs of someone being abused; reasons why women stay; what you can do to help and what not to do; help plan for her safety and finally how to look after yourself if you find that you are in a situation of a loved one confiding in you with issues of their abuse. Although it was recognized that men can be and are abused by their partner, it was stated that women are by far the majority of abuse victims within relationships and it was this aspect that the talk focused on. The talk started with the Power and Control Wheel from the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project. This wheel shows that there are 8 different ways of asserting power and control over a loved one, and that it's not just about hitting your partner. These

different types of abuse are using threats; using intimidation; emotional abuse; using isolation; denying and blaming; using children; using male privilege and economic abuse.

The talk was interactive and informative as Carolyn often asked us what our thoughts were and tried to show that there are still common myths about family violence for example that men are 'naturally' more aggressive and therefore can not control their anger. She also highlighted that if and when she leaves the violent relationship the violence will not always end as in some cases the abuse can get worse. I found the fact that the idea of it being a community problem today as opposed to an individual one interesting, and that the police are trying to stamp out domestic violence under the new Family Violence Code of Practice. WIRE will be holding a talk on this topic soon. Carolyn ended by stating that although its vitally important for you to maintain support and strength for your loved one/friend who is being abused, it is also important for you to look after yourself and this can be done, amongst other things, by debriefing with a close friend or WIRE's telephone service or by understanding and being honest about what you can and can't do to help her. I would recommend this session to other Shekinah volunteers.

John Osborne is another wonderful volunteer who has given many years' commitment and help at the Way Community. He has written about his work there:

Some wise man said " Music is the home of Memories." It is certainly true that certain songs/tunes can place one in a very reflective mood, as I found recently. Drifting down the lane of memories, I came upon my trunk of gifts which I had received from past residents of "The Way" in Fitzroy. I was going to say "forgotten gifts" but they are not forgotten, just covered with the dust of time. Dusting them off, what memories they rekindle. These gifts are not of a commercial nature, but of much greater value. They came to me from men who had spent time living on the streets, sharing fractured lives with other lonely souls and in doing so are very wary of showing emotion. These gifts came from the heart, albeit unknowingly.

I realized what wonderful friendships I had forged with these very special people in my life. Time can't erase the special moments we shared together, whether it was sitting the street or holding their hand as their time in this world came to a close.

It is in reflecting on these times and people that you realize why you volunteer, how much you have been enriched, and what wonderful characters you have met.



THE SHEKINAH BALL

Many companies are donating items (food or prizes) to the Shekinah Ball. We are very grateful to them and will be thanking them all individually in the newsletter following the Ball.

If you have an item which you could donate to the Ball (either a food item or a prize), or if you have a contact with a company which might donate something, please contact Gill. We need the following items urgently:

- Chocolate/chocolates and especially chocolate Easter eggs, large & small
- Pies
- Packets of crisps/chips
- Soft drinks/juice
- Helium balloons/ordinary balloons



WHERE THE HEART IS....COMMUNITY FESTIVAL, FITZROY

On Australia Day the *Where the Heart is Community Festival* was awarded the City of Yarra Community Event Award 2006.

The third festival for Homeless People, auspiced by the Royal District Nursing Service Homeless Persons Program and organized by a huge range of agencies, will take place this year on Friday 21st April.

Several of the Shekinah agencies are involved in different ways and you can be involved too! It is a great event which creates a day of celebration of the skills, creativity and optimism of people who are doing it tough.

Activities include music & poetry performances, art & crafts, children's and young people's activities, health information, haircuts, photographs, skin care, life styles marquee, displays and a fabulous lunch – all of which are free to participants.

We need volunteers to help run it – either serving lunch, helping with activities or on a stall, car parking and so on. If you would like to get involved (an I'm sure you will have a great time!) please contact Gill Sealby and I will send out the Festival Volunteer Form to you. Thanks!



SHEKINAH TRAINING: Enrolment Form

Please complete & return to Gill Sealby, Shekinah Homeless Services,
 PO Box 146, East Melbourne, Vic 3002. Or ring/email me to book a place.
 Tel: 9287 5568 / 0422 266 122 Email: shekinah@pacific.net.au



Name:

Agency:

Address:

Tel Nos:

Email:.....

I wish to enrol in the following training sessions—please tick the relevant box(es) :

	DATE & TIME	TOPIC	Please tick here if you would like to attend
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