



March 2011
Volume 3 Issue 1

Spirit of Shekinah

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Shekinah News for March

Here we are well into yet another year and I hope and trust it will be a good year for you all.

My year started with an early [or is that a late] Christmas present!! I was approached by a corporation wanting to volunteer. Not only did they want to volunteer, but offered 400 people [no that's not a typo!] to do a 'makeover' at one of our member organisations.

After the initial shock and disbelief, I then had the unenviable task of making a decision as to which organisation to suggest where they may be best utilised. That's not an easy call with ten programs from which to choose. However, after much soul-searching, I chose the Good Samaritan Inn as they have perhaps the greatest need for work to be done around their premises.

After an on-site inspection we realised that there was not enough work for 400 people – let alone room to accommodate that many people – so Corpus Christi Community Greenvale agreed to take approximately 290 and the Inn take approximately 100.

Landscaping, general cleaning and tidying up was the main work done and an army of people attacked 10 acres at Corpus Christi and the front and back gardens at the Inn, along with some painting and minor repair work.

Whilst the logistics were totally beyond my comprehension – they

did it! Whilst it was a difficult time for staff of the Inn and Corpus Christi as they had many hours of preparation to put in, in order for it to be pulled off – they are very happy with the result.

I never cease to be inspired and amazed by the total generosity of people – and they enjoyed themselves in the process.

The **Shekinah Ball** is coming up on **Friday 13th May 2011** at the Collingwood Town Hall. As the date suggests, we could have gone with a themed Ball again, but we chose not to, and instead we are asking people to come in the 'best Ball clothes' – and that will mean different things to different people. The people who use the services of our member organisations always love a chance to 'dress up' and this is their time.

We invite you all to come along and enjoy the night. **The cost is \$25.00 waged and \$10.00 concession.** All finger food will be supplied and BYO drinks.

The night starts at 7.00pm and ends at 11.00pm and Barry Sims and his band will again play the kind of music that gets people up and dancing.

This is a Shekinah family night – so come along and join with those you work with and for. For 'tickets' contact me on 9462 3933 or book through your organisation. I am looking forward to seeing you there.

Marg Casey



Around the Network

Bethlehem Community

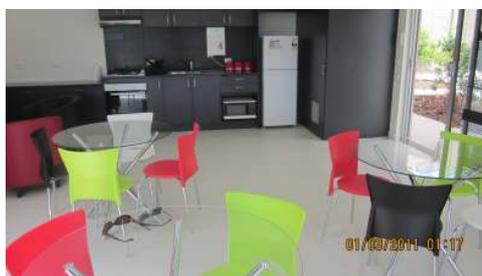
Bethlehem has finally moved women into the new Thomastown complex. It was a long and sometimes exhausting road, but a good and worthwhile one. The name of the new program is **Sophia** – named after the goddess of wisdom.

There is now only one unit to be filled. The process has been slow and at times difficult, but very well managed by all the staff. The women who have moved in are very happy with their new home and the surrounds, including the landscaped garden are all conducive to a great living environment.

If you know of anyone who would like to volunteer at Thomastown at Sophia, please contact Marg Casey on 9462 3933.

With the move of 3 women from Bethlehem to Thomastown, it now means that Bethlehem has 3 new women and they are being warmly welcomed to their new home.

Bethlehem had a group of staff from the Langham Hotel volunteer at the beginning of the year – they painted the side fence in preparation for planting a living screen to give the next door neighbours, and us, some privacy. They had a lovely day in spite of the rain that persisted and we thank them for their work.



Community room at Thomastown



Looking across courtyard to the community room



Briar Terrace

Briar Terrace has started the new year well with friends and volunteers joining in activities, outings or just enjoying chats and cuppas.

Our garden has thrived with the wonderful rain we have had. A beautiful perfumed creeper has taken over the front whilst the back garden has produced roses and geraniums. It makes for a very

pleasant environment.

As with everyone else, we struggle to fill our volunteer base. However in spite of this, we have managed to increase our opening hours which has been welcomed by our friends. We appreciate the assistance given to us by Marg in recruiting volunteers and hope the situation will improve.



Corpus Christi Community

On Friday 25th February 2011 Corpus Christi hosted a group of approximately 270 people from Insurance Line who spent 90 minutes on site working in the grounds and gardens and cleaning the windows of all residential Wings.

In addition the volunteers also cleaned furniture in the Chapel and the Dining Room areas.

This activity was part of Insurance Line's annual conference which required all participants to visit an organisation and undertake volunteer work. The volunteers did

not know where they were going nor did they know of the specific nature of the work they would be undertaking.

The theme of the Insurance Line conference for this year was 'Change and Transformation' which was lived out in the works they performed at CCC.

Although this project required much behind the scenes work by some CCC staff the outcome has been a considerable improvement to our grounds and gardens.



Good Samaritan Inn

On Friday 18th February 2011 there was an induction evening for new volunteers at Good Samaritan Inn. The aim of the induction is to give volunteers a better idea of the context of the congregation as well as the history of Good Samaritan Inn through the intervention of the manager, Michelle Reid. The coordinator, Danielle Laville, talked about the roles of the different group of volunteers. Marg Casey, talked about the reviewed position description.

The Inn was also 'inundated' on Friday 25th February with approximately 70 volunteers from Insurance Line. They worked inside the house removing old cupboards and shelving; set up new shelving in the garage; removed a shed; painted a mural; tidied the garden and set up new outdoor furniture for the women to use.

They made the most of their 2 hours working and enjoying themselves and the result was certainly an improvement and much appreciated.



Volunteers & staff at induction evening



Mural and new seating at the Inn





McAuley Community Services for Women Mercy Care Program



Mercy care Program has put in a small vegie/herb garden at the back of the property to give the women and children another thing to focus on during their stay.

An information evening for prospective volunteers was held this month with 4 women coming to hear details about what volunteering at Mercy care entails.

The information evenings will be followed up by a series of induction evenings.

Regina Coeli Program has moved 2 of its women to Bethlehem's new Sophia program at Thomastown. They are settling in well and adding to the colour and movement of the new women who are calling Sophia home. We wish them well.



St Mary's House of Welcome



Following a research and consultation process, St Mary's has decided to adopt the "Strengths Model" as its model of caring for people who attend the service. This approach is very much in line with what St Mary's has been doing for over 50 years, that is, welcoming people as they are, focusing on the positives and the achievable aspects of a person's life and thereby creating HOPE.

A new community and housing development has just started in the land (Atherton Gardens Estate) opposite St Mary's. The development will include over sixty units of housing for people with high and complex needs. This will surely impact on and increase the demand for St Mary's services in the future.



Shekinah

It's Ball time again.
Friday 13th May 2011
Collingwood Town Hall.

Come along and join with your friends for a fun-filled night.

Tickets are \$25.00 waged, and \$10.00 concession.

Contact Marg on 9462 3933 or shekinah@shekinah.org.au

