



September 2011
Volume 3 Issue 3

Spirit of Shekinah

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Shekinah News for September

Welcome to the Spring edition of *Spirit of Shekinah*.

It's such a great experience to see the new life springing into our gardens and streetscapes, magpies swooping and birds frantically building nests. Winter can see so long with its shorter days and colder weather, however, there's something exciting about embarking on a new season that seems to energise me – I guess I run on solar power!!

I trust that you've all come through winter relatively unscathed and ready to tackle whatever lies around the next corner.

This year is the 10th anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers, often referred to IYV+10. It's perhaps a good opportunity to reflect on just what those of who volunteer actually do – and how very much appreciated you are.

There is a wonderful volunteer at one of our member organisations who, up until one week ago, has been giving us 2 days of her time per week [now cut down to one day] to help out in whatever way she can. She has set 'chores' she does, but such is her dedication and attachment to the people she volunteers for, she will find things to do and just quietly go about doing them – no fanfare, no accolades – but with much appreciation from all who benefit from her generosity.

Now, if we multiply that by 300+ across the Shekinah network, then we have a pretty powerful dynamic

at play. In that number I include those who do 'on-the-ground' volunteering with the people who use the services of our member organisations, along with those who devote their time to sitting on Boards, being part of fundraising teams, marketing committees, offer pro bono financial or legal assistance etc. - the list goes on.

I would also like to acknowledge the behind-the-scenes people who assist in so many ways. For instance, Bethlehem Community [where I'm based] has been somewhat inundated with toiletries of various shapes sizes and consistencies. This is courtesy of several organisations who have donated shampoos, conditioners, pampering packs etc., all of which will be used within the Network particularly for those who come through our crisis accommodation services. In fact we've had so much donated that we've offered them to other organisations with which we have relationships. So, there are many people that go to make up the network that is Shekinah. And we thank you all, as without you, we would struggle to achieve the levels of service we provide.

Until next time remembering that:
A volunteer is a person who believes that people can make a difference - and is willing to prove it.--Anonymous

Marg Casey

Volunteer Program Co-ordinator

"Your eyes will see a home that is secure,
a tent not to be moved, none of its stakes
ever to be pulled up, none of its ropes
ever to be broken." Isaiah 33.20



Around the Network

Bethlehem Community

The Sophia program of Bethlehem Community now has an Outreach Worker, a cooking and gardening program is underway with a movie-night program planned for the near future – along with other programs.

We are looking for a volunteer to work with women who are aged between 36-70, who has strong motivational and leadership skills,

preferably with a background in the community sector.

An official opening was held at Sophia's on 2nd August. Along with other dignitaries, Mr Andrew Elsbury, Member for Western Metropolitan Region officiated on behalf of Minister Lovell, Minister for Housing, Minister for Children and Early Childhood.



Carol Vale, Executive Director, Bethlehem Community



Corpus Christi Community

An ageing facility, increased acuity of residents and the constant challenges being brought by packaged liquor outlet license applications for the Greenvale Shopping Centre, Corpus Christi Community's Board of Management is currently focussing closely on its strategic directions and priorities for the future.

An important aspect of this is a review of the Corpus Christi Community mission, vision and

values. This review process is not intended to change the nature of work undertaken at Corpus Christi Community but it will challenge the Board and senior staff to define what we do and how we do it in the context of coming years and the emerging needs of the homeless population.

To assist with this reflection a facilitated workshop will be conducted in early November 2011.



Good Samaritan Inn

This year's annual Dinner Dance was held at L'Unica Reception Centre at Parkville on Friday 26th August. The night was made memorable as we were celebrating 15 Years of caring and celebrated with a record 332 guests on the night.

Of course nights like this don't work without a lot of hard work behind the scenes and we thank Marg Godino who organised the entire event, Mary O'Donohue who was

our marvellous MC for the night, all the attentive staff at L'Unica, Sarah Fraser O'Brien from the Good Samaritan Foundation, Sr. Kerin one of our Good Samaritan Sisters, all the wonderful donors who supplied such quality items for our raffle, and the amazing band 'Kasablanka' who had people on the dance floor right to the very end!

The night was such a resounding success—we can't wait for next year's dance to come around



McAuley Community Services for Women

Regina Coeli Program's music classes are taking off again with people participating in drumming, piano and guitar.

The women are also walking the dogs at the Lost Dogs Home.

We celebrated McAuleys 3rd

birthday and had the refunding launch of McAuley Works held at Regina.

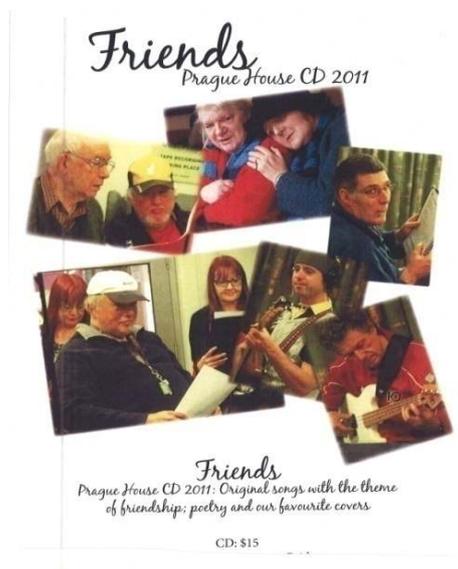
Outings are well attended especially Tutankahamen which the women loved. Leonie has been taking the women to "Mansions" around Melbourne as an August theme.



Prague House

Prague House recently won the St Vincent's Health Australia Award for 'Responding to an Ageing Population'. We were presented with a commemorative plate on the 17th June 2011 at the Award ceremony in Sydney.

They also have released a CD which is available for \$15.00 from Prague House on 9816 0600 – see CD cover on the right.





Shekinah

Shekinah was once again well represented at the annual Lord Mayor's Christmas in July luncheon at 'Jeff's Shed'. It's always a lovely time when those who have less are treated to a whole lot more! There is terrific entertainment, gift packs on the tables and above all great traditional Christmas food!

Each table is sponsored by a corporate entity which is a great way for them to exercise their corporate social responsibility and meet some of those to whom their generosity is extended.

I joined the Bethlehem Community table and the women who came thoroughly enjoyed themselves

dancing to great singers such as Darryl Braithwaite. All in all a great day!

Bethlehem Community, where Shekinah is based, was burgled this week. Shekinah lost its camera plus a brand new data projector which hadn't even been used, along with a broken filing cabinet and a disgustingly messy office. Unfortunately on my camera were photos of the Lord Mayor's lunch that I hadn't downloaded – so sorry – no pics!

One upside is that I'll get a new camera and data projector – and hopefully the filing cabinet can be fixed.



The Way Community

Renovations continue at The Way Community. After a few decades of making do, the owners of our building have put in a new roof. Work is also being undertaken to repair plaster damaged by leaks in the old roof. Along with our wonderful new kitchen (with the kitchen and labour for installation donated), the building almost fits into its (now trendy) location on Gertrude Street.

to independent housing in the past few months. He still comes in to visit and is very much a part of our community. The Way Community has been a referral pathway for Melbourne's much-praised Streets to Home project. While we have been able to provide a supportive stepping stone for some residents, who still come back to visit, some of the older men find a sense of home and community at The Way Community and will be here longer term.

Talking of change, we saw a long term resident successfully move on

