

Lazarus Centre Chaplaincy Newsletter

Volume 4 issue 1

Theresa writes: RDNS Homeless Persons Program enhances level of care for Breakfast Program participants

RDNS Homeless Persons Program (HPP) is a specialist unit of RDNS, funded to specifically address the primary health care needs of people experiencing, or at risk of homelessness. The aim of RDNS HPP is to promote the health of individuals and families experiencing homelessness by providing a holistic primary health care response and by actively seeking to link people at risk, or experiencing homelessness to the generalist service system.

I visit the St Peter's breakfast program every Wednesday morning and attend the BBQ held every Friday. The three RDNS Community Nurses who are best known to Anglicare Support Workers who facilitate the breakfast program

are Theresa, Marnie, who specializes in women and women with children, and Kim (pictured). There is great collaboration between support workers: Louise (Anglicare Manager), Alex, Sarah, Matt, Brad, Casey, Chris and Sam. Anglicare Volunteers will also sometimes ask me to talk to someone they know needs support.

More and more people are now at risk, or are homeless than in previous years. This is related to a number of inequities but specifically the high rental costs that have escalated in recent years. Sometimes it is a quiet word from one of the Anglicare team that will alert writer to a person who may want help. This certainly assists the

assertive outreach approach which HPP nurses utilize. When a client already trusts an Anglicare Support Worker they more readily allow the community nurse to approach them. This is especially important when working with people who have learned to distrust "The System". They may come for a meal and support and a supportive chat from the Anglicare Team and not want to be involved with anyone else for some time. Eventually however it usually happens that the homeless person gets used to seeing an HPP

Nurse, at the breakfast and the BBQ, and with a "good word" slipped in by one of the Anglicare Team the way is facilitated to allow the HPP Community Nurses to engage with the individual.



Homeless people know they will receive a good breakfast and support through St Peter's Breakfast Program and Friday BBQ. Apart from the friendship and sense of belonging and community this engenders for homeless people there is the added benefit of being able to be linked into services they require in a non-threatening and supportive environment. With health, housing, and other systems becoming more complex and challenging to negotiate this is increasingly important. Individuals experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness, have the right to health care that is accessible 'equitable' empowering self determined and encourages inter-sectoral collaboration.

From the Lazarus Centre Chaplain

An article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* by Melbourne Sacred Heart Mission worker Chris Middendorp explores five ways to 'fix homelessness'. Before reading his article I reflected upon what I thought my five ways would be. Here they are:

- Donate to or volunteer with a program that works to help the homeless.
- Encourage others to support programs that feed, clothe and provide social interaction and non-judgmental hospitality
- Advocate to ensure the homeless have access to primary health care
- Enable access to clean, safe and affordable housing with continued access to medical, social and pastoral care.
- Create communities focusing on prevention and early intervention in situations that may lead to homelessness: relationship breakdown, mental illness and financial difficulty.

Fr Philip Gill

A Lazarus Centre Christmas



Anglicare Victoria CEO, Paul McDonald, met up with one of the founders of the St Peter's breakfast program, Joyce Newton, at the Lazarus Centre Christmas lunch on 23rd December 2016. More than 100 breakfast program participants gathered for Christmas lunch which was preceded by the Eucharist and the Anglicare Victoria choir leading the gathering in singing Christmas carols. Members of the Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade joined volunteers and Anglicare staff in serving Lazarus Centre clientele.

Friday homilies: Tirelessly working for the rights of women

Josephine Butler was born on 13th April 1828 surrounded with all the advantages needed to make her mark on society in Victorian England. It is said she was attractive. She was educated, intelligent and articulate. Most importantly as any reader of Dickens or Trollope would know, she was wealthy. All the attributes needed by a woman in Victorian times to make a good marriage and therefore to secure a comfortable life. Josephine however chose a different path. She also had the blood of social reform running through her veins. Her father had campaigned for the abolition of slavery.

After being educated at home she married Joseph Butler, an Anglican clergyman and tutor at Oxford University. They moved to Liverpool where Joseph was head of the new Liverpool College. The couple suffered the tragic loss of Eva, their youngest child. Josephine was traumatised by the loss and threw



herself fervently into reform work. She was incensed by the Contagious Diseases Act which meant that women (not men) found to be infected with venereal diseases could be imprisoned. Women suspected of being prostitutes were physically examined by special police. Men were not held responsible for the spread of disease. It took sixteen years for the Act to be repealed. Her activism incurred the wrath of some parliamentarians who described women who advocated for the rights prostitutes as worse than those they represented.

Josephine also campaigned for a more liberal understanding of women's place in society by arguing that a woman's role needed to be broader than that of wife and mother. What of the millions of women for whom there were no husbands? Josephine Butler worked tirelessly for the rights of women. She is commemorated with a stained glass window in Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral.

A volunteer's perspective: Kelly writes on the pleasure of serving others

My name is Kelly, and I have been volunteering at St Peter's for just over twelve months now. I have been working as a veterinary nurse for the past twelve years, but in 2014 decided to turn my focus towards 'human medicine' instead, and have since completed my Bachelor of Paramedicine, with the view to becoming a paramedic in the near future.

Before starting my course I was of course aware homelessness existed in Melbourne, but coming from the outer south-eastern suburbs I had not really seen it first hand. Once I started travelling to Melbourne regularly for Uni, I saw it all too frequently.

When I heard about the breakfast program run daily at St Peter's, I immediately knew that getting involved would be a great opportunity to give something back. Volunteering has easily been one of the best decisions I have made – taking just a couple of hours out of my day to do simple tasks such as wash dishes and replenish coffee and cereal gives me such an immense feeling of satisfaction. I have had the opportunity to get to hear the stories of many of the patrons there, and getting to know them has been a pleasure. The team at Anglicare runs a wonderful program, and I feel proud to be a part of it.



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