

The Advocate

Donations

UnitingCare Harrison assists people to take charge of their own lives .

We have been doing this in the eastern region for over four decades.

In this current economic climate and rental market, more people than ever are coming to us.

Many of these people are already homeless and in crisis when they walk through our doors.

The generous support of individuals, organisations and corporate supporters enables us to offer toiletry kits, emergency food and accommodation to people in crisis.

Please support our mission with a donation.



June 2010
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National Volunteer Week Recognising those who give a helping hand

National Volunteer Week is the largest celebration of volunteers in Australia. The week provides an opportunity to recognise and thank the 5 million Australians who volunteer their time and skills.

Each year Australian volunteers contribute more than 700 million hours of service to the community.

During May UnitingCare Harrison, with the generous continued support of Twinings Tea, celebrated the contribution made by our volunteers.

We have a team of over 200 volunteers involved in a diverse range of activities; Board of Governance, Opportunity Shops, Bread Service, Community Meals, Gifford Arts Project, Pat 'n' Chat, Material Aid and Christmas Appeal.

Without the passion and dedication of our volunteers, it would not be possible to run many of our services.

We take this opportunity to sincerely thank all people who so kindly volunteer at UnitingCare Harrison and help us to assist people to take charge of their own lives.



Corporate Support

Businesses, schools and organisations have the opportunity to give back to the local community by supporting the work and the mission of our agency.

Please consider:

- Donating non perishable food
- Donating personal hygiene items
- Providing pro bono services
- Fundraising to support our youth houses
- Sponsoring the Gifford Arts Project
- Sponsoring a UnitingCare Harrison event
- Christmas present collection

For more information on how your staff, work colleagues or students can support us, please contact 9871 8700.



Kilsyth House Launch

During May UnitingCare Harrison officially launched the Kilsyth House Program; an initiative of the Youth & Families team.

The program provides a living environment that integrates accommodation, social support, group work and education and training opportunities that aim to make a positive impact on young people's lives.

Kilsyth House accommodates three young people (aged 16 – 18 years) within a Lead Tenant model for a period of 12 months. Youth Homelessness Services and the Creating Connections program assist these young

people in developing independent living skills, personal growth, community involvement and provide pathways to education and training opportunities. At the conclusion of the program our teams provide assistance with accessing stable, secure and sustainable housing.

The House also provides a Respite Room available for a young person to access for up to six weeks, whilst undergoing family mediation and reconciliation.

Julieanne Darling and Belinda Stevens from the Department of Human Services joined with the

UnitingCare Harrison team, Youth Housing Lead Tenants and the young people of Kilsyth House to celebrate the launch of this new initiative.

Stephanie Webber, UnitingCare Harrison Deputy CEO, and John Leach, Building & Grounds and Lead Tenant of Kilsyth House, planted an orange tree to commemorate the event.

We pay a special thank you to John Leach, who volunteered his skills and labour to establish a vegetable patch and improve the gardens at Kilsyth House.



'Planting the foundations for future generations'

Singstar Social Proves a Smash Hit

The UnitingCare Harrison Disability Services Team recently hosted a Singstar Social Fundraiser Event.

The fun packed night of Karaoke inspired singing and live entertainment raised funds for an innovative Client Mentor Program due to be launched in November 2010.

The Client Mentor Program will complement the Genesis 20 week live-in Individual Development & Community Support Program; with the primary focus being the promotion and recognition of people with a disability being leaders within the community.

This initiative provides and enhances learning pathways for participants as well as providing an opportunity to develop new social networks.

Past and present Individual Development Program clients will be given the opportunity to become Client Mentors; enabling them to develop their communication, relationship, coaching and listening skills while making a positive contribution to the community by supporting new clients throughout the Genesis Individual Development & Community Support Program.

This unique initiative is currently

unfunded and while the Disability Services team will manage the program, Client Mentors will require leadership training in a recognised further education environment.

We thank AAMI, Cadbury, Melbourne Storm and Onyx8 for their support of the Program and extend a special thank you to Melanie Ellis of our Disability Services Team for hosting the Singstar Social Event.

Should you be interested in offering financial support to the Client Mentor Program, please contact Glen New, Team Leader Disability Services on 9871 8700.



Volunteer turns 90! Never too old

In April we celebrated a very special birthday of one of our volunteers Joyce Billington who turned 90.

Joyce works at our Vermont OpShop on Wednesdays and alternate Saturdays.

The big occasion was marked by celebratory morning and afternoon teas with Joyce's colleagues from the Op Shop as well as family and friends.

Joyce works with another nonagenarian, Ted Parker who turned 90 late last year - there must be something in the water at Vermont.

Congratulations to both Joyce and Ted on reaching this wonderful milestone.

'Making a positive difference in the lives of people with a disability'



Life in the Front Line

The UnitingCare Harrison Front Door is a high demand service that provides initial assessment and planning services to families, singles and couples from various areas throughout the Eastern region. So far this year we have seen over 1360 clients through our service.

This Front Door initiative was set up by the Department of Human Services in consultation with homeless service agencies across Victoria. The initiative aims to reduce the complexity of the homeless service system, improve clients' access to services and guarantee a timely service response.

The Front Door team currently manage phone calls, walk-ins, client appointments, crisis accommodation and follow up work with families in crisis. On average the Front Door team will see five new clients each day.

Even though we are a housing specialist service we also endeavour to link our clients into community supports to assist them with addiction, mental health, family/relationship breakdown and domestic violence issues.

Harrison has a demonstrated record of success in working with high need families living in inappropriate accommodation, homeless or at high risk of homelessness. The following illustrates the current homelessness crisis and how we assist people to take charge of their own lives.

A young couple presented to The Front Door team. They were living in a tin garden shed on their parent's property.

The young man's wife had only just arrived in the country and had not formalised her immigration status. She was pregnant and due to give birth in seven days. They were from a multicultural background, had poor English skills and their only source of income was the



husband's newstart allowance of \$240 per week.

Harrison negotiated with a local church agency to head lease a property in Frankston. We paid rent on behalf of the family until their income issues were resolved with Centrelink and sourced furniture, white goods, a cot and other baby items.

A support worker worked intensively with the family over the next three months referring them to the local maternity ward, assisting them to settle in their new baby, helping them to apply for extra income through Centrelink, organising English classes and negotiating for the family to take over the lease in their own name.

The family is now living independently with the continued support of their local Church community.

With your support we will continue to provide crisis support to those in our communities that have none.

Volunteering

Our amazing team of volunteers are an integral part of UnitingCare Harrison.

They are involved in a diverse range of activities:

- Board of Governance
- Op Shops
- Gifford Arts Project
- Material Aid
- Pat 'n' Chat
- Bread Service
- Christmas Appeal

Nobody can do everything but everybody can do something to aid us in our mission.

Please consider offering your time or skills to help us to assist people to take charge of their own lives.



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