

The Advocate



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.

September 2010

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Safe, Affordable Family Housing

UnitingCare Harrison's Accommodation Options for Families program helps families living in inadequate rooming houses to find more appropriate accommodation.

A mother of four who we recently assisted had moved from interstate, looking for a fresh start following the death of one of her children. Unfortunately, fresh starts do not always come easy.

Unable to find private rental accommodation, the family was forced to move into a rooming house. With money tight, the mother and four children had to share one room, with a queen and single bed at the hefty cost of \$350 per week.

During the day, the family would lean the beds against the wall, so there was enough room to move around.

For more than a month, the family of five lived in these cramped conditions. Their misery was compounded by their fear of other tenants in the house, who had drug and alcohol addictions.

With your support, UnitingCare Harrison was able to help this desperate mother find a safer place for her family to live. Until alternative accommodation could be found, UnitingCare Harrison subsidised the rent and provided intensive support.

For this family, there was a happy ending, and the fresh start they had hoped for. The family have now moved into a three-bedroom transitional property, sourced by UnitingCare Harrison, and will continue to receive assistance until they obtain long-term accommodation.



 **UnitingCare**
Harrison



You Can Help!

Are you and your colleagues, students, church or club members interested in providing practical support to those doing it tough in your community?

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
- Donating Christmas gifts for children, teenagers and adults

For more information on practical ways you can support us, please contact 9871 8700.



A Good Serve

A rumbling, empty stomach and loneliness compound the misery of those finding times tough.

But for those in the Box Hill area who are living on the streets, or simply struggling to afford groceries, a Community Meals Program run by Box Hill Tafe, Wesley Uniting Church and UnitingCare Harrison is providing welcome relief.

Each Monday, up to 30 people visit Wesley Hall, on the corner of Station and Oxford Streets in Box Hill, for a free hot meal and friendly conversation.

With staff and students from nearby Box Hill Tafe preparing and donating nutritious meals, the weekly menu includes tasty treats such as vegetable soup, beef or lamb stew, chicken casserole, roast vegetables, salads and a

scrumptious dessert.

And nothing goes to waste. After lunch, participants are invited to take home any leftover food for their dinner or to give to a friend in need.

A big thanks to Box Hill Tafe and volunteers from Wesley Uniting Church, who make this fantastic community lunch possible!

Cardboard Box, Bus Shelter, Park Bench ...Or Swag?



Despite UnitingCare Harrison's best efforts to provide temporary accommodation for all those in crisis, at times it can be impossible to find somewhere for people to stay.

Mark Dixon, General Manager Homelessness Services, says UnitingCare Harrison has been forced to offer people swags because of a lack of accommodation and a limited budget to pay for motels until houses become available.

"As of June this year, there were 4926 families on the public housing waiting list in Melbourne's eastern metro region. We are seeing people forced to sleep on

friend's couches, in cars and on the streets," Mr Dixon said.

Rather than turning away those in crisis and letting them spend a freezing night huddled under a blanket or cardboard box in a doorway or bus shelter, as a last resort UnitingCare Harrison provide emergency swags and camping packs.

Thanks to Swags for the Homeless and a \$15,000 grant from the Share Community Appeal, UnitingCare Harrison has purchased swags and camping packs for our emergency relief program. The camping packs contain necessities such as toothpaste, a toothbrush, a face

washer, a towel and a blanket.

The swags are waterproof, windproof and fire-resistant and have insulation to keep a person warm when they are forced to sleep in the open. For those without a permanent home, the swags have a secure section to store belongings and can be rolled up into a backpack and easily carried around during the day.

These swags – which cost \$70 each but are provided to clients for free - are just one way that your donation to UnitingCare Harrison could help those doing it tough to make it through another cold night on the streets.

Much Needed Makeovers

Residents of our disability and independent living units are among those celebrating recent makeovers to a number of our properties.

Our **Iris Court** and **Frances Avenue** disability properties have been given a facelift with bathroom renovations, fresh paint, new carpet and a new garden shed among the recent improvements. **Fellowship House** and **Croydon Road "recycled manse"** properties are next on our makeover list.

Meanwhile, residents at independent living units at **Wesley Grange** in Sandringham, **Cornwall Flats** in Prahran East and **Chapel Court**

In Moorabbin now have bright, new communal lounges to socialise in. The makeover included new carpet, paint and furniture.

Wesley Grange resident, Margaret Mould, is enjoying the upgrades to the communal lounge: "It's lovely and bright. Very comfortable and I love the new TV. I am looking forward to our first meeting, where I can meet everyone and share a cuppa. I am so content and feel it is a privilege to be here."

During the past five years, UnitingCare Harrison has completed major upgrades to 40 of the 171 units it manages.



Tour For Independence



What better way to let young people know about support services in the Eastern region than to show them first hand on a fun bus tour.

The tour was one of the fortnightly activities run by the Creating Connections and Youth Homelessness teams for young people living with a lead tenant at

our Kilsyth house.

Beginning at Kilsyth house, the tour group travelled to Croydon, Ringwood, Wantirna and Boronia. A UnitingCare Harrison staff member was on hand to point out important services like the local Centrelink offices, train stations, bus stops, shopping centres, health services,

dental services and where to access material aid.

For young people who may not be familiar with the area – or feel confident accessing services independently - this bus tour was a great opportunity to see what services are available and where they are located.



Thank You!

UnitingCare Harrison thanks the following supporters for their generous contributions.

- Angus & Robertson
- Australia for Christ Fellowship
- Box Hill TAFE
- East Kew Uniting Church
- Curves Gym & Members - Kew
- Contours Gym & Members - Vermont South
- Domtex Australia
- Emerald Uniting Church
- Ferntree Gully Uniting Church
- Hungry Jacks
- IGA - Studfield
- IGA - Wantirna Mall
- Kmart - Knox City
- kogo - Knit One Give One
- Manchester & More - Staff
- McDonalds - Box Hill
- Rotary Club of Balwyn
- Share Community Appeal

Harrison Happenings

Be Someone's Santa this Christmas

Looking for a way to brighten Christmas for those in need? Target Australia is partnering with UnitingCare to collect and distribute more than 100,000 gifts across Australia this year.

Gifts are needed for children, teenagers and adults. UnitingCare Harrison will be distributing all gifts donated at Target stores at Knox Shopping Centre and The Glen. To donate, simply buy or make a gift and leave it beneath the UnitingCare Christmas Tree at Target. We will ensure your gift goes to someone in need for Christmas morning.

Farewell Susan!

We recently had the pleasure of hosting Susan Jupp, who has been doing a work placement as part of her Diploma of Community Welfare Work. Susan says she chose to work with UnitingCare Harrison "because I am interested in supporting and empowering parents in their crucial role of guiding and nurturing their families."

"It has been wonderful seeing all the classroom theory translated into practical application..... the range of services at UnitingCare Harrison is diverse and I've enjoyed seeing the way staff draw on their skills and past experiences in their work with those needing support."

Do you need a Speaker?

Would your church, school or Rotary, Lions or Probus group like to hear from an inspiring speaker about the work of UnitingCare Harrison?

Perhaps you would like a demonstration of the new swags for the homeless?

We have speakers available, at no cost, for local groups.

Please contact Stephanie Webber on (03) 9871 8705 to discuss your needs.

Have you thought about volunteering?

Our amazing team of volunteers are an integral part of UnitingCare Harrison. They are involved in a diverse range of activities including our Board of Governance, Op Shops, Gifford Arts Project, Material Aid, Pat 'n' Chat, Bread Service and 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.

Yes, I would like to help

I would like to support the work of UnitingCare Harrison with a donation of:

\$10

\$20

\$50

\$100 or

All Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible. A receipt will be issued.

Name

Address

State

P/Code

Phone

Email

Payment Method

Cheque or Money Order—Please make payable to UnitingCare Harrison

Visa

MasterCard

Bankcard

Card number

Card expiry

Cardholder signature

Please return to UnitingCare Harrison PO Box 4503 Knox City 3152

'We assist people to take charge of their own lives'