

ANNUAL REPORT 2009/2010

*“There should be
'no wrong doors'
for people who are
homeless when they
seek help”*

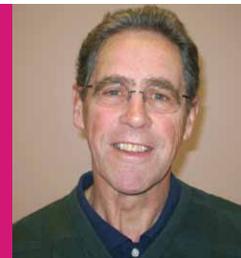




Inspired by the spirit of the Daughters of Charity, St Mary's House of Welcome seeks to further social justice by standing with disadvantaged people offering support, solutions and hope.

The Centre provides free meals, recreational activities, emergency relief, psychiatric disability support, social work services and a sense of community for homeless people and people with mental health issues.

Chairman's Report



The year 2009/10 has been one of consolidation and also one for seeking and analysing future directions for St Mary's House of Welcome.

Our new building has delivered both the capacity and confidence to improve and extend service delivery across all programs. It has also provided a level of stability to allow the Board and Management to implement improvements in governance, management and strategic planning activities. These matters continued to be critically reviewed at the Annual Review and Strategic Planning Workshop. At the December review a major commitment was made to the activities of the Mission Committee and, in particular, the conduct of an Annual Mission Workshop for Board, Management and Staff.

St Mary's Board made a major contribution to the development and adoption of a Corporate Governance Charter for all Australian Daughters

of Charity operations in the Province. Similarly, significant input was made to the development of a common Trust Deed for each of the operations to adopt for the implementation of a Foundation – a facility which will provide focus for future fundraising efforts.

In November, Kevin Ryan retired after having served the maximum nine years as a member of the Board. We are extremely grateful for Kevin's contribution. In particular we acknowledge, and thank him, for his outstanding commitment to the initiative and achievement of the redevelopment of St Mary's.

The remaining membership of the Board has been constant and hard working and I thank them sincerely for their contributions.

The Government White Paper on Homelessness *The Road Home* said "There should be 'no wrong doors'

for people who are homeless when they seek help". In this regard we at St Mary's are fortunate to have CEO, Tony McCosker, the Manager of the Day Centre, Sr Roseanne Murphy, the caring and dedicated staff and many generous volunteers who are committed to that philosophy. I thank them all sincerely for their contribution to the work of St Mary's.

Bob O'Halloran
Chairman

St Mary's Board

Frances Warren	Michael D'Arcy
Sr Margaret Armstrong	Margaret Lodge
Sam Biondo	Bob O'Halloran
Paul Bridgeford	Jenny Smith
John Cowlishaw	Roger Hine
	Mark Lafferty



From the CEO

Providing a “safe place” for people who are homeless and who have mental health issues, who are disadvantaged and disconnected from the community, is not an easy task. It is an ongoing challenge that requires a skilled and responsive staff.

I congratulate the Managers (Sr Roseanne, Lee Esposito, Kathy Hogarty and Pamela Whiting) and all staff at St Mary’s who have displayed exceptional skill and dedication in providing a welcoming and safe space over the past twelve months.

Our new purpose-built building has created a dignified environment with plenty of rooms for activity, for new programs, for enjoyment and for educational purposes. A recent survey of participants at St Mary’s indicated that those who use our services ‘find what they are looking for’, their needs are met, and the experience of being at St Mary’s is a very positive one for them.

It is also clear from our survey of participants that our services and interventions help them to maintain a more stable lifestyle; in other words, they are prevented from further crises in their lives that would escalate their mental health issues, destabilise their current housing arrangements and lead to further social isolation.

To provide these positive results requires a lot of effort and a lot of team work. I want to thank the Board for its broad vision and strategic planning, the Fundraising staff for their exceptional efforts this year, the great number of volunteers without whom we could not operate, and all members of staff ‘on the front line’ for their commitment to a task that is not always easy. As a team we can, and do, make a difference.

Tony McCosker
CEO

“...those who use our services ‘find what they are looking for’, their needs are met, and the experience of being at St Mary’s is a very positive one for them.”



Day Centre

The Day Centre has experienced another busy year with many additional activities offered and the numbers attending constantly growing.

After a full year in the newly refurbished premises, the increase of over 10,000 meals served in the dining room (per year) has been sustained compared with the number served prior to 2008 (an increase of 35%).

We have conducted the Day 2 Day Living in the Community Program since securing funding from the Federal Department of Health and Ageing in 2007. This is a structured activity program to support people who experience social isolation. The Program allows the opportunity for people to participate in social, recreational and educational activities, assisting them to integrate with the community.

The fishing program continues to be hugely popular with both men and

women and all look forward to the regular outings such as visits to movies, bowling and various city venues.

We have the support of more than 200 volunteers who primarily assist in the kitchen and dining room. Many also are involved with the recreation activities and outings; others take on the responsibilities of the reception desk or assist with the hairdressing and women's pampering days.

In the past 12 months, 23 schools have brought their students to volunteer as part of the schools' community service programs. This allows the students some experience of working in the Day Centre and also to gain some insight into homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse and mental health issues. The positive feedback from both the schools and the students reinforces the need to continue to make these opportunities available.

Our sincere thanks to all our volunteers, without whom we simply could not offer the services we provide.

Each member of the Day Centre staff has risen to the many and varied challenges that has come their way and I thank them for this.

Roseanne Murphy DC
Day Centre Manager





No Limits

The No Limits Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation Service has continued to provide specialist programs for people diagnosed with a psychiatric disability. The aim of the program for participants has been to create opportunities for both recovery and empowerment and to facilitate the return to optimal levels of independent functioning in the community.

Over the last 12 months participants of the No Limits program have actively participated in 'Special Event' days which have included an Easter BBQ lunch at Warburton featuring a fun filled Easter egg hunt, a visit to Nova Radio station and Sing and Dance Entertainment days. These special events have provided the opportunity for participants to show case new skills and engage in meaningful activities which promote self-discovery, social inclusion, mental health and wellbeing.

Participants of the No Limits program have also continued to enjoy their involvement in the general SMHOW Community days including a visit to the Melbourne Aquarium which was enjoyed by all.

The group activity program on offer during the last 12 months has catered to the needs of our participants and new programs have been introduced which have been the direct result of the feedback we have received from our participants. We welcome and encourage feedback which has been instrumental to our program planning and design. We saw the introduction of a Chill Out and Discussion group and a remodeled Writing program.

Culturally and linguistically diverse participants have continued to enjoy the English classes on offer by our much inspired Sister Catherine. A valuable partnership has been developed with Reclink who provides support to our successful dance program which is held at a community venue. The dance program is attended by our participants as well as various community groups and members of the public. The diversity of attendance at this program evidences the true nature of 'social inclusion'.

Over the last 12 months it has been encouraging to see our singing group performing at hospitals, nursing homes and the Festival of the Hearts. We would like to warmly thank our yoga teacher Geraldine who had decided to leave after dedicating 18 years to teaching yoga and relaxation to participants of the No Limits program and community members.

The No Limits team is proud to acknowledge the achievements of some of our participants who have successfully completed the Catalyst Clemente Course at the Australian Catholic University. Many of these participants have enrolled in further studies. The No Limits team has been instrumental in providing the support, encouragement and skills necessary for these participants to have achieved their educational goals. Furthermore, we are proud to acknowledge the vocational achievements of our participants who have successfully gained employment and volunteer work within the community. These vocational achievements represent the spirit and principles of psychosocial rehabilitation and the importance of social inclusion. The No Limits program has provided the opportunity for participants to recognise their potential, to focus on their strengths and abilities and provided a safe and trusting environment for personal growth, development and change to occur.

The success and achievements of the No Limits program over the last 12 months has been the result of a team of dedicated staff, volunteers, sponsors and donors. Our participants are the real achievers as they trust us to join them on their unique journey of personal discovery and well-being. I would like to thank all those who participate in and support the valuable work of the No Limits program.

Lee Esposito
Manager, Mental Health Services

Fundraising and Events

Despite uncertain economic times, our Christmas and June appeals continue to grow. The money raised from these appeals is vital in providing for the ever-increasing number of people who visit the Day Centre and depend on our services.

Thank you to all those who have so generously donated to these appeals and throughout the year.

The year was very busy with almost monthly events: the October Anti-Poverty Week debate; the Footy Greats Bike Ride bike in November; a trivia night in March; movie afternoon in May; Italian Pasta night in June and several dinners throughout the year. Our thanks to the members of the Events Committee for their help with all these functions. Thanks also to Peter "Crackers" Keenan for staging the first Footy Greats Bike Ride.

We have received solid support from trusts and foundations, including the Erica Foundation and the Angel Foundation, enabling us to run a variety of projects that help our service users join activities, learn new skills and become integrated with the community.



Our Supporters

The Erica Foundation

This year, a generous grant from the Erica Foundation has enabled St Mary's to develop the volunteer and client participation project. The aim of the project is to build St Mary's capacity to deliver services and to provide opportunities for service users and members of the community to gain work experience in order to be eligible for paid work.

Our Volunteer Coordinator/Client Participation Officer ensures that the volunteers' experience is rewarding by providing appropriate training and support.

The Coordinator also identifies service users who would benefit from participating in the food handling and food preparation classes, run by St Mary's chef. Each person is helped

to identify their objectives and to find the type of business in which each might find employment. Participants can gain work experience by volunteering in the kitchen and dining room and then use this experience to enhance their application.

Computer classes for our service users have also grown steadily. St Mary's is extremely proud of its state-of-the-art computer laboratory that is recognised as one of the best training settings in the local community. At the request of participants, St Mary's has purchased a variety of additional programs. Purchases such as touch typing programs, and music and creative programs for those wishing to utilise the computer for more than simply word processing, has enabled St Mary's to cater to individual needs. The translation application, for example, has enabled us

to assist our culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) clients.

An important outcome of the project is the increase in St Mary's capacity to deliver its essential services. In the last financial year, volunteers worked the equivalent of 15.5 full time staff. As we become busier each month with meal services and activities, we must continue to focus on building and retaining our volunteer group.

We sincerely thank the Erica Foundation for partnering us in order to achieve these objectives.

The Angel Foundation

St Mary's is most grateful to the Angel Foundation for its support, particularly of the dining room meal service and for the funding to open on Saturdays to provide meals, activities and a place to spend time with other St Mary's clients.

Although the Angel Foundation was only founded in 2005 by Andreas Angelatos, Andreas has been involved in supporting the homeless, the sick

and the disadvantaged members of our community for many years. Andreas is very passionate about the work that the Angel Foundation is doing in our community through the many charitable organisations that the Foundation supports. Andreas believes that philanthropy should be a commitment from those who are successful in life. Andreas is a regular visitor to St Mary's and often helps in the dining room.

"I like the way the dining room operates", he said. "It is important that people are welcomed and have the opportunity to get to know others around the table, and that they are served these carefully prepared, healthy meals with dignity. Everyone deserves this".



Second Bite

Like the Angel Foundation, Second Bite was formally established in 2005.

Second Bite's mission is to identify sources of nutritious surplus fresh food and produce that might otherwise go to waste and facilitate its safe and timely distribution to agencies and people in need.

Second Bite started when two people began collecting fresh produce from the Prahran Market and distributing it to agencies that used the high quality ingredients to provide nutritious meals to their clients. This year, Second Bite will distribute more than 85 tonnes of fresh food each month to more than 160 agencies in Victoria and Tasmania resulting in 170,000 hearty meals.

Second Bite has developed a strong partnership with St Mary's. The two organisations shared office space in 2008, while St Mary's was temporarily relocated during the building refurbishment and before the Angel Foundation provided a permanent home for Second Bite in Kensington. In the last financial year, Tony McCosker estimates that St Mary's saved approximately \$42,000 as a result of the supplies it receives from Second Bite.

St Mary's, the Angel Foundation and Second Bite share a similar philosophy. Second Bite CEO Katy Barfield explains that all three organisations believe that those who are able to provide meals have an obligation to provide nutritious meals. St Mary's Chef, Shane Pereira, is also insistent that since the benefit of a greater intake of fresh fruit and

vegetables is well established, people have a right to access good food. Many people depend for almost all their food intake on agencies such as St Mary's and those agencies should have a ready supply of fresh produce so they are able to choose what they serve. Katy and Shane also agree that the various cultural groups should have access to the specific types of foods they want to eat.

As the need for food related services continues to grow, we look forward to continuing our partnerships with Second Bite and the Angel Foundation.

Pamela Whiting
Fundraising Manager



St Mary's
House of Welcome

Standing with the disadvantaged. Support - Solutions - Hope

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