



ANDREWS CENTRE

ENDEAVOUR MINISTRIES

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QUARTERLY REPORT

JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2021



“John” is on his own and living in a local boarding house. He has back problems and struggles to walk any distance due to heart issues. Every week he struggles to manage the two kilometer walk from his room to the chemist to pick up the medication he needs to keep going. Often he calls in at the Andrews Centre on the way through and we are happy to provide him with some cooked meals to take home and a few groceries. He is always very grateful. After seeing him struggle so hard to manage the long walk to the chemist, we decided to ask him if he would benefit from a good bicycle we had available. To put it mildly he was delighted!!! We were able to “load him up” with his meals and grocery items thanks to a backpack provided by the Op Shop and off he went!!

Hopefully now his trips to the chemist will be a little easier!

It is terrific to have the services of Sue each week making up some beautiful home cooked meals to distribute to people like John living in boarding houses, or, indeed, to others who are homeless but have access through friends to a microwave.

The Andrews Centre has remained open throughout the lockdown periods and has been very busy with families and individuals seeking help. Many have been impacted directly by Covid lockdowns which has meant they have little or no work. There are many in our community not eligible for any Centrelink payments who are without any income when they are not able to work. This includes those who have come from overseas.

“Hannah” is an international student who has two months left to qualify as a nurse. Due to Covid she has not been able to work in her part time job in hospitality and has used up all her savings. Once she has graduated she will be able to work but she still has two months of study to complete her degree and is struggling to cover basic expenses such as board, food and bills. She was really grateful to receive support with food, vouchers and toiletries.

“Daniel” sponsored his wife to join him from overseas and he had steady work to support the family. She also had some part time work. Unfortunately the lockdown has meant both he and she lost work and they are reduced to relying on his Newstart

payments and the Family Tax benefit which is barely enough to cover rent and utilities. In addition, his wife fell pregnant and has encountered complications requiring two ultrasounds which he simply could not afford. The Centre has stepped in to cover these urgent medical bills as well as supporting the family with food and vouchers.

It is a sad fact that the Centre has been called upon many times to help people in need of medical treatment who would miss important specialist appointments simply because they cannot afford the upfront fee!

Many continue to struggle to afford basic necessities due to high rental and utility costs. Any unforeseen circumstance such as a car repair, sickness etc means they fall behind in rent or do not have food on the table. It is so important that there is somewhere people in this situation can come. It is wonderful just to reflect on the kindness of so many in the community who financially contribute or provide a continuous supply of food or Op Shop donations to help keep the Andrews Centre going.

“Mary” is a mother of four with all her children under 12 years of age. Her husband has been unwell for a number of years but it is only recently that a diagnosis was finally made. She was devastated to find out that he has a terminal illness and is not expected to live beyond a few months. Compounding all this trauma is the fact that bills have been mounting and they have fallen behind in rent. That has now been rectified and the Centre continues to help with counselling, financial support and any other supports to help at this very difficult time.

EMERGENCY HOUSING



Bringing out supplies for a new tenant

All four of the emergency accommodation units are currently housing victims of domestic violence. Three of the four units are also accommodating children and the fourth is providing shelter for a single girl about to give birth to her first child! This remains a vital part of our ministry as there is such a critical shortage of affordable housing in the Casey area. There simply is not enough housing in our area and what is available is very expensive and beyond the reach of many on low income. Waiting lists for public housing – even for those on priority listing – are many years long. All our units are fully furnished and often we are called upon to help new tenants with bedding and food as they have had to leave their homes quickly and have not been able to bring more than the most basic necessities with them

Victory!

A moment of real joy came at the start of August when one of our families triumphed over adversity in a wonderful way! Back in 2018 the Centre was asked to house a mother and her two daughters after they were cruelly abandoned by the husband who had sponsored them out here from overseas. They were left homeless, penniless and facing deportation. Even more distressingly the mother had very little English to be able to communicate her plight. She actually collapsed and was hospitalized just as a result of the stress.

Over the next 18 months the Centre helped this little family with food, accommodation and other expenses whilst seeking the expertise of professionals likely to be able to help them overcome their financial and immigration plight. The children were enrolled in schools and, with the generous support of the two local schools, were supported with all their educational expenses. Over the past two years we have seen what can happen when a whole group of generous, compassionate professionals work together to achieve justice for a family with no way of helping themselves. With the pro bono assistance of two lawyers, a barrister, a social worker and a psychologist this family has won an appeal to allow them to stay in the country and a modest financial settlement from the ex husband to help them survive financially into the future.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES IN CRISIS



The Andrews Centre has remained open during all the lock downs and we have been able to provide abundant supplies of food as well as vouchers and toiletries thanks to goods purchased from Foodbank and supermarkets but also thanks to the many generous individuals from churches and the community. Direct financial donations continue to be made to help with rent arrears, medical costs, car repairs and utilities.

Sadly we have a number of families and individuals in our community who are totally reliant on charities to survive because their applications for Australian residency have been rejected and they are awaiting an appeal. They could not return to their homeland at the moment even if it were safe to do so but they are not allowed to work and do not receive any Centrelink support.

NO INTEREST LOANS

Bill continues to head up our No Interest Loans team and 41 loans of up to \$1500 were provided over the past 12 months for a number of items including laptops, car registration and repairs, whitegoods, education expenses. Budgeting advice is provided as part of the loan process but is also given to others who might be struggling with money management issues. Unfortunately due to Covid Bill has had to postpone both the Money Minded course for adults and the “Cool Money” basic literacy course due to be delivered to a group of Gleneagles Year 9 students.

LOAN CARS

The two loan cars continue to be a great help to families needing a temporary mode of transport whilst their car is being fixed or just, as in the case of one of the cars, someone in need of transport to and from frequent medical appointments. Sadly one of our cars had to be repaired following a collision at the shopping centre but it is now back on the road! Our electric scooter continues to provide “wheels” to one elderly lady in need

MEALS

The Monday Meals’ team continue faithfully each week to for the many who come for a hot nutritious meal and a chat! To cater for a diverse multi -cultural population a mix of vegetarian and meat dishes are provided and over the lockdown period they have been handing over 140 meals to people in takeaway containers. All the guests also go home with fresh fruit and often “other goodies”. As well as our own faithful team of volunteers ably led by Rob and Roslyn, Rotary and the local police continue to support this ministry as does Crossway Baptist Church which provides the mobile shower service on location each week.



Sue comes faithfully each week to the Andrews Centre to “cook up a storm”. She makes up to 50 meals each time, which are prepared then packaged in biodegradable oven and freezer proof containers. They are stored in the freezers and distributed as part of the emergency food program. The boarding house men love them!!!

LEGAL ADVICE

Noel continues to provide valuable legal advice which can be very helpful to many who feel disempowered and at a loss to know how to deal with particularly stressful personal situations. This includes advice around family law, elder abuse, car accident and infringements, estate matters, information on Powers of Attorney or tenancy issues. He also assists with Statutory Declarations relating to loans. We are most grateful for the conveyancy work Noel has done to secure the re-purchase of one of our emergency accommodation units temporarily owned by “friendly purchasers” for the purpose of securing monies for the purchase of the Andrews Centre last year.

MIGRANT ENGLISH CLASSES

It has been a real joy to watch our Cambodian student actually learn to read and write in English – not an easy thing to accomplish when you have grown up with a completely different alphabet! She no longer has to rely on her children to interpret for her or read notices they have brought home from school! Two other students have been enjoying one on one tutoring to improve their English – one from Syria and one from Sri Lanka.

EMPLOYMENT HELP



The Andrews Centre has welcomed the addition of Jayan from Jobs Victoria who has been coming in each Tuesday to help the many we see who are struggling to survive on newstart and are doing their best to find employment.

OP SHOP

Lockdown has meant, of course, that the shop has had to close. It has been wonderful to see a steady flow on good quality donations from the community which is the lifeblood of our shop! The number coming each day.



Liz and Peg have organized special cutlery and crockery sets for people moving into the local boarding house as well as organizing warm clothing and bedding for many who have moved into new accommodation with nothing but the clothes on their back and little else!

PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELLING



Rosemary and Susan taking a break!

This has certainly been a most challenging time for all in the mental health area. Certainly the Andrews Centre has been quite overwhelmed by the sheer volume of calls from people of all ages hoping to make an appointment to see a psychologist or counsellor. It is quite distressing to have to inform people of the waiting lists and the amount of time it will take before they can get an appointment



We welcome to the counselling team Coral Barker M Counselling (Monash University) Provis Member PACFA Dip. Teaching (Early Childhood -Monash University)

“For those experiencing lockdowns, this is a time of disruption and frustration for many, and a time of isolation and fear for others,” Professor Kidd.

There has been a lot in the news of late just on the impact of the current lock down on the mental health of people of all ages. Kids Helpline has reported a 184% increase in the number of primary school children ringing in. The attempted suicide rate among teenagers is up 184% and reports of child abuse have increased by 2/3rds as families struggle to cope with added tensions in the home.

In our own locality the counsellors and psychologists have noted an increase in anxiety and depression directly related to social isolation. Many who have lost jobs are feeling demoralized and are struggling with low self esteem due to the inability to support their families as they had in the past. Many students are fighting depression and struggling to remain motivated. Some have thoughts about self harm or even suicide or they worry about peers expressing suicidal thoughts.

Children with autism have really struggled to adapt to changes and it has impacted their mental wellbeing. This in turn has caused more conflict in families as pressures mount and more demands are being placed on fragile family systems. Families who have children with disabilities have struggled because the Covid19 restrictions have meant they have been locked away from school and activities which were giving the parents some respite.

Family counselling has been important at a time where stresses in the home have led to increased hostility and family breakdown. Many are feeling anger, frustration and confusion about all that is happening and sheer loneliness is impacting many.

However, in all of this, there is some good news! The counselling services provided through the Centre are making a difference in the lives of many. Families who were initially resistant have been helped to sort out issues and come together. Teenagers have been supported to look at their present circumstances in the light of “the bigger picture” so that they can be restored to a perspective of hope for a better future and positive outcomes instead of being paralyzed by a sense of hopelessness.

Much counselling has been done through Telehealth because of the present situation but there are some clients still receiving face to face support due to the fact that they do not cope well with phone or online counselling or they are needing assessments can only be done face to face.

OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS

As an essential service Al Anon is able to continue to meet each Monday but the church group has not been able to meet on Sundays due to the current restrictions.

COMMUNITY GARDEN



As part of their community outreach, Gleneagles Secondary College Year 9 students have taken charge of two garden beds at the community garden to grow vegetables for the Centre and Monday Meals programs. They have planted spinach, potatoes, beetroot and broccoli.

Winter crops have now been harvested with the Centre Meals benefitting from a crop of pumpkins! We have also managed to grow broccoli, cauliflowers, snow peas, rhubarb, potatoes as well as a selection of herbs. We are looking forward to the end of lockdown when the gardening community can meet together again!

I am so grateful to a whole community of generous people who have expressed their compassion for those most in need in this difficult time, in very practical ways. Thank you to all the individuals and organizations who have supported us financially to "be there" for people in crisis as well as the many who have provided food, toiletries, linen or Op Shop donations.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judy Muth".

On Behalf of the Management Committee

I acknowledge with thanks the contribution of the following organizations.
The Andrews Foundation; Danks Trust; Peter and Lyndy White Foundation; City of Casey; DSS, Specsavers; Hire a Hubby; Roman Works; Endeavour Hills Uniting, Anglican, Catholic Churches Victory in Jesus, Narre Hills, St James Anglican Dandenong

To donate towards the work of Endeavour Ministries the bank details are as follows

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Please provide email and/or address or name so that a receipt can be sent.

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