



# ANDREWS CENTRE

## ENDEAVOUR MINISTRIES

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## QUARTERLY REPORT

JANUARY TO MARCH 2023

I cannot remember a time since we started 30 years ago when there has been such a demand for our services, including people asking for help who have never had to access help before. According to the latest data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics one in eight people (13%) and one in six children (17%) are living in poverty. Over the past three months we have provided emergency relief, including food vouchers, food, rent assistance, help with chemist and medical expenses, educational expenses, travel costs and car repairs etc. We have had 310 appointments and have spent a total of \$37,572.00.

*“Jane” is married with 3 children. Her husband owned his own business but could not work during Covid because his wife was incapacitated due to an operation following a cancer diagnosis. She could not lift and was vulnerable to Corona virus. They were left having to seek help from us because they had used up all their savings. The bills were accumulating and they have no income apart from Family Tax Benefit.*

*“Joan” is a grandmother on a pension who was left to care for three grandchildren when their mother was hospitalized for a long period of time. She has been waiting for weeks for Centrelink to help her with at least the Family Tax benefit so that she had the capacity to pay for their meals and other bills. The Centre helped her with vouchers and food and also took the children on the outing to the zoo – something they absolutely loved.*

*“Cecilia” is a single mother with two children. Her bank accounts have been frozen because her ex partner has tried to access her monies fraudulently. The bank will eventually unfreeze her account but in the meanwhile she cannot access her Centrelink payments to pay for food for her children.*

### HOUSING CRISIS

The current housing crisis has meant that many already struggling to pay rent have faced rental increases on top of higher utility and food costs. We are also seeing people in mortgage stress due to the significant rise in interest rates and others who are already homeless and needing help with short term accommodation or even just a swag or blankets, a warm meal and a shower. For those who are able to access affordable accommodation in rooming houses, the Centre is often called upon to supply the new residents with cutlery, crockery, linen and toiletries – and, in some cases, warm clothes and shoes. The Op Shop proves a very handy supplier of many of the required household goods!

*“John” is married with teenage children. He has struggled to find employment and relies on casual work which makes it difficult for him to keep up with bills. His wife up to recently had reliable income but has now lost her job because of a battle with cancer. The family came to us for help with rent arrears so that they would not end up facing eviction at a time when housing is very difficult to find.*

*“Mary” and “Peter” fell behind in rent because their car “died” the same week their rent rose! The couple have two children and Peter needs his car to get to work. Our support has kept this family from losing their home.*

*“Lydia” is a single mother with one child. She has come from overseas and is therefore not eligible for any Centrelink benefits and relies on her work to pay her rent and bills. Unfortunately her little boy was ill for two weeks and she was unable to work so that she faced potential eviction from her rental property.*

*A couple with five children from New Zealand not eligible for any Centrelink payments ended in strife when the father - a truck driver - hurt his ankle and was not able to drive for three weeks. The Centre was able to provide food, food vouchers and petrol vouchers to help them through this difficult period.*

## EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

The Centre continues to provide emergency accommodation in four units – mostly for families who have been the victims of domestic abuse. Unfortunately Casey has one of the highest incidents of domestic violence and this was certainly not helped by the stresses associated with Covid over the past two years and the current financial strains on families. It is proving very difficult for our residents to find alternate more long term accommodation because of the shortage of rentals available in the area, but we are hopeful that rentals might be found so that other families currently in motels awaiting housing can be accommodated in these more suitable dwellings.

## POP UP MARKETS



Thanks to a generous grant from the State Government, we have been able to provide a wonderful array of fresh fruits and vegetables to all our most financially struggling families over four markets – two last year and two in February and March this year.



It was quite a process to organize these markets, as it required a dedicated team to be prepared to be at the Andrews Centre by 6.30am ready to carry large quantities of produce from the truck into the Centre! Another team was then required to run the market from 10am to 2pm for 60-80 families. As well as the fresh produce, other goods such as toiletries, brand new clothing items, seedlings, soil and small garden beds were supplied. At the last market some families reported the successful growth of a crop of tomatoes from the seedlings supplied last November at the first market.

## MEALS



We are kept with a constant supply of delicious and nutritious meals to give out – mainly to the homeless and people in the local boarding houses. They are very popular and also very handy when a homeless person comes to the Centre for a shower. They can have a shower while their meal is placed in the microwave so that it is ready for eating once they come out!! Over the past couple of months we have had to defer provision of the Monday meals because of family issues for the key managers. We are hoping to start the Monday meals again next month.

## LOAN CARS

The Centre currently loans out two cars at no cost to families in need. At the moment one is being used by a single mother with four children who has a medical condition requiring her to attend a lot of specialist appointments. The other is being used by a single mother of two needing the car to get to her new job until she is able to source a car for herself.

## NO INTEREST LOANS

Bill and Ameet do a great job helping many access help through no interest loans, which are an invaluable service keeping many vulnerable people away from exploitative loan sharks! People are able to borrow up to \$2000 for whitegoods, car registration or repairs, furniture and educational equipment such as computers, text books etc In addition both Bill and Ameet have provided budgeting advice to clients and have helped some who struggle with technology to claim the \$250 bonus from the government to offset the cost of their electricity bills.

## JOBS VICTORIA

Jayan from Jobs Victoria is a frequent visitor to the Centre, helping many to find work and/or opportunities for training towards achieving appropriate work placement. Even when he is not there we are referring clients to him over the phone.

## COMMUNITY GARDEN



Our keen gardeners met together one Saturday this month to do some general maintenance work and to share knowledge on growing techniques as well as tips on how to use the vegetables that have been successfully grown in the 16 available wicking beds! We have enjoyed a good variety of vegetables including tomatoes, corn, potatoes, lettuce, bok choy, various herbs, cucumber and



even cantaloupe! There has also been a crop of apricots, plums, pears and apples on the surrounding trees! The chooks have also provided a steady supply of eggs!

## OUTING



On a beautifully mild autumn day an excited group of adults and children met at the Andrews Centre ready for an all- expenses paid outing to Werribee Zoo. A total of 56 people climbed aboard the 57 seat bus. All the children were very excited and it was a really lovely time together for many who would not otherwise have been able to afford such a trip! A safari ride together in the afternoon with up close viewing of giraffes, antelopes, bison, ostriches and rhinoceros was a real hit!! By the time the children returned to the bus for the trip home they were tired out – making for a much quieter ride home!! Once home, however, they were greeted by Easter bunny who happened to be in the neighbourhood with his basket of chocolate Easter eggs for all the children!!

## MIGRANT ENGLISH

As part of helping people successfully enter the workforce, understand written communications and/or engage with others in their community, The Centre offers one on one help to individuals to learn to read, write or speak English.

## COUNSELLING

It is great to be able to offer people a counselling service that they can afford, especially when so many accessible medically related services require up-front payments beyond the reach of people on low income. Unfortunately, post Covid, the counselling team continues to be in high demand with all the psychologists still having very long waiting lists. We do our best to fit people in as soon as we can and those with no ability to pay are subsidized by the Centre to get the help they need. The counselling team continue to meet together once a month to support one another and share knowledge and experience.

## AL ANON

The Al Anon team has been “on board” at the Andrews Centre since it first opened its doors and they continue to faithfully provide valuable support for the families of people struggling with alcohol addiction.

## OP SHOP



The Op Shop team continue to do a wonderful job sorting, pricing, selling and/or giving away good quality clothing and household goods. The emergency relief team are regular visitors asking for clothing and/or cutlery, crockery, linen and other goods needed by the homeless or those just moving into new accommodation

They have a store of medical aids available at no cost when needed by those we help. Over the past three months we have provided shower chairs, wheelie walkers and a wheel chair to clients in need. We are most grateful for all the donations made by our local community as the funds raised by the shop are a great help as we seek to provide for those in need.

#### A VISIT FROM MELBOURNE AFLW



On a sunny Saturday in February, we were delighted to welcome a number of the girls from the Melbourne Football Club who did a wonderful job giving counselling rooms and our main waiting area a fresh coat of paint! Their numbers were boosted by a number of volunteers from the Endeavour Hills Uniting Church who did a lot of prior preparation and first coat painting! We are so grateful for all that was achieved. We are not sorry to say goodbye to the pink paint!!

We are also grateful for the help of a number of Year 8 students from Maranatha Christian College, who have come each second Friday to help with gardening, packing goods for the pop up markets and even cleaning the van we use to get food from Foodbank.

Well, it has been quite a busy and challenging term to begin 2023, but it is so good to be in a position to help the ever-increasing number of people around us who are really struggling for a whole range of reasons. We remain so grateful for those who support us as volunteers or with financial support. We also really appreciate all the donations for the shop and help with non-perishable food and toiletry items.

Judy Martin  
On behalf of the Management Committee

Thank you to all the organizations and individuals without whose support we could not keep doing this very important work in our community.

The Andrews Foundation; Peter and Lyndy White Foundation; City of Casey; DSS; State Government; Specsavers; Endeavour Hills Uniting, Anglican, Catholic, Narre Hills Churches Community Church, Victory in Jesus, Narre Hills, St James Anglican Dandenong.

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

Account Name  
BSB 063610  
Acct 10419490

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

Email Address [admin@andrewscentre.org](mailto:admin@andrewscentre.org)

**ALL DONATIONS OVER \$2 ARE TAX DEDUCTABLE**

