

ROSIES

Friends on the Street

WINTER 2021



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Sharing friendship creates belonging. Dare to reach out together.

A message from our CEO



Imagine that no one addresses you by name or says your name out loud.

Imagine that you are in the busy city centre and you stop to rest on a step, but as people approach you they avert their gaze or cross the street to avoid you.

Imagine not having a place to call home—or a place to go as the nights grow colder and longer during the winter months.

Entrenched disadvantage is a very real part of the Australian landscape, with more than 13% of people living below the poverty line (3.24 million people), while in Queensland that percentage is greater than 15%.¹ In addition, there are over a million people estimated to be experiencing deep social isolation or exclusion.² These numbers are staggering, clearly demonstrating the number of individuals and families struggling to access basic and acceptable standards of living.

While homelessness, social isolation or any type of disadvantage can be traumatic and destabilising, social connection that comes with belonging to somewhere or something helps us to withstand life's challenges and hold onto hope. Belonging is a basic human need and is essential to overall happiness, as well as to physical and mental health and well-being. That connection and friendship is a key contributor to building confidence, self-esteem, dignity and self-worth.

The building of trust, friendship and community on outreach is vital to the well-being of every patron that we meet. It is not always easy to start a conversation, but creating the building blocks of friendship can be as simple as being thoughtful and considerate, being dependable and being fully present for our patrons. One conversation or one act of kindness and friendship can make all the difference in someone's life.

The saying goes "home is where the heart is", but home is not always a traditional place. It can be the feeling of warmth, comfort, safety, and a "place" where you feel you belong - that place is Rosies.

Thank you for your generous support of Rosies which allows us to keep our amazing volunteers and the Rosies vans out on the street every night of the week.

Wishing you peace, love and a warm and wonderful winter,
Jayne Shallcross
CEO

¹Davidson, P, Saunders, P, Bradbury, B. and Wong, M. (2020), *Poverty in Australia 2020: Par 1, Overview*. ACOSS/UNSW Poverty and Inequality Partnership Report No 3, Sydney: ACOSS

² CEDA (2019), *Disrupting Disadvantage: setting the scene*



Local Artist highlights the importance of Social Inclusion

By Kate Schmidt

"It was the highlight of a dark time. Something I will never forget and will always be grateful for."

That's what 20-something Jake Moss feels when he looks back on the six months he spent attending Rosies' outreaches at the Sunshine Coast branch.

"I can honestly say attending their outreaches twice a week made a ginormous difference in my life for a little over six months," he said.

The artist, who has been writing, painting and creating "all sorts of things" for as long as he can remember, said he first heard about Rosies when a disabled pensioner visited his art studio in 2019, telling him about the Sunshine Coast outreach.

"As I'm keen to connect with people, he suggested I drop by. I started attending and having dinner with patrons and conversing with volunteers," he said.

Jake thanked the volunteers for the support and kindness they offered, which helped to create a great sense of community with their patrons.

"Speaking from personal experience the best thing you can offer someone who is socially isolated is good company and Rosies' volunteers gave me that in droves."



The Rosies Community

Your generous support of Rosies has enabled our Branches to build a community unlike any other.

Community, connection, and birds

By Raja

Sometimes outreach can just be your team, one patron, and a flock of magpies. This was the case one Tuesday morning when Pantry Assist was closed.

Is outreach any less worthwhile without a steady stream of patrons? Some might think so, but we go out with the goal of social connection - and we did that!

We spent the morning with our faithful Rita, eating lamingtons, sharing our holiday adventures and discussing current events, and trying to figure out if the Annerley magpies were smart enough to learn how to knock over a paper cup for a tasty popcorn treat. They were perhaps too smart to perform tricks for strange humans, but at the end of the day I think we all had an entertaining and joyful outreach!

Especially in times of isolation, sometimes it's not about the quantity of human interactions we have, but the fact that we have it at all.



Caption: Raja teaching the magpies. Photo supplied by our patron Rita

Family noodle drive

When Amy and Jai moved from a small country town on the border of New South Wales and Victoria to Queensland, they were shocked at the number of people who were homeless.

"In the town where I grew up there was one homeless person and we all knew him well enough to know his name and say hello." It's a sharp contrast to what we see in South East Queensland, where the rental crisis and the lack of affordable accommodation has seen an increase in the amount of people sleeping rough or in cars.



Caption: Jai collects noodle to help the homeless

"The first homeless person we saw when we moved, I had Jai go over with a sandwich and introduce himself. I was homeless for a little while, living in temporary accommodation at a caravan park when Jai was very young. He doesn't remember it, but I know that acknowledgement and kindness can make a big difference."

As the child of a single parent, Jai has seen firsthand what it's like to struggle and he wanted to help those who were doing it tough.

"Jai is a very sweet, kind hearted boy and had been asking about the different ways that we might be able to help those who were homeless" Amy said. They first approached Rosies with the idea of making sandwiches for those who came to outreach, "I spoke to someone in the office and she suggested the best way to help was by holding a noodle drive. When Jai got home from school that day I'd purchased a few instant noodle cups and explained to him what we were going to do."

Amy and Jai started collecting noodles in late March, five days later they had collected over 160 cups of instant noodles from friends and neighbours! They are aiming to collect 500 cups by the end of the month. We are so grateful for the generosity of community members like Amy and Jai; it is because of individuals like them that we can keep our vans fully stocked and in the communities where they are needed most.

The Rosies Community



Caption: With a current shortage of sleeping bags, we hope this coat will make sleeping in his car more comfortable for Steve tonight.

Rental crisis left many out in the cold

Southport and Nerang outreaches are seeing the effects of the Gold Coast rental property shortage, the worst in two years. The entire Gold Coast community are discussing the difficulties being experienced locally, with increases in rent and property scarcity. The flow on effect for Rosies is the increasing number of patrons at every outreach and the need for us to supply backpack beds or sleeping bags. Five patrons in the last month have received backpack beds as the only option left to them is sleeping rough or in their car. With the cold weather arriving at the same time we are now facing a shortage of these supplies ourselves.

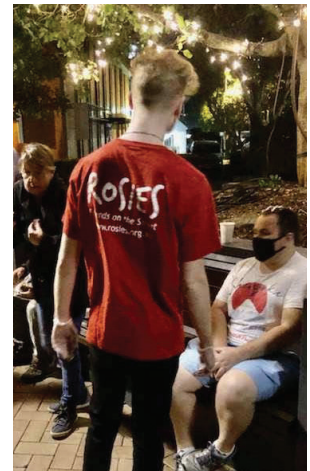
Last week we saw the return of Steve* to our Nerang outreach, he is once again sleeping in his car. Steve is currently unable to find accommodation that he can afford, but luckily has kept his car on the road. Unfortunately our current shortage of sleeping bags meant that we only had a coat and beanie to offer him along with some simple groceries as he only has the BBQ facilities in the park to cook on.

For those that are managing to stay in rental accommodation, costs have increased and many are now having difficulty paying bills. Thanks to the very supportive community on the Gold Coast we have been able to offer help by giving away non-perishable groceries and a few takeaway meals. It has been a pleasure to be able to be the person there for our patrons and offer the hand of friendship during these unusual times.

*Name changed to protect privacy



Left: Veronica serves a patron some cordial



Right: Rosies Volunteers visit with patrons on outreach

Outreach stories

Sometimes it can be hard to gauge the impact that we have on the patrons that come to visit us on outreach, especially if they only come a few times. After each outreach our volunteers get together to chat about what they've experienced; how the regulars are, who's new, and all of the wonderful or interesting things they've seen that night.

Given the nature of Rosies' work, sometimes our volunteers experience things that can have a lasting impact on both the patron and the volunteer. One night, an intoxicated patron, Violet* expressed her plans to go home and take an overdose to end her life to a team member. We kept Violet chatting while an ambulance was discreetly called to offer her additional support. Thankfully, Violet did not take action that night and returned to outreach the following week to connect with volunteers. We were all so happy to see her and made sure she knew how important her presence was.**

It can also be a small gesture that helps someone who's in need. A young man presented at outreach who was new in town and sleeping rough. While we couldn't provide him with accommodation, we could offer a sleeping bag, a personal toiletry kit, and a list of services in the area he could access until he found something more permanent.

We are constantly amazed at the care that patrons show for each other on outreach. While our volunteers aim to create a space that is loving and open, it's the patrons that set the tone of the outreach. Dave, a long-term Rosies' patron announced he had been kicked out of the caravan park where he had lived for years and had to be gone in the morning. Dave was quite upset and the list of accommodation providers we offered him did little to settle his worries. It was very sad to see Dave so distressed. Another patron heard Dave's story and put Dave in contact with the place where he lives, and they took him in immediately. Dave now lives in the centre of Caloundra and has made many new friends who look out for him.

At our normal outreach at Happy Valley - Caloundra, we went to talk with a man we had heard about sleeping rough on the

streets. It was then I had the amazing opportunity to watch two lovely women from Rosies help a man sleeping rough. Their love and compassion for the lost and lonely was one of the greatest things I have ever witnessed. Not only did they comfort him and listen to his story, they gave him food, some Easter treats, a blanket, sleeping bag, toiletries, water and goodies for his dog with the promise to be back with some local contacts for further support. Seeing the amount of love and care that the volunteers have for our patrons is truly a wondrous site to behold.

*Name changed to protect privacy

**If anything in these stories raises any issues for you, please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636.



Caption: Society President Cec Crees presenting branch coordinators Fay & Jim Stein with their donation

Floral Society helps Rosies bloom

The Rosies community has many things in common with the magnificent blooms that were showcased at the Toowoomba Bromeliad and Orchid Society meeting in March. Our outreaches require a good position which is easily accessible to patrons, we need the right amount of water and food to keep our patrons comfortable and happy, and we need the right temperature to thrive (which sometimes means offering a blanket or a sleeping bag to a friend in need). If the Orchid and Rosies receives all of those things it can bloom into something truly amazing. We are deeply grateful for the members of the Toowoomba Bromeliad and Orchid Society for warmly welcoming us into their meeting and for their kind and generous donation. Many of the members supported us financially throughout 2020 providing the necessary funds to purchase BBQ items for the outreaches, so that we could maintain contact and provide support to our many friends impacted by COVID.

Working together to help others

People who are experiencing homelessness or social isolation often find it hard to access all of the services that they need. One of the things that patrons and volunteers love is the way that Rosies collaborates with other like-minded service providers in order to connect with as many people as possible. Our Wynnum branch, like many others, works with many community based organisations to create a "one stop shop" for those in need. On Monday morning outreach at St Peters church grounds, we work with: Hair Aid who



Caption: Team Leader Ross gets a haircut to show patrons how easy the Hair Aid team are to work with

provide professional haircuts and a friendly smile, Footprints who provide laundry and shower facilities, Pete's Pantry who provide food hampers and clothing, and the Police Liaison Officer, Jacqui, who looks after the safety of our patrons and provides advice if required. All of these wonderful services along with the Rosies team ensure that patrons enjoy their time with us at outreach and in turn we all benefit from our time together.



Caption: Luke, Taitha, Benjamin, Max, Tyler, and Harrison prepare for their bike ride

Mountain biking for Rosies

Luke, Taitha, Benjamin, Max, Tyler, and Harrison are riding 100km on mountain bikes to raise money for Rosies. These Year 6 students have learned about the Rosies mission through their school Trinity Anglican School, who is an active member of our School Engagement Program. The boys have created this fundraiser as a part of the Round Square Gold Medal student initiative and wanted to partner with a charity who was actively working in the Cairns community. They have decided to raise funds for Rosies to purchase Backpack beds for those in need because "they wanted to ensure that homeless people had some shelter from the elements...and provide a little comfort from the hard ground." Backpack beds are a wonderful option for our patrons as they are portable and lightweight. To support them and Rosies please go to: <https://www.gofundme.com/mountain-bikers-for-rosies>

Beloved volunteer retires



One of the things that makes Rosies so special is our people. Each night volunteers put on their red t-shirt and name badge and head out in the community to be present and lend a friendly ear to those who come to visit on outreach. One volunteer, Karen Seymore, from our Logan branch understands the importance of connection and support more than most – having benefited first hand from this type of engagement.

"Many years ago I was badly injured in a car accident, I couldn't do anything for myself and felt really helpless. I didn't have family living locally but many people came to visit me, bring me food and offer assistance when needed. It made me feel better and after I recovered I wanted to find a way to pay it forward" Karen said.

It was at this time that her friend Jo Gosney began speaking with her about Rosies. "Jo was always saying how great Rosies was and how she enjoyed meeting and talking to all of the different people on outreach." It didn't take much to get Karen involved, after her first guest outreach she was hooked.

"I just loved being on outreach. Everyone has a story but not everyone has the chance to tell theirs, I just loved listening to the patrons and chatting with them. I've made some amazing friends and when I see them outside of Rosies I always make sure to acknowledge them. Sometimes I would even pop by on a Friday night when I wasn't scheduled just to say hello!"

After volunteering for many years Karen has had to step away from Rosies due to some knee trouble, "I have a bit of trouble getting in and out of the van, and in case anything were to happen on outreach and we needed to leave quickly I didn't want to put my teammates in danger because of a sore knee."

Even though she might not be on outreach, she'll keep Rosies with her wherever she goes. "I'll always remember this one family who I met a few years ago in November, they were a family of five who had just arrived from a refugee camp in Syria. The parents and the two young boys spoke no English, so their 10 year old daughter was translating for us. I talked to them the whole night as I wanted to make sure that they felt welcome and included and I wanted to make sure that they came back next month for the patron Christmas party."

"While we were talking, one of the boys who looked about five years old was tugging on his sister's skirt every few minutes and whispering something to her. I asked her what he was saying and she said 'he wants to know when the bombing is going to start.' That just broke my heart, he was so little and that's what he was worried

about. I got down on my knees and tried to explain to him that there would be no bombing here. He said 'No boom boom?' and I promised him there would be no boom boom here."

Twelve months later at the Christmas party, Karen remembers the family had changed so much. Both parents had jobs, the boys were in school and they were all learning English. Karen recalled "I was helping serve food with the Lions club at the Christmas party and the youngest boy ran up and said, 'Hey I remember you, you're the nice smiling lady.' It filled me with such joy to watch him and his brother running around and playing soccer with the other kids. I sat back and thought now that is what little boys should be doing not worrying about bombs."

It's been a few years since Karen has seen the family on outreach which was bittersweet for her, "I miss seeing them, but if they are not here it means they have found a stable community and don't need us anymore."

When speaking about why she stayed engaged with Rosies for so many years, Karen said "We have no idea how lucky we are in this country. We don't have wars, we have the right to say whatever it is we want to say. And then you meet these people on outreach and you can't believe some of things they've been through and some of the things people do to others. We meet people from all walks of life on outreach; refugees, people coming from prison, homeless – everyone matters. People are the most important thing that we have – everything else is just stuff. Rosies welcomes everybody, I know in this world it's so easy to disconnect or be disconnected because you don't really fit but Rosies is the place where everyone is welcome."

Now that Karen has retired from both her professional career and Rosies, she still carries the things that she learned as a Rosies volunteer with her. "My mom teases me that whenever we walk through a shopping centre if there is someone sitting alone I always make eye contact and say hello. That's something that I've learned from my time at Rosies. I say hi to these random people because I think well one day I could be that person sitting alone in the shopping centre and I'd want someone to acknowledge me."

Karen's words perfectly sum up what it's like to be a volunteer, "Rosies volunteers are such a diverse group of people but we have one united heart."

We are so grateful to Karen for her many years of service and the love and care that she put into every outreach.



Caption: Anne-Maria on outreach

Volunteer takes gospel message to heart

Matthew 25:35-36 tells us "I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me.

One of Ipswich's volunteers has really taken this to heart. Anne-Maria has been a Rosies volunteer since the branch was formed back in 2012. She is a Friday night outreach regular, as well as helping out with other outreaches when needed. As soon as an outreach commences, Anne-Maria is out there welcoming patrons, catching up on what is happening in their lives, and making sure they have something to eat or drink, or blankets and toiletries if that is what they need. For those too proud to ask for anything, she will quietly figure out what they need and softly convince them to accept assistance.

Even though Anne-Maria was regularly volunteering with us, she didn't feel like she was doing enough, so she worked with a group of ladies to provide meals to the homeless and others struggling on Monday nights. More recently Anne-Maria has been working with St Pauls and other groups to provide end-of-day bakery items to our regular patrons.

But that still leaves a couple of areas from Matthew's gospel not covered! If you are sick and heading into Ipswich Hospital, or going to visit those there, you are likely to run into Anne-Maria at the welcome desk. With a smile and greeting she will make sure that you feel more at ease at being there and get to where you need to go.

And for those going through the court system, Anne-Maria was there as part of the court support network. Which courtroom? What am I supposed to do? I need help! Is there someone I can just talk to? Anne-Maria was there to help with those questions to try and make the court experience a little less traumatic.

According to Anne-Maria, she is simply doing what she can, but for those on the other side of all the interactions with her, Anne-Maria is an angel and making a huge difference to the world. Recently a group of Rosies patrons presented a tearful and slightly embarrassed Anne-Maria with a card and chocolates to let her know how much she means to them.

We are so lucky to have volunteers like Anne-Maria on our team and out in the community caring for our patrons.



Ladies group warms hearts this winter

The lovely ladies of the St Mary Mackillop Knitting Group are one of the many wonderful community organisations that are involved with our Beanie Collective initiative. They meet weekly to connect and knit beautiful pieces for Rosies to fundraise and distribute to our patrons. These talented knitters hand stitch every beanie, blanket, sock, and scarf with love so that when a patron receives an item they know that someone out there cares for them and their wellbeing. Sometimes a blanket isn't just a blanket. We couldn't do what we do without the generous support from people in our community like the ladies at St Mary Mackillop.

Rosies Prayer

O Jesus,
Make our hearts so human,
That others may feel at home with us,

So like Yours ,
That others may feel at home with You,
So forgetful of self
that we might simply become the place
where You and they meet

In the power of Your Love and the joy of
Your friendship.

Amen



The Beanie Collective

An initiative of Rosies - Friends on the Street

Launching June 1st
Go to rosiesbeaniecollective.company.site
to purchase beautifully handmade
beanies, scarves, and blankets.

As the weather begins to turn colder, we not only experience an increase in the amount of need but also an increase in the amount of people who want to provide comfort and assistance to others. Over the years a number of knitting groups, craft circles, and individuals have lovingly hand stitched beanies, scarves, socks, and blankets to keep those sleeping rough warm during the winter months.

While our branches across the state give out as many items as we can - we can barely keep up with the quick knitting needles! These groups have graciously allowed Rosies to use some of their items in order to raise funds for the work that we do in the local community.

From 1 June you will be able to purchase a beanie, scarf or large blanket* from rosiesbeaniecollective.company.site with all funds raised going to support people in need

*Large knitted blankets are not suitable for our friends on the street as they are heavy and take up too much room in their packs



Reflections with Fr Michael



To be at home with others, God and ourselves is an invitation that is offered through the Rosies prayer accessed in every outreach. From a faith perspective, a home can refer to the way that a life is lived with all its blessings, challenges, joys and hope. The spirit of Rosies hospitality invites us all to help create homes of safety,

affirmation, kindness and hope in every outreach that we attend. One of the greatest ministries of Jesus was to help create and support those who had often been left out of homes, society and families and Rosies continues this ministry in our many branches. On behalf of the Oblates, I sincerely thank every Rosies community member who continues to create and build homes that last through the storms of life. It is deeply necessary and appreciated.

Take Care and God Bless
Fr Michael Twigg OMI

Where can you find us on the street?

Beenleigh - South Brisbane - Nundah - Brisbane CBD - Caboolture - Cairns - Southport - Surfers Paradise
Nerang - Burleigh - Ipswich - Logan Central - Mareeba - Caloundra - Toowoomba - Wynnum Manly

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Name on the card _____ Signature _____



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