

*Celebrating* **35** *Years*

# ROSIES

*Friends on the Street*



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*Celebrating* **35** *Years*

# of sharing friendship



As homelessness and the escalating housing crisis moves into the spotlight and the Queensland Housing Summit focuses attention on housing solutions, the numbers of people struggling

continues to increase – individuals and families who have no home, are struggling with the rising cost of living, unable to put food on the table or partake in activities, or experiencing social isolation or exclusion.

Throughout this time of uncertainty, Rosies continues to be a safe place creating community and connection for those who are struggling with homelessness, hardship or social isolation – just as we have for the past 35 years.

Rosies begins celebrating 35 years of service in Queensland during November. Originally founded in 1987 on the Gold Coast and now located in 14 Branch areas across Queensland, Rosies reaches out to those most in need, meeting people where they are at, accepting them as they are and welcoming them into the Rosies Community. The Rosies mission, offering friendship, belonging and acceptance, is at the heart of all we do.

The 1500 incredible Rosies volunteers show love, care, compassion and respect at every outreach, impacting the lives of those they meet on the street. They greet our friends by their name, look them in the eye, and genuinely ask and care about the question “how are you?”

It is because of you that we have been able to share friendship for 35 years, and it is because of you that we will continue to share it for the next 35 years. To mark this milestone, we want

to celebrate with you – in the communities and with the people who support us most. Rosies will be moving life-sized cardboard vans around the state to help us celebrate the work of our volunteers and our mission of love and acceptance. These pop-up locations will also feature specially designed merchandise by former Sunshine Coast patron and artist, Jake Moss, who has used his talents to provide us with something wonderfully unique and meaningful to the Rosies Community, as a generous thank you to Rosies.

Thank you to the Rosies Community for being the heart of this amazing organisation. Wishing you hope and peace for the holiday season – and, let’s celebrate 35 years of friendship, volunteering and Rosies—Friends on the Street. Remember to look out for our pop-up locations to be announced on the website and Facebook throughout November.

With gratitude and blessings for the holiday season,

Jayne Shallcross  
CEO

## **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

# Reflections with Fr Michael



Rosies is 35 years old and that brings an enormous amount of joy and special feelings for so many people who have contributed positively to it. I found myself curious about which symbol is used for 35 years and after searching google, I found that the symbol was coral!

I wondered why coral was chosen for 35th anniversaries and also what messages might it be able to share for Rosies in 2022.

Those humble beginnings by the Oblates and the volunteers of 1987 in transferring the values and mission of Rosies in Rosebud Victoria to Queensland have grown in strength and depth in reaching some of the most vulnerable in our community.

Coral has a symbolic meaning of longevity and successfulness. Some of its emotions (according to google) are joy, freshness and dynamism where it is uplifting, comforting, stimulating and has a great sense of warmth.

The colour of coral has a friendly and humanitarian spirit thanks to its pink shading and also embodies dynamism and vivaciousness thanks to its orange shading.

Coral is an activating, life-affirming color. It's revitalizing the way the vibrant color orange is but with a softening edge thanks to its pink tones. The result is a feeling of freshness, liveliness, and a deep sense of optimism and joy. It's a very positive color with strong physical energy and a need for social interaction.

In the natural world, the coral reef fulfills its potential by giving up some of its individuality for the sake of connecting with others and creating something as part of a team. It's the embodiment of expansion without ego. This makes it the perfect symbol of Rosies in 2022.

We also know that coral is vulnerable to the conditions that it finds itself in and as a living creature has survival and regeneration firmly in its focus. Coral is beautiful, vulnerable and alive. I believe this to be true of Rosies patrons, volunteers, supporters, donors and the board.

For those who might look to the spiritual elements of coral, I found the following very interesting. Paintings from the renaissance (15th and 16th centuries) believed coral provided a protective support to the vulnerable and it is why sometimes the baby Jesus is depicted as wearing some coral for this purpose. The colour of this coral on Jesus looks very close to our Rosies red as well. The protection and care of the vulnerable are core features of Rosies too. With the season of Christmas approaching, may the love of God reach every heart that it can. May the invitation to love continue to be offered through each Rosies outreach on an ongoing and renewed basis. The Rosies prayer certainly helps keep us grounded and guided in this direction.

In conclusion, our branch in Cairns and Mareeba are probably our closest to the spectacular Queensland icon the Great Barrier Reef, but for this 35th anniversary, I sincerely hope a little bit of the joy, dynamism, optimism and spiritual nature of coral fills your heart with warmth and gratitude.

It is beautiful, vulnerable and alive.

Happy 35th Anniversary Rosies and Merry Christmas to all our Rosies family.

Take Care and God Bless  
Fr Michael Twigg OMI

*Image above: The baby Jesus in a painting by Piero della Francesca in 1472-1474*





# Patron to volunteer: Lis' story

Rosies' volunteers come from all different places, have unique experiences, and give freely of their time for many different reasons. For one Brisbane City volunteer, Lis Rourke, her reason for volunteering is somewhat closer to home.

"I volunteer with Rosies because they were there for me during some really dark periods in my life and this is my way of thanking them," Lis said.

Lis has been a member of the Rosies family for over a year, starting out with our Brisbane North branch before moving into the bustling Brisbane City branch.

As a teenager Lis lived on the street and was addicted to heroin and like many in her situation, she relied on services like Rosies for food, drink, and companionship.

"There was a group of us living on the street and we would all look after each other. We all knew to meet up at the Rosies van and we'd be taken care of," said Lis.

She continued, "We would make our rounds to the services that were at King George Square back when they were allowed there. Drug Arm was there to help and sometimes you could

get a feed off the Hare Krishna people but we always knew the Rosies van would be there – we could count on them when we couldn't count on anyone else."

"The Rosies people never judge. That was why I was always comfortable going there and why I wanted to volunteer with them when I got things in order."

Lis, who has been clean for the last seventeen years, decided to make a change when her daughter was born addicted to heroin and died shortly after her birth. "I made a promise to my daughter, and I've never looked back. It was hard but I decided to make a change," said Lis.

Over the next couple of years, Lis focused on her sobriety and being the best mum, she could to her children. "I was in a better place and started to think about how I wanted to give back to the places who helped me. I did a lot of volunteer work with QUIHN which I really liked, but I was experiencing domestic violence and needed to flee, so I couldn't commit to volunteering just yet," Lis recalled.

"Rosies was there for me throughout that time as well, I'd drop in and out when I needed but could never stay in one place too long," she continued.

"I am in a place now where I feel safe and I'm not moving, so I could finally join Rosies on the other side of the table. It's been a year now and I'm really happy. It feels good to be in a position where I can give back to an organisation and people that helped me so much," Lis said.

Lis uses her background and lived experience to connect with our patrons on outreach, "Some of the people who come to us are drug affected or their mental health is not great, and I know what to say or


what they need, and I try to pass on that knowledge to my teammates. I know how to help and can de-escalate any potential high-risk situations because I know what our patrons are going through. A lot of people who come to Rosies don't know about all of the other services they can access or how to access them, so I try and help or show them where to start."

She continued, "When I used to come to Rosies I always liked how the volunteers would remember that I only drank cold milo even when it was freezing out. The volunteer would see me coming and make me a cold milo without even asking and it made me feel special that someone would remember a little detail like that. I try and take the opportunity to do that for our regular patrons so that they know that someone cares about them and thinks they are special."

On volunteering Lis said that "I feel like I'm making a difference and I go home and feel humbled, and I hope that I've helped someone. I feel really grateful for Rosies – there is a volunteer on my team named Elaine and she is like an angel; she makes everyone feel welcome and another named Cathy who brings a smile to everyone she meets. They are all so special and I'm just really grateful to spend time with them."

Volunteers like Lis are one of the many reasons that Rosies has been able to remain present for our friends in need – her unique blend of compassion, empathy and lived experience help our patrons to feel safe and welcome.

\*If you find any of the content in this story distressing, please contact the Red Nose Baby & Infant Bereavement Support line on 1300 308 307 or Lifeline on 13 11 14.



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# From the street to the gallery

Artist Jake Moss has been homeless twice in his life.

Both times he was ashamed and didn't want anyone to know he was going to work during the day and making art and sleeping rough at night.

But after going to Rosies and chatting to volunteers, his perspective changed, and he found an understanding that everyone goes through different things.

"I would not close the door to the fact that without Rosies I might have killed myself," he said.

"Rosies helped me realise this is what's going on in my life right now, but I'm going to get through it and I'm going to find a way out. People don't understand how many ways homelessness can happen. They don't understand that when you are homeless it can be difficult to see a way out."

Jake said he was at his lowest when Rosies volunteers helped him turn his life around by just being there for him, chatting to him and caring for him.

He's now in the process of giving back to Rosies in his own way - by designing new merchandise for the charity to celebrate its 35th year.

The second time he was homeless, Jake was 25 and in Caloundra, where he was doing paintings for an exhibition for the local council. He wasn't comfortable telling people he was homeless and was sleeping on the concrete floor of a dusty little shed the council had given him to paint in.

He found out about Rosies when an older man on a disability pension, who was living in a Housing Commission property in the neighbourhood, told him about the charity in August 2019.

So, for eight months every Tuesday and Friday and the first Saturday of the month, Jake went to the Rosies van for conversation and snacks.

He said it was a different experience from the first time he was homeless, when he was 22 and living in Brisbane.

"I was so much more social. I was a lot happier, and I had a lot more hope," he said.

"The second time I was homeless - even though there were a lot of times when I was depressed - I was talking to people from Rosies - and it made me feel better and I was staying connected with friends.

"I just went to sleep on the concrete every night for eight months. I was terrified. I had one of dad's old jackets, and I would roll that up and use it as a pillow and it would always make me feel better. This shed was right next to the bus terminal. All the bus fumes would come in. It was like the dirtiest place. It was disgusting. I was really anxious someone from the council would find out I was sleeping there. I was pretty good at hiding it. There's a lot of stigma around homelessness. I felt a lot of shame. I was going to the beach to shower every day."





He said the friendship and conversations were the best thing he got from Rosies.

"To just be able to sit there and talk with them was so helpful. I would often walk away with extra snacks in my pocket that they'd insisted I take – I will never forget what they did for me," he said.

"I can say for myself that chatting to someone who has nobody else to talk with makes a massive difference – it really does make people's lives better. The value of conversation with someone doing it tough is so much more than what you think it is. Talking to someone can give them hope and bring a lot of light to their life and you can't put a price to that."

"It's weird, even though those eight months were pretty horrible, I look back and think: 'Oh man there were some great memories. When you go through hardship, that's when you really appreciate the kindness of others. Going to chat with the volunteers at Rosies was something I would look forward to. I loved going there."

Years later, he still remembers the volunteers - Cathy, Carolyn and Lisa. "There were so many wonderful people there that were so friendly and supportive and generous to me. And being friendly and generous should always matter but it especially matters when you are going through certain things," he said.

"When you have people who are being kind to you when they have nothing to gain from it and you know it – that meant so much to me – it always will. I will always be in debt to Rosies.

"The volunteers at Rosies are just so warm and generous and supportive and it really made a massive difference in my life. They were my role models, and they still influence me today.

"I can only imagine the difference all the Rosies volunteers have made in the 35 years it's been running.

"I know what a difference they made with me; it was pretty bloody high. That's why I want to help them by designing some merch. Rosies will always have a special place in my heart. I have made some great friendships."

Now, things are going well for Jake -he's just been to Sydney where his artwork opened a new gallery - Darlinghurst Road Gallery.

He's sold "enough art to buy a car" but says he still thinks of money in terms of how much milk it could buy.

"A few years ago, I was showering at the beach and shaving in public toilets and now I'm selling paintings for \$5,500. It doesn't feel real. It's insane to me. For most of my childhood, I was living with Dad in a Woodridge Housing Commission house and we were trying to make \$314 stretch over a fortnight. I remember being so aware of the price of milk. I knew it was \$2 for 2 litres. That's how I have always seen money, I don't think in terms of dollars but in litres of milk. So, at the end of the Darlinghurst exhibition, I still think about how many litres of milk I could buy."

# Christmas Wishes



Best wishes for a Merry Christmas to all of Rosies' family and friends.

I pray you will all enjoy the

happiness and blessings of this wonderful season. Hopefully, we continue to move forward from all the COVID induced challenges that are behind us and that our generous volunteers, and our many friends can celebrate this time without too much worry or hustle and bustle.

I find it hard to believe it's been 35 years since the Oblates of Mary Immaculate had the foresight to start and support this great organisation we know as Rosies. What a blessed and generous gift it has been to our community!

Thank you all who have supported their initiative and continue to do so today.

May 2023 bring you peace, joy and many of God's blessings.

The Honourable Ms Leneen Forde AC  
Former Governor of Queensland

# from our Patrons



Lynne and I join in wishing everybody at Rosies a wonderful Christmas. I hope you are all able to celebrate and perhaps relax.

The celebration ought to be of the marvelous stewardship you provide through your charitable instincts and your hard work to help those people that Rosies reaches out to year in year out.

Thirty-five years of support to people who are doing it tough. You've extended that muscular hand of faith and optimism to people who really need friends.

We were thrilled to be involved for many years, almost by accident, and came to know and admire the work being done by Rosies. During my time as Governor General, Lynne and I were able to join in from time to time with the work of Rosies. We even were able to do a visitation to some of the evening operations where the volunteers reach out to a clientele that really loves to see them and relies on them, that looks not just for a bit of sustenance but a cheerful smile, a word of advice or a simple acknowledgement that they count.

In all of this can I say to the supporters and volunteers, thank you for what you do for your fellow Australians. You never pass judgement but you do often convey friendship and, if I may say, we all admire you, we want you to keep it up and we want you to lead us as a community into a better place looking after those who otherwise might be left behind.

God bless you all and I hope you have a wonderful Christmas.

General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK AC (MIL) CVO MC (RETD).  
Former Governor-General and Lady Lynne Cosgrove

## Friendship - A good investment

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