

ROSIES

Friends on the Street



SPRING 2021



Patrons playing chess at new trial location for Beenleigh - page 4



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Sharing friendship creates belonging. Dare to reach out together.

A message from our CEO



Recent statistics indicate that some 775,000 people are living below the poverty line in Queensland alone, an astonishingly high figure. Approximately 20,000 people are reported to be experiencing homelessness in Queensland, and it is likely that this number is actually significantly higher. So many of those individuals

currently experiencing disadvantage are not readily visible in our communities, resulting in a lack of understanding of the enormity of the need we see on the street each and every day.

With the recent surge of COVID-19 and the restrictions and lockdowns experienced by everyone, we are also more acutely aware of the impact that social isolation and loneliness has on our day to day lives and our mental and physical health and well-being. This situation poses challenges for individuals and families who have a roof over their head, food on the table and the ability to continue to work. Imagine the impact and uncertainty surrounding those who are without a home, struggling to find or keep a job and/or are without any close family or support network.

Numbers of people on the street and attending outreach continues to increase as we face rising rental cost, ongoing housing shortages and increasing financial stress. We continue to see more newly homeless at outreach, with greater numbers of young people and women, particularly older women, in many areas.

The amazing 1,350 Rosies volunteers ensure that the Rosies vans are out on the street somewhere in Queensland every night of the week. Through outreach, Rosies offers acceptance, belonging and friendship to all our friends on the street and we do this with hospitality – just as you would when you invite a friend into your home for a visit and make them feel comfortable or at home. The following quote seems appropriate when thinking of Rosies, **"A real friend is one that walks in when the rest of the world walks out."**

Walter Winchell

Thank you for the compassion, love and care which you show through your generous support of Rosies and our friends on the street.

With gratitude,

Jayne Shallcross
CEO

Patrons & Paintings

By Maddie Batch

I had some painting kits laying around home that weren't being used so I thought it'd be fun to take them to our Jeays Street outreach. The patrons got right to it and it was amazing to see some beautiful masterpieces take shape - sunflowers, city landscapes and an elephant in the making. The painting kits were a huge hit with the kids as well, although I think they got more paint on themselves and the table than on the canvases! At one point, one of the kids was chasing their brother around with paint on a paintbrush, with squeals of joy from both the chaser and the chasee! We had paint on our hands by the end of it, some on our clothes and even in our hair too (whoops!) but it was clear that fun was had by all involved.

Our volunteers are always looking for ways to bring joy and engage with our patrons, whether it's a painting kit or a game of soccer – you never know what a small act of kindness could mean to someone in need.



Tiny patron and her abstract masterpiece

The Rosies Community

Family Business gives back to those in need

By Kate Schmidt



Tony, Jan, & Karen from The Distributors

"I wanted to be involved with a charity that I could see, touch and make a visible difference."

Those are the words of The Distributors' boss, Tony McIntosh, on why he decided to have his business support Rosies - Friends on the Street.

Tony grew up with strong family values and a supportive ethos to help those in need and had always supported a number of different charities over the years. But three years ago he decided to focus his attention on one or two charities rather than try to support everyone.

"As a keen cyclist, I often ride under the city expressway and continually observed a homeless man living and sleeping under the bridge. I started to get goodies from work and bought some clean and warm clothes for him to wear and I would drop them off while he was sleeping.

"One day he was awake, so I stopped and had a chat with John. I asked how he was doing and how he was coping, and he said fine. Eventually, I established he was using Rosies - Friends on the Street and that was the moment I knew who I wanted to support."

When he told his mother Jan McIntosh, and his sister Karen (who both work for the family business as Credit Controller and Warehouse Manager) about his plans, the two jumped at the chance to support Rosies by personally offering their assistance and friendship.

"When we arrive at outreach in Logan, the smiles on people's faces is enough to give you a warm fuzzy feeling of making a difference," Karen said.

"A small conversation, giving them something to eat and drink, a blanket to keep them warm, toiletries to make them feel more comfortable, is all they need to keep a tad positive and feel cared for. I truly feel blessed that I can make a small difference by being their friend and serving them some home comforts."

Jan agreed and said volunteering at the Logan outreach left you with a "beautiful but sad" feeling.

"Some of the people there have got to recognise myself and my daughter and really look forward to having a chat with us as we serve them their food."

The independently owned and operated business, which was born

from Tony's spare room in 2003, with business partners Stewart Robertson, and Louis Filippetto, after the wholesaler he worked at was sold to a larger international company.

The Distributors Brisbane is one of Australia's largest confectionery, snack food, beverage, grocery and chilled wholesale distribution businesses and is located at Larapinta. It services more than 3000 customers through south east Queensland with a range of more than 5,500 products, and partners with more than 250 market-leading manufacturers including Cadbury, Nestle, Mars, Wrigley, Red Bull, Frucor, Unilever, Smiths, and Bundaberg.

Tony said he was fortunate to have a business that could compliment Rosies through the products it sold and distributed. "Donating and supporting Rosies gives me great pride and hopefully shows my employees and retailer partners the strong family ethos we possess as a business," he said.

The Distributors Brisbane help support Rosies in various ways including donating food items and grooming products, providing financial assistance on a monthly basis, numerous employees donate money from their wages on a fortnightly basis and the business matches those donations dollar for dollar. This all creates awareness of Rosies and their work via the sales team, staff and clients and continues to build a meaningful relationship between the two organisations.

Tony said some of The Distributors' staff also volunteer at Rosies in hospitality vans or in community awareness initiatives. He said as Rosies receives "little to no government support", it is primarily made up of volunteers and Rosies existence depended on businesses like his own to offer donations and assistance.

"I support Rosies because my business can make a visible and notable difference," he said.

"I would certainly encourage any business or individual to support Rosies in any way they can."

Jan said she "wouldn't hesitate" to recommend other people to help with Rosies.

"When we leave our destination after attending to all the people who are in need, it makes you feel you have done your small part in helping those less fortunate ones," she said.

The Rosies Community

Regional grant helps Cairns become more sustainable

Thanks to the generous support of the Queensland Community Foundation (QCF), our Cairns branch has been able to take steps forward to become a more sustainable outreach. The QCF Regional grant has allowed us to purchase biodegradable takeaway containers from local supplier Vegware. Due to a lack of services in the local area, Cairns provides substantial meals to our patrons and it was important to local branch coordinators, Werner & Gina Rossbach, that we found a sustainable solution. The shift from takeaway containers was originally prompted by lockdowns that affected the region in 2020, but as the containers allowed us to more closely monitor food safety and hygiene protocols it made sense to keep using them. "The Vegware containers are fantastic and allow our patrons to save some of their meal for later should they want to stretch things out. We are so grateful for the support of QCF and that we could buy from a local supplier as we all know how important it is to support local business these days," Werner said. The grant from Queensland Community Foundation will provide enough containers for six months at current outreach levels and allows funds that would have been used to purchase containers, to be spent elsewhere on other needed resources in Cairns.



Darren enjoying a curry from a Vegware container



The Rosies Team celebrating a successful first BBQ

Community BBQ brings friendship and fellowship to Sundays

Sundays have long since seen a gap in services on the Gold Coast. As the demand for support increases due to continued stress on the rental market, our Surfers Paradise branch began looking for ways to remain present for those who access our service. After connecting with Rosies to collect essential items, Heritage Church of Faith in Burleigh wanted to do more and offered to sponsor a Sunday afternoon BBQ for patrons at our normal outreach location. The first BBQ was held in late June and a beautiful spread was laid out for all who attended, from sausages, salads, and fresh fruit; even those with special dietary requirements were catered for. All in attendance had a wonderful afternoon of games, friendship, and of course delicious food cooked with love. Due to the success of the first BBQ, Rosies Surfers Paradise Branch is looking for sponsors to help them produce the event fortnightly. If you are interested in supporting the branch please contact our head office on 07 3396 4267.

New trial location for Beenleigh

In mid-June we began trialing a new location, St George's Anglican Church Carpark, Beenleigh, for our Wednesday night outreach.

The members of the St George community and Rev. Peter Palmer have been very welcoming and have even been assisting us with set up, donations and friendly support. The new location is just a short walk from the Railway station, still making it easily accessible for our patrons. We have access to toilets, it's well-lit and has a wraparound veranda, which will come in handy in wet weather situations. St George's also allows the team to store our BBQ, which makes it incredibly convenient and more accessible for any team to use. Recent feedback from volunteers has indicated that set up is much easier and calmer as they can control the flow of Patrons into the space. The Patrons and Volunteers feel much safer letting the young children run about and enjoy a game or two as the area is fully fenced, providing a safety net from the busy road. Our Patrons are enjoying the new table games we've created, and once the weather gets warmer everyone is looking forward to enjoying some lawn games like bowls, croquet or quoits. We are so grateful for the St George Anglican Church community and their support of Rosies.



Rosies volunteers & patrons gather for a Christmas in July celebration

Christmas in July

The weather was truly beautiful for our Christmas in July event this year. It's safe to say that this was our most successful event to date with both patrons and volunteers getting into the spirit of things and enjoying each other's company - we were absolutely delighted to bring the event back to life after having to cancel last year due to COVID.

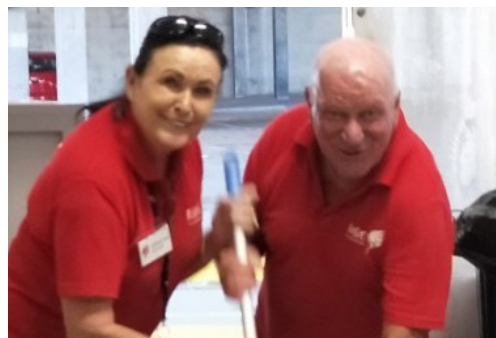
Volunteers mobilised quickly to begin set up at 5pm, there was so much to do before our guests arrived! Felicity Park was certainly a buzz of activity and a sea of red with more than 80 patrons, guests and volunteers who shared our night. Tables were laden with just about everything you could imagine, even a selection of brand new skating gear donated to us by Project Distribution.

We wanted to make sure this was a night to remember for patrons and the food was sensational! Our volunteers lovingly prepared 3 large pots of delicious homemade soup; chicken noodle, roast veggie, and thai pumpkin (which was a patron favorite!). James, the Head Chef at Club Kawana, really out did himself, preparing heaped trays of roast beef, ham, mixed vegetables, and plum pudding with custard. How could we have a Christmas event without plum pudding? Karen from local MP Jason Hunt's office was also in attendance with some beautiful homemade cupcakes with individual snowflake fondant she rolled and cut by hand - a real treat. The abundance of it all allowed patrons and volunteers to sit down side by side and enjoy a meal together as if they were just two old friends chatting on a park bench. It was wonderful to experience the genuine camaraderie and friendship that the teams have fostered at the Sunshine Coast outreach.

Everyone was in such a jovial mood with patrons filling their bags and trolleys to the absolute brim. For those fortunate enough to have vehicles, many trips were made back and forth dropping off their selection of clothes, foods etc.

It was a night of jolly good cheer with the fairy lights glowing, surrounding bushes adorned in Christmas decorations and Christmas carols playing in the background. Our delightful COVID safe Santa, Terry, dropped in and with his helpers, Oriana and Vera, handed out an assortment of chocolates and other goodies.

The event would not have been possible without those volunteers who met at the Hub in the afternoon to sort through all of the donated items, prepared all the takeaway packs, and packed and unpacked all the vans laden with goodies. It was wonderful to see everyone lending a hand, to make the work feel light and the atmosphere of love and joy was felt by all. Volunteers who were not rostered attended with their families to mix and mingle with our patrons and we were blessed by the collaboration of other services like Mission Australia, Vinnies, HTK church, Hair Aid, and Pets in the Park.



Kathleen & Richard at the Drop-In Centre

Vale Kathleen Vlastic

By Robyn Hunt

It is with extreme sadness that we share with you the passing of former Gold Coast Branch Coordinator, Kathleen Vlastic. Kathleen lost her battle with cancer on Tuesday 20 July surrounded by family. We ask that you keep her and her family in your thoughts and prayers. May she rest in peace, although unlikely, knowing her passion and vibrancy.

Kathleen was a volunteer with Rosies for more than 13 years with much of that time spent as Branch Coordinator. She was loved and respected by the Gold Coast community and worked tirelessly to advocate for Rosies, our patrons, and for the wellbeing of the wider community. Kathleen was well-connected on the Coast and never missed an opportunity to share the importance of Rosies, the work that we do and the wonderful people we serve.

Kathleen was instrumental in securing and setting up the Rosies Drop-In Centre at Southport in partnership with the Gold Coast City Council in 2008. The Drop-In Centre was of great significance for the Gold Coast and with Kathleen's assistance, we increased our outreach schedule in both Surfers Paradise and Southport and began offering meal assistance in Southport three days a week. The first breakfast outreach welcomed more than twenty children with their parents before they went off to school.

Over time the Drop-In Centre became a hub for those who were homeless or at risk of homelessness - they now had a safe place where they could hang out, grab a bite to eat or a cuppa, have a shower, and share friendship with our volunteers; all supported by the generosity of the Gold Coast community. It was with great sadness that the Drop-In Centre was closed as a result of safety issues and the onset of COVID-19.

Kathleen was such a champion of Rosies and was always looking for opportunities to help the Branch grow and offer more support to our many friends in need. We are so grateful for all the time and effort that she put into her role as Branch Coordinator. The Rosies Community was enriched by Kathleen's infectious enthusiasm and wonderful contribution and she will be sadly missed.

A volunteer remembered: Mu Hai

By Margaret Harvey

When Mu Hai showed up to a Rosies new volunteer training session with his friend (and interpreter), no one was sure what to expect. With the assistance of Mu's friend, he completed the training and wanting to double check that he understood everything asked, 'Do you understand?' With a big smile on his face Mu replied 'NO!' and we shared a laugh. Through his friend I understood Mu wanted to join Rosies in order to give back to a country who had given him and his family so much. I wanted Mu to join my monthly Friday night team; there were a few teachers and I felt Mu would be able to easily learn English with the help of these team members.

Over the next few weeks I would receive calls from the Friday night team leaders asking who this man was that kept showing up to help – it was Mu. At first Mu didn't understand that he was only rostered to help once a month, so he dutifully showed up every single Friday for six months. It was only then that the team could make him understand that he only needed to come monthly. At the end of his shift he simply smiled and said to me "Is it Ok if I go now teacher" as for him it was customary to call the person in charge teacher.

As I got to know Mu, his wife Roselyn, and one of his seven children, Priscilla, I learned he was born in 1951 in a small village in Myanmar (formerly Burma). He and Roselyn taught local children, along with their own, at the Karen Primary School in their village and in 1974 he became the pastor of the Baptist church. I was shocked when they told me that before coming to Australia, they (Mu & his family) fled the civil war in Myanmar and lived in a refugee camp for 15 years.

Mu loved being a part of the team at Rosies, according to Priscilla 'It gave him great pleasure being a part of Rosies and giving back to the community'.

One night on outreach a patron turned up and Mu found out that they spoke the same language. They chatted happily all night and the patron later remarked that he (the patron) had not had a conversation with anyone for a long time and it made him feel good to speak with Mu. Sometimes something as small as a conversation between strangers can have a lasting impact on those who were involved.

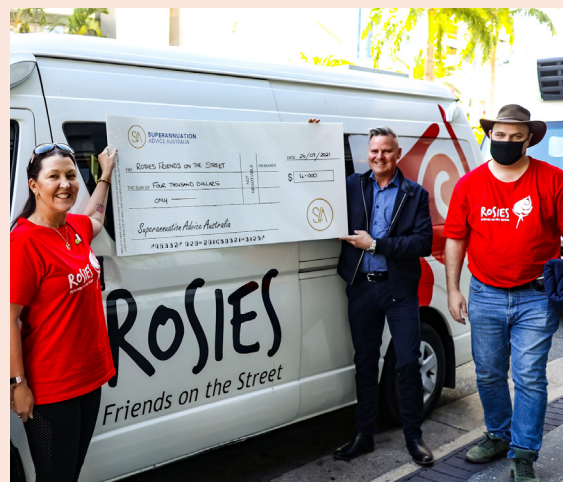
Mu's generosity of spirit didn't stop with his work at Rosies. Mu had learned of a lady in his home village of Paheelu who needed a wheelchair and he wanted to do some fundraising so that he could buy her one. Mirri, a volunteer on his team, heard about his efforts and was due to go on a holiday; she rearranged her holiday dates so she could go via his village, she purchased the wheelchair herself, and personally delivered the wheelchair to the woman in need. Mu was so happy that he couldn't stop smiling and was so grateful for the generosity of his fellow volunteer. It is gestures and acts of love like this that make those that share the spirit of Rosies so special.



Throughout his time with us Mu was a quiet, humble, loyal volunteer, with an infectious smile that never left his face. He never missed an outreach, until in 2019 when he started getting sick. At first he thought it was only pneumonia but it kept getting worse and eventually was diagnosed with lung cancer. He responded well to treatment at first and returned to his regular volunteering for a few months, but unfortunately the cancer came back. He started chemo and even though he was feeling poorly he always wanted to come back to his team at Rosies. I told him 'that there would always be a spot on my team for him.'

I had the pleasure of being on the same team with Mu for many years, he was a lovely man, a generous spirit and will be sadly missed by patrons, volunteers, and everyone one whose life he touched.

From all of us at Rosies Logan, we love you and rest in peace.



(L to R) Michelle, Greg, & Colm accepting the Superannuation Advice Australia donation

Local business supports Burleigh Branch

We are so grateful for Jodie, Michelle and Dani who championed Rosies to their employer Superannuation Advice Australia. They were instrumental in Rosies being invited into the business to discuss our mission, the work we do on the street, and learn more about how through the simple act of giving, they could change the life of someone in need.

The team at Superannuation Advice Australia raised vital funds and purchased 50 sleeping bags which will directly benefit the numerous rough sleepers we are still seeing on the coast.



St Thomas More's Shalom Family Group enjoying an afternoon of fellowship and pizza

From Strangers to Family

When 15 families registered to join a Family Group as a part of their local parish they had no idea where the journey would take them. Would they meet a few times only to have the novelty wear off or would it bloom into an amazing gathering that everyone would look forward to?

For the last 34 years the Shalom Family Group, as a part of the St Thomas More's Parish Toowoomba has offered support, love and friendship to the members that comprise the group. Each family takes turns planning the social activity for the month, which showcases the interests and passions of each family and shares it with the others.

Retired Toowoomba Branch Coordinators and current volunteers, Jim & Fay Stein said "The Family Group is amazing and has blessed us all with lasting friendships. They certainly have become family and are included in all our life events. The interesting thing about the concept is that when we gathered for our first meeting in 1987, we didn't know each other."

The pair reminisced, "Our early years were like a Rosies outreach with children everywhere! We sometimes had more than 30 children plus parents and we met in the local parks many times so the kids could run around. Our youngest was 6 years old when we started and many of the friendships made between the children have stood the test of time and now they are in their 40's and still love seeing each other."

The friendships made through the Family Group are like the friendships made between our Rosies volunteers. The family group has been through school graduations, school sport events and school Boards, Parents and Friends events, important birthdays, engagements, weddings, births of grandchildren, baptisms and now they are beginning to farewell special friends at funerals.

Some of the men golf together, the ladies sew for charity, some have travelled overseas together and everyone enjoyed the yearly camps, but most importantly they have supported and cared for each other through life events including serious illness and comforting each other in loss.

Of the importance of the group, Fay Stein said "It is an amazing group

who have blessed our journey with so much and we continually support each other through the challenges and celebrations of our lives. We have welcomed many new members through the years and currently have 16 families who have a great time together."

For the past three years, they have incorporated fundraising for Rosies into the monthly gathering to support the work we do in the local community.

At a recent gathering John and Pauline Dwyer treated everyone to a fabulous feast of home cooked pizza in their wood fire oven.

Of the afternoon Fay said, "John and Pauline are a beautiful couple - generous, compassionate and giving. They not only provided all of the food for the lunch but afterwards Pauline passed around a hat and every one of the families gifted Rosies with a donation. It provided us with a wonderful opportunity to do a presentation on the Rosies story and share how their donation would help those in need."

The St Thomas More's Shalom Family Group has supported Rosies in so many ways. Jim recalled with a huge smile on his face, "Rosies would not have had such a seamless move to our new hub at St Thomas More's with all of our 'junk' without the help of our friends from this group. From packing for the week before the move, to actually moving everything, cleaning the cupboards at both venues, washing and vacuuming floors, packing everything in cupboards, putting up shelves and juggling many heavy items through the doors."

Jim continued, "The list for moving day was endless and we couldn't have done it without them. They support the vision of Rosies and are always there to help when we need someone - all we have to do is ask!"

We are so grateful for communities like St Thomas More's Shalom Family Group, they embody the spirit of Rosies and do us proud with their commitment to love and friendship. We could not be present for those in need without the encouragement, support and action of individuals like those involved in the Shalom Family Group. Thank you for your support of Jim & Fay and their work with Rosies - Friends on the Street.



Reflections with Fr Michael

Dear Rosies Family,

For many regions in our state and country, the ever present health risks of Covid are front of mind. The uncertainty of the day to day and the potential isolation has given many people a very clear insight into the circumstances that those most vulnerable within our community have lived with for a long period of time.

Our sense of hope is crucial in our Rosies outreaches and mission and is based on a genuine belief that every person matters. The deepest treasures of Rosies is the God-given dignity of each person and I continue to give thanks for the ministry of presence that accompanies each outreach.

St Eugene de Mazenod from rural France in the 1800's founded the Oblates who then founded Rosies in Victoria (1974) and Queensland (1987). He was a passionate person who often acted from the heart rather than just from the head. His mission was to help the abandoned poor to learn that they are loved by God. St Eugene believed that every beating heart was precious and needed in the mission.

In the very early days of the Oblates he took the daring risk of new outreaches, even though the numbers were small. St Eugene is described as having "a heart as big as the world" and there is no doubt in my mind that the establishment of each and every outreach of Rosies in the past and also into the future has a bit of that heart in it. The heart appears central in the Rosies prayer and is an integral part of every life.

Our hearts can be strong, fragile, warm, cold, caring, unkind, hurt, resilient, spiritual, loving and so many more emotions. And

sometimes when our heart is full...our eyes leak! This can be for great joy or tremendous sadness.

I dedicate this short little reflection to all of your hearts and encourage you to reach out to each other just to check how the hearts of other members of our Rosies family are going during these challenging times.

Take care and God Bless
Fr Michael



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

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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Friends on the Street



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