

ROSIES

Friends on the Street

WINTER 2022



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Sharing friendship creates belonging. Dare to reach out together.

A message from our CEO



Winter conjures up memories of sitting by a fire, hot chocolate and marshmallows, warm and cozy jackets, scarves and beanies. Many will look forward to cooler temperatures, turning on the heater and the change of seasons. For those who are living on the street, in their car, or

moving from place to place, winter often brings increased social isolation, loneliness and the challenge of trying to keep warm and comfortable.

Finding affordable housing has never been so difficult, with limited availability and increased demand resulting in rental stress and increasing house prices. Supply of social or community housing has not kept up with demand, nor has rental assistance kept pace with rising rental costs. There is an average of 13.6% of the Australian population living below the poverty line and struggling to pay rent and keep food on the table – in Queensland this equates to more than 700,000 people.

That statistic is before we look at the lingering impact of COVID and the devastation brought about by the floods and storms which will see many people remain homeless and many businesses and livelihoods destroyed. Rosies continues to see increasing numbers attending outreach, including more women, both older and younger people and families, and numbers are predicted to increase in the aftermath of recent events.

During this winter season, please open your heart to help Rosies continue to provide street outreach – a safe space, a warm smile, a hot drink, a much needed conversation and the unbreakable hand of friendship – to those who are currently experiencing homelessness, social isolation or loneliness.

The definition of compassion according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary is “the sympathetic consciousness of others’ distress together with the desire to alleviate it”. Compassion has a component of action, an involvement -- when others pull away or avoid those who are suffering, compassion prompts us to act and to be involved. Rosies is the demonstration of compassion in action, creating an atmosphere of belonging and trust for our friends on the street. Thank you for the compassion you show, for being a part of the Rosies Community, and for helping those who need it most.

With gratitude,
Jayne Shallcross,
CEO

Reflections with Fr Michael



Dear Rosies Family,

As we experience the winter months, it's a reminder of many emotions and feelings. We can be reminded of the cold, uncertainty and loneliness that can be associated with winter or we can be reminded of the warmth generated by friends, loved ones and the wider community.

During this time, the Rosies prayer becomes even more relevant with its call for us to help others be at home with us, with neighbour and with God, no matter what each circumstance brings.

This prayer appeals to each heart of Rosies and calls every member, patron, volunteer, staff, donor and supporter to look into their heart one more time as an opportunity for mission and outreach. It appeals to the God-given human dignity in each person that is a treasure and a beautiful gift.

There are many examples in faith of the loving kindness and care of God, and yet that can feel very distant when faced with some of the harsh realities of life. The Rosies prayer calls on Jesus to work with us in our daily lives and look for any opportunity at all to bring comfort that can be shared. The Christian faith reminds us that we should never worry alone and yet that seems to be never far away. It really takes a great effort to reach out and also to receive this loving sharing of comfort.

I sincerely hope that this winter we all make the effort to reach out to others in our daily and personal lives and bring something of that Rosies beauty into wider contexts than just the formal outreaches. When we are able to embrace this sharing comfort, our hope is that it will shed light on all areas of our life and that that light will be our hope.


I am certainly keeping all of our Rosies family in my prayers and for all of your intentions. If you have a spare moment, you might like to pray the Rosies prayer which is included below.

Take Care and God Bless,

Fr Michael Twigg OMI

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



Rosies saved me

"Maddie saved my life," those were the first words a patron spoke to me when I arrived at Emma Miller Place on a balmy winter evening. The patron, Joan*, wanted to make sure that Maddie knew how grateful she was for the extra support and encouragement Maddie gave her the previous evening.

Maddison had gone over to chat with the regular patrons who were gathered around the side of the van to catch up on all the goings on from the last time she had seen the group and noticed Joan straight away.

"She was standing off to the side of the group of regulars and it was easy to see that she was in pain," Maddison remembers. "Joan shared with me that she had major surgery the day before and was released from hospital that afternoon. She was in a significant amount of pain and was really worried about her ability to recover well outside of hospital."

The longer the two women spoke, the more concerned Maddison became about Joan. "She was very upset, often tearing up while talking, and I saw that over a short period of time she was becoming more unwell and experiencing more pain. I was quite worried about her sleeping rough in her condition" Maddison said.

"I asked Joan if we could call an ambulance for her, but she was very reluctant. She had a very negative experience when she was discharged that afternoon – they were rude, and they treated her poorly" Maddison said.

Another volunteer, Lauren, who was with Maddison and Joan said that "We were eventually able to convince her that she needed medical support and contacted the Micah Nurse. Joan was adamant that she would not return to the hospital who had treated her unfairly and requested to be taken to the Mater"

After explaining Joan's situation to the Micah team and arranging for them to collect her and take her to hospital we waited with Joan to make sure she was OK until help arrived. While waiting for Micah, Maddison, Lauren, and a regular patron tried to keep Joan comfortable and hydrated but most of all calm and laughing.

The group sat with Joan cracking jokes, chatting, and providing reassurance for the majority of the outreach.

"It was so nice to see her have moments where she wasn't focused on her pain and was smiling and laughing," Maddison said.

Eventually, Micah arrived and helped her to the hospital for further treatment. The team would not see Joan for another four weeks, but they hoped that when they met her again, she'd be in good spirits and better health.

"It was about a month later when I saw Joan again. It was like speaking with a completely different person, she looked so well, was bright and articulate, not at all the woman I spoke to the

previous month. You could see the difference in her straight away," Lauren said.

"She was very keen to thank Maddie in person and it was great for them to be reunited and share a cuppa together" Lauren continued.

Joan was so thankful for the attention and care that the team and Maddison, in particular, had shown her. Joan recounted to another volunteer, "Maddie saved my life. I had an issue after my surgery and if she hadn't kept encouraging me to talk to Micah and get help, I don't know what would have happened if I had slept rough that night. I don't think I'd be here today without Maddie's kindness."

For Maddison the act of sitting and chatting with a stranger, offering a kind word, a friendly face and some assistance was business as usual, just part of her role as a Rosies volunteer. For Joan, that support was life changing.

"This reminded me why we outreach and how important our 'Friendship on the Street' can be. At the time, I didn't think much of staying with her. To me that's just what we do, so it has absolutely floored me how much impact a little bit of time and support can have," said Maddison.

Little acts of courageous love like Maddison's are not uncommon among Rosies team of more than 1,400 volunteers, but every interaction is special and every patron matters. Sometimes we can forget that it's the little things that so often make the greatest difference.

If you find any content in this newsletter distressing please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14.

*Denotes name change for patron privacy, stock photos used



Community right next door

Sheryl, a 68-year-old retired assistant nurse, found community and connection when Rosies moved in next door. "Once I retired from aged care nursing, I got a bit lonely and was looking for a regular social outing – Rosies operates in the park next to my house in Harlaxton and I thought I would pop over and see what it was all about," Sheryl said.

Sheryl was unsure about what to expect from her first outreach, but the volunteers made her feel right at home. "The volunteers are so welcoming, greeting everyone by name and making sure everyone feels accepted. There are many different types of people who attend outreach from lots of different cultures and the volunteers and the neighborhood itself embraces us all."

Sheryl has a unique understanding of what many of the patrons who visit Rosies have gone through because she has also experienced hardship. In a previous life, Sheryl was married to a prosperous grain grower and was able to send all of her children to private schools, but then the drought came, and her family lost everything. She suffered a relationship breakdown and really struggled to make ends meet. "I didn't have enough money for food even though I was working two jobs because I was funneling every penny into caring for one of my children who became addicted to drugs. I didn't know about Rosies then, but the support would have been a great help for me. You never think it will happen to you, but anything can happen to anyone at any time," Sheryl recalled.

While Sheryl found Rosies later in life, she really enjoys meeting the young people that attend outreach. "There are a lot of children and young people that attend outreach; the volunteers are so good with them, especially the refugee families. They play basketball with the kids, remember all their names, and give them lots of attention – they (the kids) start showing up at about 3.30 just waiting for the Rosies van to show up." Sheryl continued "a lot of the kids that come to Rosies don't expect much from life, but the Rosies volunteers make them feel special. Rosies always makes sure that the kids get to celebrate the holidays like Easter and Christmas – the look on the kids' faces when they are given a gift is just wonderful, they just light up and can't believe that someone is just giving them something for free."



Sheryl & diesel on outreach

Sheryl also enjoys chatting with the many school students who attend outreach as a part of our School Engagement Program (SEP). "I always impress upon them the importance of education because no matter how strong your family ties are, you never know how things can change. I think it's really important for young people to experience and speak to people who have had different experiences than what they have."

Sheryl continued "They need to look at the reality of life and really look and acknowledge the people around them and realise that anything can happen. No matter how privileged their life has been, they could need Rosies one day. The people that come to Rosies are people just like them."

Sheryl is a patron of Rosies, but she also carries the spirit and mission of Rosies in her heart. Each Wednesday Rosies operates a BBQ to help ease some of the financial pressures on those who attend and ensure that those who are homeless can have a hot meal. Sheryl always takes an extra plate from the BBQ to her neighbour who is too unwell to attend, "I like to bring a plate over and chat to them – make sure they know that there are others who care for them and want to make sure they are OK."

Sheryl said she was so grateful for the friendships she'd made through Rosies but was especially grateful for the presence of Rosies in her community. "I've lived amongst all types of people in various places and when I first moved to Harlaxton, I thought it was a rough area, but it's not. It's a beautiful vibrant community, a melting pot of different nations. Rosies picked the perfect place to set up shop – they really help people who need love and acceptance."

Sheryl continued, "There would be quite a few people who would be upset if we didn't have Rosies. They give you so much support and they listen to you and what you have to tell them. They really do want to make a difference in your life."

Friendship - A good investment

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