

Seeds of Hope News

Autumn 2010

We are determined to Influence the Spiritual Climate of our Community rather than be influenced by it.

Homeless Backpacks

We provided another 10 packs carrying emergency supplies in easy to carry backpacks that were distributed by the Homeless Health Outreach Team (Dept of Health) on the Gold Coast. Many of the recipients of these packs have mental health issues and are unable to access support themselves.

One of the more exciting things that has happened just recently with this project is that I was contacted by another large Church on the northern end of the Coast who had heard about these packs. They were also looking to provide a similar outreach but weren't sure how to move ahead. I was able to show them one of the packs and also give them a copy of the items included in each pack. This was a huge blessing to them and has enabled them to launch a similar initiative through their congregation...duplication...now there are more packs being distributed...for the benefit of the people not the churches.

A huge thank you to Michelle Powell for coordinating the collection and presentation of all these packs. We have now distributed over 60 backpacks. A big thank you also to those people who have been giving financially into this program.

Parent Training

We ran our first P5 parenting course in Nerang Primary School during term 1 of this year and have just launched a Mum's Support/Cooking Group this term. Jenny Murfet and Sue Hutton have been incredible in pushing through the obstacles that kept presenting themselves to launch these two initiatives. The school has also been wonderful in its support and promotion of these groups.



One of the ladies in the P5 group was actually an Aunty who has just recently taken over as full time carer of her niece and nephew. This lady found the course incredibly helpful as a 'new' mum of primary schoolers.

Our hope and prayer is that through these opportunities we will be able to link with and practically support and encourage Mums who desperately need it.

Gold Coast City Council – Social Connections / Bold Futures Project

There is a great project under way in the GCCC looking at creating strategies and initiatives to help fulfill one of the Gold Coast City Council's Bold Futures (www.boldfuture.com.au) goals of building a better connected community.



I have been invited to take part in two workshops with other agencies and organisations and it has been great to bring a 'Kingdom' perspective into these environments as we talk about desired futures for our city. I would encourage you to be praying for this process so that some 'Kingdom' outcomes and initiatives will be identified, supported and funded

Community Hub



Lavelle Street, Nerang

I believe there is tremendous opportunity for more community outreach if we are able to secure a 'shop front' in the CBD of Nerang. The goal for this 'shop front' would be to establish a gathering / meeting type place where we could offer all sorts of reasons for people to come together. It would also need to be self funded. Some thing like a Coffee Shop could work.

We are therefore exploring options and would appreciate your prayers into this initiative.

Schools Outreach

The Shed

Frank and his team conducted the 'Becoming A Man Program' for Year 11 young men at Nerang State High School for seven weeks during the first term. The program draws leaders from several churches in the Nerang/ Mudgeeraba area. They work predominantly in small groups with 2 leaders and 4 young men and aim to form solid bonds with them through shared experience and respect.

The new program, entitled 'The Shed', is being conducted off school grounds, aimed at Year 12 students, on a Thursday commencing at 8:00am. Frank and his team have the full support from the school community. Frank believes that they are now in a position to establish 'The Shed' as an integral part of the development of the young men at Nerang State High School.

Frank is always looking for new leaders, so if you are active, have or can obtain a Child Services Blue Card and feel God is leading you to share your life experience with young men, please don't hesitate to call Frank on Mob: 0434 908 968.



Frank Cowell

Shine

The first Shine program this year has just concluded at Nerang State High School, and was facilitated by Sue Lavender and Shirley Kent from Grace Fellowship and Jenny Murfet from Genesis. The program had 12 girls, selected by the teachers and Chris Perry the Chaplain. They had full participation in this program and all of the girls enjoyed the sessions.

Topics covered include:

- Personal care, grooming, nail and hair care.
- I'm valuable
- I'm one of a kind
- I am wonderfully made (including nutrition and fitness)
- Dealing with emotions
- My decisions determine my destiny
- Dealing with problems, peer pressure etc.
- My potential is limitless
- Planting seeds, goal setting and achieving my dreams.



Thank you to those who have been praying for and financially supporting this program.

Breaky Club

The Nerang Primary Breaky club is still powering along and we have definitely become an integral part of the Tuesday morning activities at NSS. Rod Jones is now organising the mornings and it has been wonderful to be able to 'step back' a little and see everything continue strongly. The team consistently cook over 200 slices of French Toast for the students and there are lots of hungry bellies that are filled as a result.



I would like to thank the regular team of Rod Jones, Bill Ungerer, Gwen Ramsay and Dawn Callan who hold everything together. George Parker has also visited a few times as well.

Chaplaincy



Nerang LCC Team

Chaplaincy is going well. We now have two new Chaplains in our primary Schools with Derrel Mortimer replacing Nina at NSS and Michael Jones replacing Kees at Worongary State School. Chris Perry is still doing great work up at the High School. We also hope to be able to find funding for Michael to work one day a week at William Duncan State School.



Michael Jones

Finances, or a lack of them, is our only obstacle to expanding this Chaplaincy service. The schools have opened their doors to Chaplains and we are very blessed to have this opportunity to share the love of God to almost 3000 students in our community. If would like financially support / sponsor a chaplain (all donations are tax deductible) then please speak with me and I can help arrange a direct link with them.



Derrel Mortimer

Cooking Classes

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program



I have been on the Nerang Primary School Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program Committee for the last few months to help usher in an incredible initiative that should be a great blessing to the kids, parents and the Nerang community generally.



The aim of the Kitchen Garden Program is pleasurable food education for young children. The underlying belief is that by introducing this holistic approach there will be a chance to positively influence children's food choices in ways that have not been tried before.

Nerang Primary School currently has a classroom block set up with Kitchen facilities and a large pantry. A Kitchen Garden is currently under construction at the school which, when completed, will provide edible, aromatic and beautiful resources for the school kitchen. In both the kitchen and the garden the children work together in small groups with the help of volunteers. The finished dishes are arranged with pride and care on tables set with flowers from the garden, and the **shared** meal is a time for students, helpers and teachers to enjoy each other's company and conversation.

There are opportunities to volunteer in this program, so if you have an interest and a blue card please speak with me and I will put you in touch with the coordinator at the school.

YEAH (Yummy, Easy, Affordable & Healthy) Cooking Classes

Sue Hutton has been instrumental in pulling together a group of people who have planned and now started a four week YEAH course in Nerang Primary School. The goal of the group is to provide some family and social support to mums around a practical and helpful project like cooking. Sue's team will be passing on ideas and skills to a small group of mums in the Nerang Primary School community.

I would like to thank Sue for the great work and time she has invested in making this project work. Please be praying for her and her team, and for some 'divine appointments' with people who would really benefit from this initiative.

These outreaches are wonderful opportunities to build relationships with people and offer some practical support at the same time. If you would like to help Sue please call her at the Church office on 5525 3534.

Emergency Relief

Whilst most of the above is talking about Community Building, Training and Equipping there have also been quite a few emergency relief projects. The reality is that there is a great level of need right before our eyes, right here in our very own community...and not just Nerang. Consider the following as a small example of the types of issues that we have been involved in through various outreaches over the last few months;

- Grade 11 girl suicided
- Parent of Grade 1 boy suicided
- Grade 3 boy wants to kill himself
- Single mum of three trying to rebuild her life after getting her children back from Child Safety protection order
- Mum trying to choose between drugs and her children
- Family with 7 kids - Parents don't have enough money to feed them
- Single mum of four with cancer currently undergoing chemo – ran out of money, car was reposed and has no way of accessing her treatment

Some of these people we can practically support, many we can only pray for and link with other support options. We have been able to provide some practical support through the following;

- Donated a microwave to a single mum trying to establish a home
- Donated sheets, Towels and linen to homeless couple establishing a new home
- Donated bed to single mum who has limited furniture
- Made an interest free loan to a fellow in need
- Donated bunks, table, chairs and fridge to young family living in a house with virtually nothing.

There are plenty of 'orphans' and 'widows' in our community; abandoned ones, lost ones, overlooked and undervalued ones... It is great to be able to help some of them.

Nerang Early Years Centre Partnership

You probably know that I have been contracted to work with the Benevolent Society (www.bensoc.org.au – if you are interested to have a look) in the Nerang Early Years Centre as a Community Development Project Worker. To give you an overview of what I am doing there I thought I would provide this brief 'report'.

The Benevolent Society are funded by the State Government to run the Early Years Centre and the purpose of this service is to provide a 'One Stop Shop' for families with children aged between 0 – 8 yrs.

The types of services they provide include:

- Family Support
- Playgroups
- Parent Training
- Parent Support Groups
- Child Development Checks and Referrals
- Parent / Child Relationship Development
- Family Intervention Services – Child Safety



Nerang Early Years Centre, Martin Street, Nerang

I have been given the task of identifying the other key stakeholders who provide support to young families in our community and to help build stronger networks between all these agencies and organisations. It is also my responsibility to try and identify some of the pockets of 'at risk' families who live in our community and who don't know how to find services like these, then help them to gain the support they need.

The other task I am pursuing with them, is to try and develop a Community Building Strategy to improve the level of 'School Readiness' for the children in our community. This involves establishing a network of Child Care Centre Directors and helping them work better together, better with the local schools and better with the Child Health Clinics, to provide maximum opportunities for the children to develop to their full potential.

Some tangible projects that I am working on to help achieve this include:

- Establishing an After-School Activity Program in a unit complex in Nerang
- Plan and Host a "Thank You Dinner" for the Directors of our local child care centres
- Plan, Host and Facilitate a Community Dinner for all stakeholders in the Early Years sector to provide information, encouragement and feedback on the project and other research projects currently underway in Nerang
- Create a resource directory of all Early Years Service Providers
- Develop and Complete a Community Survey of young families accessing local child care centres, to determine the level of social connections and support that exist in our community

The opportunities that exist whilst working in this environment are massive. My hope and prayer is that God can use this time to build great relationships that will lead to meaningful and effective long term partnerships between the local church and significant community service organisations like the Nerang Early Years Centre.



Also...

No or Low Interest Loan Program – Linda D'Arcy and Lynne Godbee will be attending a workshop in Brisbane next week to further pursue the idea of offering a loans program to our community.

Transport – The bus is still be used by Child Safety & Volunteering Gold Coast.

Food Bank – The Food Bank service that we started in 2008 and later moved to the Nerang Neighbourhood Centre is still distributing 80 – 100 boxes of food per week.

Thank You – A really big thank you to all those people who have donated money and sponsored programs through Seeds of Hope. The reality is that without your support these things would not happen. Thank you also to those who have been praying for Seeds of Hope and have given so generously. Our community is a better place because of your faithfulness and generosity in helping to sow Seeds of Hope. Thank you.