

Seeds of Hope News Winter 2009

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

Here is a great couple of sentences from an article written by Mal Fletcher on a must read website called www.rediscoveringthekingdom.info

“The church has the opportunity - indeed, the responsibility - to develop strategies that will move entire communities forward in a positive and godly direction. By building strategic, future-engaging cultures of hope in our churches, we can shape the direction of communities and entire cities.”

My hope, prayer and plan is that Seeds of Hope will continue to sow into that ‘strategic, future-engaging culture of hope’. Thanks for being part of the plan.

Here is a bit of summary of what we have been up to:

Helping Families in Need

It has been a privilege to help 4 families who were referred to me through a couple of agencies I have been working with for some years now.

I can't be too specific with details because these families live in our community however to give you an idea of the need and what have been able to do, here is a quick summary of 3 of them.

Family A – This family had no work and sold most of their furniture to raise money for the bond for a new tenancy. The result is a family of 5 living in a home with only a double bed, cardboard box for a table and 3 blow up mattresses. I was able to collect and deliver a fridge, beds, table, chairs, microwave and other supplies to this family.

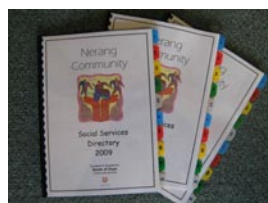
Family B – This family needed to move out of an unhealthy living arrangement but had no basic household items and therefore felt trapped. I was able to get a washing machine, table, chairs and various kitchen items and they were able to move out and are beginning to see changes in their lives as a result of the move.

Person C – This fellow is caught up in a fairly tragic downward spiral but needed accommodation to stabilize his situation. He found a room to share and with the help of Hazel Hartley and the Mudgeeraba Op Shop I found bedding and linen to help. After meeting this man I am attempting to build a relationship with him and hopefully we can break the cycle??

Closing Comment: *I find it really hard to share some of this information since these are people that you may hopefully one day meet. The risk is that talking about them this way makes them sound like charity cases rather than the real people that they are. Our challenge is find ways to bridge the ‘judgement’ gap, bridge the ‘us and them’ gap, bridge the ‘welfare’ gap and find ways to love and support the people we come in to contact with, that for one reason or another find themselves in a very difficult position. What is required here is not religion, but love.*

Nerang Social Services Directory

The Directory has been updated and distributed to the key community stakeholders. This has proven to be a great resource and a great tool for connecting agencies and people.



James 1:27

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Food Bank

There is now a 3 way partnership in place to offer food to people in need in Nerang. Due to the geographical distance between the Nerang CBD and ourselves, we have found it necessary to move the distribution point up to the Nerang Neighbourhood Centre.

As a result, the volunteer team has increased and they are now distributing up to 50 food parcels per week. This is a great result and a great example of how partnerships and collaboration can improve service outcomes.

The Nerang Early Years Centre are still providing transport and a huge thank you to Rosemary Johnston who is still collecting food on a weekly basis with members of the EYC and NNC.

Homeless Backpacks

Another 12 packs were put together by Michelle Powell. Each pack includes enough food for up to 3 days, various personal hygiene items, raincoat, socks, beanie/hat, torch plus some other basics. We also include a New Testament and Tract and hope and pray that each recipient of these packs will be touched with the love of Jesus.

The pack and the items in them cost approximately \$70 and I would like to thank the supporters who have donated money towards them. Any additional financial support would be fantastic, so we can supply more packs when required.



Homeless Health Outreach Team
Collecting the Backpacks

Nerang Primary School Breaky Club

The faithful team of Bill Ungerer, Sue McGovern, Dawn Callan and Rod Jones continue give many of these children the only 'Grandparent Time' that they receive in any given week. Not to mention a stomach full of French Toast to keep them warm and ready to learn. The team cooks anywhere between 250 – 350 slices of French Toast each Tuesday morning.

Any donation towards these supplies would be really appreciated.

Food & Friends on Friday

The community lunch on Friday's is still kicking goals and it is great to see people coming together for meals and conversation.

Another big thank you to Vicki Hansen and her team of Sue McGovern, Lynne McGregor, Carol Harvey and Dawn Callan who have been preparing the meals.

Food & Friends is a super community environment that reaches out to people who might be looking for company, support, new friends or just a good meal. **Come and join us – Friday's 12:30pm.**

Homeless Connect

Approximately 600 visitors were offered free food, clothing, blankets, showers and haircuts at this year's Homeless Connect event, held at the Albert Waterways Community Centre. This is a one day expo offering information and practical relief for the homeless community on the Gold Coast. We had a couple of volunteers who were able to



help with this wonderful event and they thoroughly enjoyed the experience of getting beside those in the community who are really in a tough place. Thanks goes to Mona Nielsen for encouraging people to be involved and for being part of the organising committee for the event.



Parenting & Family Support

Children aged between 0 and 5 are in an incredibly vulnerable time in terms of development. The stability of a child's home life during this time directly relates to that child's readiness for school and their ability to learn and socialise in the school environment.

More opportunities are opening up for us to work in partnership with Government and Non-Government organisations to practically support local families and offer training in parenting for mums and dads who have children in this age bracket.

Please be praying for us to be effective in what we do with families and for opportunities to open up to build relationships and long term support networks for these people.



Child Safety

We continue to host some supervised access programs for parents with children in care and are finding more ways to support the families who attend, but it is a slow process.

One of the biggest challenges is breaking the cycle of Foster Care. A large percentage of parents with kids in care were foster kids themselves. If any lasting change is going to take place, then this cycle needs to be interrupted.

I am building a good contact list of people who also have a heart for breaking the foster care cycle and we are not far from arranging a gathering to explore some projects and ideas.

Please pray for parents and kids caught up in the foster care system. It is a stressful time for all concerned and we need to be searching for creative options that can improve the safety and well being of kids in our community.

Thank You

Thanks heaps for all of your prayers, support and encouragement. Local mission work is never easy, often frustrating, occasionally rewarding but ALWAYS worthwhile. May God bless you heaps and heaps.

Regards, Brett Lush