



Volunteer Vera's been around for 36 years – and still going strong

What do Vera McKinnon and a MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging scanner) have in common?

Technology for the MRI scanner was developed in the USA in 1974 – the year that Vera started as a CRE teacher in WA. "I suppose in a way both of us work with the insides of people's bodies. Just as the MRI is completely painless, but rather noisy, so is CRE," Vera laughs.

Vera started teaching Christian Religious Education (CRE) in Morley when her son, Stuart (now business editor of the West Australian) was born. Her relationship to YouthCARE gained an added dimension when her other son, Steve secured a position as school chaplain at Swan View Senior High School and later served as school chaplain at Hampton Senior High School.

Her passion for this work took on a further dimension when she agreed to become the CRE Coordinator for the Morley YouthCARE Council. This brought her into contact with members of the church community in her area who shared her passion for children. Vera presently has contact with a number of different schools where CRE is being delivered and liaises with various stakeholders where the opportunity to deliver CRE might present itself.

Although she is unsure of the exact number of students she has taught over the years, Vera is certain that 'there were thousands.'

"Life is so precious. We need to embrace it. My journey with YouthCARE through CRE has been wonderful. It is a privilege to be involved in this Ministry."

[Readers will also remember 1974 as the year that Cyclone Tracy struck and almost completely destroyed Darwin. Ed.]

*Source: www.thepeoplehistory.com/1974.html

“Life is so precious. We need to embrace it. My journey with YouthCARE through CRE has been wonderful. It is a privilege to be involved in this Ministry.”
Vera McKinnon.

Colourful posters spread the message that people care

One school chaplain had the idea. The other had the graphic design background to make it happen. Their combined powerful outputs – posters – are getting high school kids in Kalgoorlie talking.

As a school chaplain at Kalgoorlie Boulder Community High School, Justin Smith spends time with adolescents in need, often seeing and hearing their pain and confusion. "It's easy to feel all alone and powerless about the things that go on around you. Often the negative messages in the marketplace – from the movies the children watch to the music they listen to – are not conducive either. Our posters were designed to send the message to our youth – the leaders of tomorrow – that they are not alone. People do care and they should never give up, they are worth fighting for," Justin said.

Knowing that Amy Bell, school chaplain at South Kalgoorlie Primary School, is a qualified graphic designer, Justin set up an informal meeting and the duo discussed the project brief and goals. "Justin was instrumental in giving suggestions and guidance to help me design the posters in such a way that teenagers would easily relate to them," Amy said.

Justin, who has been a school chaplain for six years, says the response from the school has been very positive. "They were willing to pay for the production of the posters and I've had some very positive comments from students and staff."

He says that he had the calling to work with the youth since reading *The Cross and the Switchblade* at the age of 14. "God then planted a seed of passion within me – to care for those who are going through a tough



time. I can vividly recall the day when I sat in assembly and our high school's first school chaplain was introduced. That's when I said to myself: 'I am going to be a school chaplain'."

Amy says God also called her into school chaplaincy. "I just love loving kids and being there for them. You never know when an act, which might seem insignificant to you, has the potential to make a huge impact on a child's world and he remembers the smile, the hug or the encouraging words for the rest of his life, being able to recall it in difficult times." Amy has been a school chaplain at South Kalgoorlie Primary School for eighteen months.

ON A MISSION

Justin Smith and Amy Bell pictured with the posters, targeted at high school students, that they produced.

Below: Justin and Amy's colourful posters up close.



EDITORIAL

One of my biggest treats is to go to the letterbox and find a hand-written letter from a loved one tucked amongst the junk mail and accounts. Everything in the Coetzee household comes to a complete halt.



I make myself a cup of tea, find a peaceful spot and carefully open the envelope, knowing that I will soon be transported into the world of the writer, dancing between the cursive curls, lean lines and dainty dots that frame the words and sentences.

How I love paper, the century old, patient tactical messenger!

It was Mother Theresa who once said: "I am a little pencil in the hand of God who is sending a love letter to the world."

YouthCARE's pencil people, our staff and volunteers, all bring their own unique gifts and talents to their workplace – be it in government schools, within the community or at head office. Likewise, each one of us has a unique story to tell and different reasons why we have been called to this Ministry of expressing God's love and presence in educational communities.

For some, it might be to teach students the powerful impact of vision, to dare go where nobody has gone – and leave a trail. Others love to be involved in helping students set measurable goals, to dream and continue pushing their own personal boundaries – to create those rewarding, priceless moments.

Then there are those staff and volunteers who love helping students, school staff or members of the community to let go of their firm grip on their own 'pencils', assisting them (through various programs and intervention strategies) to work through the unwanted, dark strokes and shades of grey in their lives.

So that they too, can witness the subtle changes to their pictures which have been transformed to softer, warmer colours and reflect a life of colourful compassion!

This winter issue covers some of our passionate people's activities (love letters) and I hope you enjoy reading them as much as I had fun looking for them.

You'll read about the Australian Record Bench Press title holder (one of our school chaplains) who uses his talents to connect with people. Then there is the story of two men and their 'CRE prayers' – and their journey to enrol and be trained as volunteer CRE teachers. If creativity is more your style, read about the school chaplains who combined their creative ideas and talents to produce thought provoking posters that get the message across that our youth and their stories matter – that they were created for a purpose.

And, if you are like me, who feel outpaced by your technologically savvy kid, read more about empowering ourselves (and our kids) to socialise safely online.

Blessings in abundance – and may we never lose sight that we are all instruments in the hand of the Author of Life!

Karen Coetzee
karenc@youthcare.org.au



Letter of gratitude for caring chaplain

Dear [redacted]

My name is [redacted] and I am in year [redacted]. I am writing this letter to tell you how grateful I am to have Monica as our Chaplain. For the past three or so months I have been seeing Monica Mendes and receiving help on some difficult issues I have had to overcome and I am still working on some issues with her. She has been there for me through the thick and thin, big and small. I do not think I have met someone so caring before no matter what is going on she will help and I think that is amazing and she is a tremendous asset to the school and I would like the opportunity to thank you and the school for hiring Monica because I don't think I could have got through this ruff patch in my life without her. I feel that Monica's tremendous efforts should be recognised and mentioned. I can not wait to have her as our Chaplain next year. She is an amazing person who will do everything in her power to make you feel happy, safe and welcome. She has also taught me so many things that are important to my health and [redacted]. No matter how down you are feeling her words and smile make you feel happy and you feel that everything will be ok and it is not the end of the world. She has changed my attitudes to positive not negative and she has just made me feel so happy and I can very easily put all my trust in her. I also think it is an awesome event that she holds on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. She comes in bright and early to make students breakfast for them to eat. She is thoughtful and trustworthy. So thank you so much for hiring Monica Mendes as the School Chaplain. I can't thank you enough.

YouthCARE school chaplain Monica Mendes (pictured right) was recently acknowledged for her work in a letter, addressed to her school principal. To protect the identity of the student (whose parents gave consent that we publish the letter), her details have been blocked out.

It should also be noted that YouthCARE, not the school as indicated in the letter, employs school chaplains.



Mentors sought for Indigenous interns

YouthCARE is currently developing school chaplaincy internship opportunities for Indigenous people, who will be mentored by experienced school chaplains for a term, or longer, in their respective schools. The pilot program will run in Perth.

We are seeking to develop a small pool of experienced school chaplains, who have a good understanding of

Indigenous people, to be available and act as mentors. School chaplains in the metropolitan area, who are interested in becoming part of this initiative, can notify Stephen Larkin (Stephen@youthcare.org.au), highlighting their relevant background experience for this role.

As the program expands, expressions of interest will be sought from school chaplains outside the metro area.

Live the Legacy

School chaplain Abe challenges students 'to defy mediocrity, live with vision'.



CHALLENGING MEOCURITY Dunraig Senior High School students recently celebrated the school's 10th Alive Week, which urges students to live with vision, challenge mediocrity and avoid a dull, stale existence by devouring sport, art, music and creativity. **Pictured back, left – right:** Abe van Hatch (YouthCARE school chaplain and organiser of Alive Week), Liam Ryan and Liane Rasmussen. **Front, left – right:** Alexandra Bouma (Head Girl), Michael Bailey (Head Boy) and Carissa Alosi.

"I never thought school could be this inspiring."
"I feel accepted, purely for myself."

These were comments by two Dunraig Senior High School students after the school's recent Alive Week with the theme 'Live the Legacy', organised by YouthCARE school chaplain Abe van Hatch with the assistance of fellow school chaplain Ali Dee.

The school's 10th Alive Week – coordinated by Abe for the 5th time – urges students to live with vision, challenge mediocrity and avoid a dull, stale existence by devouring sport, art, music and creativity. The week was crammed with activities ranging from obstacle courses, a triathlon race, dunking machines, a number of competitions and bands, climbing walls, pancake and watermelon treats, a free dress day and seminars.

Former Captain of the Australian women's hockey team and winner of three gold medals, Rechelle Hawkes, was one of the celebrities involved in the more formal part of the week. Her motivational message to students during a seminar, was to persevere. "Persistence pays off, never give up! I got knocked back, but I chose not to let it bring me down. I kept on fighting until I succeeded," she said.

Other seminar speakers included youth motivational speaker, Mike Matich on dreaming big, comedian Mike Connell on how one should laugh at yourself and build resilience. Blind Paralympic bronze medalist winner in tandem cycling, Janet Shaw, in turn spoke about persistence in overcoming your circumstances.

Abe says students went wild, when two wildcat players Jesse Jagstaff and Stephen Weigh also turned up at the school.

During his speech at assembly, Abe challenged

students to not only exist, but to grapple and wrestle with their thoughts of where they want to go, who they want to become and how they want to influence others.

"You are sitting on fireworks of different shapes and sizes, ready to be ignited. Just think of all the people you will impact, all the places you will go, the opportunities you will have – all you need is a match. And that match is vision! Lack of vision can stop you from igniting a most exciting and fiery life," he said.

"We live in a now world – out now, buy now, download now, but we rarely talk about the future – let alone the distant future. It's almost a mystery to us and it can strain our brains so much that we decide not to think about it at all, but rather just let it happen... Start thinking about the future and what legacy you want to leave behind. That legacy might be something big like inventing something that changes the world. It can also be something not so epic, but incredibly important, like teaching your children honesty or keeping self respect whilst others around you may not. We are not born to simply exist – we are individuals who have something to offer this world. We will make our lives count by leaving a legacy behind."

Dunraig Senior High School Principal, Mr Graeme Smith says it is 'fantastic' to see so many students involved in the many varied activities, enjoying a different side to the school experience.

"I hope that our students take on the challenge, think about their futures and become visionary thinkers. Both Abe and Ali are to be congratulated on a great week."

Jenny swaps the pharmacy for pastoral care

Not many people would know that Jenny Mazalevskis, who has been a YouthCARE school chaplain for 18 months, is a qualified pharmacist. In actual fact, she spent more than 30 years in pharmacies in Hamilton Hill and West Perth, providing prescription and other medication to those with physical and emotional wounds.

Why this bold career move, switching from pharmaceuticals to school chaplaincy?

"Each school chaplain has a different reason to be called to this work, but in the end our goals are all the same – to listen, show love where it often is lacking and to demonstrate care & compassion to the community where we work. I felt called to school chaplaincy

to teach children resilience to life's events and to encourage them to always strive towards happy and respectful interaction with others. Over the years I've seen many people with illnesses which in some instances appear to have been brought on by trauma, unresolved anger, grief and so on," she said.

"I feel for those addicted to drugs as it has a huge impact on their lives and the lives of their loved ones. To leave the addiction is extremely hard and I feel if I can be of some use in steering children away from the need to use drugs, even if it is only two, it will be worth it for them and their families."

Jenny says she particularly enjoys being involved in the Rainbows Program (an

extra-curricular program for students who may be experiencing some crisis in their lives, such as a family breakdown or the death of a loved one) and the Resilience Program which helps to build children's self esteem and reduce anxiety.

She also finds Helen McGrath's Bounce Back Program (a junior school pastoral care program that fosters well-being, a sense of belonging and connectedness) beneficial. "Pastoral care and academic progress go hand in hand and this program is designed to impart core values and encourage resilience in children, so that they learn to bounce back when things don't turn out as they hope or expect," she said.



YouthCARE school chaplain Jenny Mazalevskis says it is the spark of love that makes us human. "It is in each one of us. It is important for school chaplains to help the youth discover and nurture it, so that they can grow and glow."

First group of YouthCARE peer skills facilitators trained

By: Neil Masters

The first YouthCARE Peer Skills facilitator training program was held recently in Perth. Seven high school chaplains and teachers learnt how to equip key students in school communities with the skills and knowledge to act as guides and supporters for their peers as they face issues or situations on their journey to adulthood.

The YouthCARE Peer Skills workshop is designed to build and enhance young people's interpersonal skills and confidence to help other young people handle personal problems or conflicts. Ray Redner, YouthCARE school chaplain at Coodanup Community College who was part of the first group of peer skills facilitators to be trained, said he found the program beneficial. "It will benefit the school community. By training students, particularly the leadership group (student council), they will be able to help their peers through certain life situations."

Peer helpers do not try to fix anyone, but rather seek to guide others in solving their own issue or problem. It is also made very clear that there will be times when they will need to pass on the situation to a school or community based support person, or perhaps receive some support themselves after the helping experience. Thus, positive patterns of problem solving, supportive relationships and help seeking can be taken into adulthood.

By training and equipping students in school communities for this task, there will be a more compassionate and

capable response when young people do seek help from their peer network.

Workshops are held over two consecutive days, for up to 16 students and usually away from the school campus. Students can be self, peer or teacher nominated and the workshop must be run by at least two trained facilitators.

A Canning Vale College student, who attended the first peer skills training workshop presented to students, said he benefited from the program. "From now on, I will listen to my friends in more detail, because during one of the role play exercises in the workshop I learnt how it feels to be ignored."

The program was first developed by Kids Help Line in Queensland in 1994 in response to the large number of calls made by young people concerned for and wanting to help their friends, but not knowing what to do. Since then around 20 000 young people across Australia have completed the program, with a course cost of under \$13 per student.

Anybody who has completed the Peer Skills training with Kids Help Line in the past, remains qualified to facilitate groups within their school, although a half day refresher course is recommended if there has been a considerable gap in time.

For more information contact John Clapton, Head of Religious Education & Volunteer Services at YouthCARE on (08) 9376 5000 or johnc@youthcare.org.au
• Visit the Peer Skills website www.peerskills.com.au to read more about this proven approach to problem prevention, youth development and community building.



FIRST IN WA ... Ray Redner (YouthCARE school chaplain at Coodanup Community College), pictured left and Karin Jackson, Middle School Coordinator at Coodanup Community College (right) were part of the first group of WA school staff and YouthCARE school chaplains to complete the YouthCARE Peer Skills facilitator training in WA. Pictured with them is Fransesca Lejeune (Manager: Peer Skills Program at Lifeline Community Care in Queensland) who presented the facilitator training workshop.

How do we help our teens socialise safely online?



While social networking sites can increase a person's circle of friends, they can also amplify exposure to people with less than friendly intentions. Connect asked YouthCARE school chaplain, Joel Candy to share some quick facts and tips on how parents can empower their kids to socialise safely online.

"The world has changed and technology is now available to our children 24/7 – be it via computer or on their mobile phones. It is important that parents talk to their children in a non-confrontational manner, highlighting the risks involved and lay down parental control mechanisms," Joel says.

He found a number of sites which are helpful in guiding parents and children on how to connect safely.

"Connectsafely.org is a site for parents, teens, educators – basically everyone engaged in and interested in the impact of the Web. It has all kinds of social-media safety tips for teens and parents, amongst others: virtual world safety tips for parents of teens, tips to stop cyber bullying, and cell phone safety tips, to mention a few."

Joel says that research has shown that kids tend to share their passwords with one another. "It is important that parents make their children understand how harmful this can be and this site also has tips for creating strong, secure passwords."

Other sites that he found helpful were Onguard Online (www.onguardonline.gov) and the facebook security site (www.facebook.com/help/?safety=parents)

You can assist kids to socialise safely online by:

- Helping them understand what information should be private
- Explaining that they should post only information that you – and they – are comfortable with others seeing
- Using privacy settings to restrict who can access and post on your child's website
- Reminding them that once they've posted information online, they can't take it back
- Telling them to trust their instincts. If they ever feel uncomfortable or threatened by anything online, they must inform you.

School's innovative, 'no fuss' fundraiser

Mount Lawley Senior High School came up with an innovative fundraiser to support their school chaplain – all it costs is a bit of time.

"The second hand school uniform fundraising project is so simple and easy. It doesn't cost us anything, apart from our time before and after school and during the last six months the chaplaincy fund has been injected with \$1,800," says Andrew Paul, who has been a school chaplain at the school since 1992. The fundraiser was initiated at the end of last year after motivating

year 12 students to donate their school uniforms at the end of their school career. The items of clothing are then sold by members of the Mount Lawley YouthCARE Council during the busy periods – at the start of the academic year and each new term – and the money deposited into the YouthCARE head office account, earmarked for Andrew's chaplaincy fund.

When new students enrol at the school, staff members also inform them of the

second hand school uniform shop, which provides Andrew with a unique opportunity to connect with them and their families.

"In the end this no cost initiative is a win-win situation for everyone," Andrew said.

James Middleton (Mount Lawley YouthCARE Council member, left) sells second hand school uniforms to raise funds to support school chaplain Andrew Paul (right). All money raised is earmarked for Andrew's chaplaincy fund.



Strongman Nathan's heart pumps sturdily for school chaplaincy

Australian Bench Press Record holder and YouthCARE school chaplain Nathan Baxter says there is no greater reward than seeing students 'get it'.

"Nothing – not even my recent trip to the World Bench Press Championships in Texas – gives me such a kick than when, sometimes after years of seeing what appears to be no result, a student will do or say something that reveals the penny has dropped. This makes my job very satisfying," says the 165kg Karratha Senior High School chaplain who broke his own Australian Bench Press record for the 6th time with a lift of 290kg in Texas during May.

"Being in a country town and at Karratha Senior High School for 8 years, means I am able to form long lasting, meaningful relationships with my students – even after they've completed school. I stay connected with them for long enough to celebrate when they get their first job or get married."

Nathan says he particularly enjoys presenting the Rock and Water Program, aimed at young male students at the school. The program encompasses physical-social teaching

for boys and helps them do develop self-control, self-reflection and self-confidence.

This muscle man, who is also the Strongman title winner (Nov 2009 – South West strongest man) and winner in the National Australian Power Lifting Championships (2008 & 2009), says he loves the opportunity to connect with people 'on a very real level' and influence them in a positive way – inside and outside the school's gates.

One such occasion was at the recent World Bench Press Championships where Nathan connected with a South African competitor in the 90kg class.

"On the Thursday Heinrich was having a hard time, missing his first two attempts. He was actually nowhere making the first two lifts, so he was in grave danger of bombing out of the competition. So when his coach asked me to come backstage to help out on his third attempt – basically getting him fired up and ready to lift – I said yes."

While Heinrich was waiting for his turn, Nathan did something that he would rarely ask with such boldness – especially to someone he has just met. "I asked



YouthCARE school chaplain Nathan Baxter was recently credited with a 290kg bench press lift – and a new Australian record – at the World Bench Press Championships in Texas. This school chaplain loves water. He not only consumes on average 6 to 8 litres per day, but the Rock and Water Program, aimed at young male students, is one of his favourite programs that he presents at Karratha Senior High School.

if I could pray for him. And in such a public setting too," Nathan exclaimed.

When Heinrich accepted, Nathan prayed that he would feel God's peace and that He would remove all anxiety, enabling Heinrich to lift.

Heinrich went out and absolutely smashed his third attempt and retold the story several times that evening.

Nathan says that his diet before a competition is not that much different to the man in the street – 'it's just the quantity and frequency that is much greater.' He eats a lot of steak, vegetables and oats 'plus some protein shakes around training times.'

Owing to 'ongoing issues' with his right knee, he will probably not be heading to South Africa to participate in the World Power Lifting Championships in Potchefstroom in November this year,

but he plans to be back for the World Championships in Austria in 2011, if he can secure a major sponsor. Companies who are interested in sponsoring Nathan, who is also his own coach, can contact YouthCARE head office on (08) 93765000.

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS:

Winner:

WA Power lifting championships 2007, 2008, 2009

Winner:

Victorian State Championships 2008, 2009

YouthCARE goes on air

YouthCARE recently hit the Perth airwaves – on 98.5 to be precise – when Sonshine FM announcer Rodney Olsen interviewed a group of school chaplains on a variety of social issues that are presently being faced by Australian teenagers. All school chaplains who were interviewed, were selected for their expertise on the subjects being discussed, not owing to the school or environments within which they operate. Topics under discussion included substance abuse, social networking issues, bullying, values teaching and self esteem problems.



Pictured with Sonshine FM's Rodney Olsen (left) are the first two YouthCARE school chaplains who were interviewed – Joel Candy (back) and Jenny Mazalevskis (front). Fiona Beermier, Head: YouthCARE Chaplaincy Services, is pictured far right.

Taking time out...

The Gosnells City cluster YouthCARE school chaplains took the opportunity of using their professional development allowance and go on a retreat. Their time, away from the stresses of the job, was spent on teambuilding, personal reflection, networking/support and 'God time', planned by one of the school chaplains.

The group recommends a cluster retreat to all school chaplains, saying it is a very worthwhile and enriching time together. "Although it was short, we all became closer to one another and learnt something more about each other and our individual experiences as chappies," one school chaplain commented.



Pictured back row, left – right, are: Christine Thomas (Thornlie Primary School), Robyn Tyrie (Ranford Primary School), Jane Warman (Southern River College), Ryan Hill (Canning Vale Community College), Stephanie Sanderson (Maddington Primary School), Grace Munnee (Gosnells Primary School) and John Baxter (Orange Grove Primary School). Pictured front row, left – right are: Lauren Hollett (Excelsior/Canning Vale Primary School), Bev Pabedinskas (Yale Primary School), Helen Ivatts (Wirrabirra Primary School) and Jeanette Stewart (Ashburton Dr Primary School).



Belmont City College twins Melissa (left) and Bonnie Wheeler say their YouthCARE school chaplain Vicki Banks (far left) treats them as individuals and not as twins. "She also arranges an array of activities that builds spirit and harmony within our college. Kids will often say 'I am going to the school chaplain' without any discomfort."

Here they are pictured with fellow student, Latisha Trinidad in the college's centrally located games room that serves as a drop in centre for students and staff to have a chat with Vicki. She says the centre 'is like a train station during recess and lunch times, jam packed with students testing their skills on one another in a variety of different games – including pool.'

COMMUNITY NEWS

Reaching out beyond our shores



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Pickering Brook Primary student Brianna Herden (10) collects cans to raise funds to build a toilet block at Ang Serey Primary School in Kampong Speu, Cambodia. The Herden family has close ties with school chaplain Glynis Turpin, who coordinates the project. Brianna's parents were both students at Lesmurdie High School where Glynis started her chaplaincy career 18 years ago.

Chaplains and their schools are responding to the plight of the poor

YouthCARE chaplains David Karcheski and Glynis Turpin are two of many school chaplains who, in conjunction with their schools, are reaching out to the poorest of the poor beyond our shores.

Although the duo's projects vastly differ from one another, both are linked to the goals of their respective schools – teaching students the value of care and compassion whilst raising consciousness of the social injustice that exists in society.

Their unique programs aim to build a sense of pride in their schools, teach students to cultivate an opinion that says 'no' to social injustice, whilst motivating them to get involved and positively impact on the lives of the less fortunate.

Raising \$5K in 10 weeks for Thailand

When David Karcheski learnt about the work that Seeds of Love Inc was doing amongst the leper colonies in Thailand and that one of Armadale Senior High School's Alumni was directly involved, he knew they had to collaborate.

"The organisation builds homes – designed by one of our old students, Michael Hansma – for the lepers who have been ostracised because of their condition.

They often end up living in the slums and in very poor conditions," he said.

Owing to the aims of the project – that students had to think outside themselves and put the needs of others in a higher position in their value system – students from Armadale Senior High School had to drive the project themselves. They rose to the challenge that David and the school's staff put to them – to raise \$5,000 in ten weeks.

Although the fundraising aspect of the project was the most visible part of this venture, it was not the school's main aim.

"We knew that raising money to build a home in Australia would be a formidable task, but building them in Thailand would require significantly less, thus our challenge to the students to raise this money within the set time frame," David said.

A fundraising concert and the sales of chocolates were the largest income generators. Other initiatives included a car wash, a disco, 'guess the number of jelly beans' and many more.

The school is contemplating taking the students to Thailand to build some of the homes themselves.

Collecting cans for Cambodia

For some, it's just an empty aluminium can. For students at Pickering Brook Primary, it is a source of potential income – and a step closer to realising their dream of building a toilet block for students in Cambodia who would otherwise not have had access to this facility we all take for granted.

"When our principal, Ms Suzanne Cooper, visited Cambodia and witnessed first hand that the 550 students at Ang Serey Primary School in Kampong Speu did not have access to a toilet, she knew that we had to get involved," explains Glynis Turpin, school chaplain who coordinates the cans for Cambodia project at the school.

"Many students, particularly females, did not regularly attend school and this is why we decided to raise money to build a toilet block for the school. This project gave us the opportunity to educate our students about those in need whilst linking the project to recycling and how other people's trash could benefit the less fortunate."

Students, with the assistance of Glynis, collect the cans which are then washed, de-ringed, squashed and sold for scrap. "By recycling, we are not only being kinder

to the environment, but making life for many others more bearable. The project also teaches our children how fortunate they are as six in ten Cambodians do not have access to clean water and eight in ten lack decent sanitation. Almost 15% of Cambodian children do not live to see their 5th birthday and of those who survive, fewer than 60% will complete primary school."

Glynis says each member of the school community is involved in the fundraising efforts for the Ang Serey Primary School. "Our student council organizes MAD days (Make A Difference days) which are either a uniform free day or a fete where students are encouraged to make items which are then sold. Last year a group of girls made jewellery items which were very popular." Glynis also knits scarves – more than 50 in a year – and sells them for the Cambodian fund.

The school has a 'can monitor' (a student) who keeps record of both the donors and the number of cans donated. At the end of each term the names of the donors are put into a hat and the name that is drawn out, receives a prize that Glynis donates.

Pickering Brook Primary School has already sent a container full of books and stationery items to Ang Serey Primary School.

CRE & VOLUNTEERS



John Wesley (left) and Ross Allen have been praying for the prosperity and effectiveness of school chaplaincy and Christian Religious Education for more than a decade and have now been trained as accredited CRE teachers.

“For over forty seasons we’ve been praying for the volunteer CRE teachers in public school classrooms. Now we are part of that group of more than 380 CRE volunteers who need other people’s prayers!”
John Wesley.

Two men and their prayers for Christian Religious Education

John Wesley and Ross Allen have been partners in prayer for more than a decade, meeting at 6.30 am on Tuesday mornings and appealing for the expansion and effectiveness of Christian Religious Education and chaplaincy in public schools. After hearing about the need for more CRE teachers in public primary schools, the two men enlisted and were recently trained and accredited as volunteer CRE teachers.

“I suppose, you can say we’ve come a full circle,” explained John. “For over forty seasons

we’ve been praying for the volunteer CRE teachers in public school classrooms. Now we are part of that group of more than 380 CRE volunteers who need other people’s prayers!”

“Our interdenominational prayer group has always prayed – as long as 15 years and just over 10 years in its present form – for Christian Religious Education coordinators, conveners and teachers as well as school chaplains – not only in the Gosnells area, but across WA and Australia,” Ross Allen explained.

Both men agreed that as a result of earnest and consistent prayers, they have noticed ‘a greater degree of fruitfulness and effectiveness of both programs in the City of Gosnells.’

John said it was his concern for the future of Australia’s children that drove him to consider making time in his already busy schedule to become an accredited volunteer CRE teacher.

“Over the years, I have witnessed the decline in operational Sunday Schools and Kids’ Church becoming less available

to non-churchgoing children. This deep concern for our Nation’s children, our future, drove me to be trained,” John said. Ross in turn, has always enjoyed working with people and when he heard about the shortage of CRE teachers, he knew he had to get involved so that he too, could make a meaningful difference to children’s lives.

Both men are impressed with the quality of YouthCARE material and the amount of work covered in the CRE training.

YouthCARE hosts first celebration service and training day

YouthCARE recently conducted its first celebration service & training day for their Council members and CRE teachers.

The two day event, held at the Highway Foursquare Church in Beechboro, attracted volunteers from across the Perth Metro area and it is hoped that it will become an annual event.

Stanley Jeyaraj (CEO: YouthCARE) updated volunteers of recent developments at YouthCARE. YouthCARE Council members were introduced to the new Brand Pack 2010 (comprising the YouthCARE Brand

Manual, various printed promotional material and a range of electronic material and templates) that would assist YouthCARE Council members in communicating a coordinated message and brand to their various stakeholders.

Workshops were held for YouthCARE Council chairpersons, secretaries and treasurers, CRE teachers were recognised for long service and CRE coordinators and teachers attended a practical session on Biblical storytelling, presented by Michael Lush.

Making stories come alive

“We all tell stories – on the phone, facebook and face to face. Biblical storytelling is not much different. We need to use our heads, our hearts and our bodies to make the stories come alive. By internalising the story, it will remain with you for the rest of your life, not just for the duration of the CRE lecture,” Michael Lush said.

Other story telling tips from him included:

- Always remain true to the Biblical text;
- Do background research to understand the text and content of the story in

relation to historic events of the time;

- Remember that during Biblical times, stories were told, they were not written down;
- Look for clues in the text that can guide you in your storytelling (eg if the scripture reading says ‘Jesus sat down’, then you need to sit down);
- Mull over the story, internalise it and make it your own – ask yourself if there is a specific part of the story that evokes a response from you;
- Personal experiences can help you to make the story your own.



FAR LEFT: Brenda Chester (CRE coordinator) and CRE teachers Ruth Welch, Merle Seitz and Dinah Gan attended the YouthCARE celebration and training day.

LEFT: Michael Lush (pictured right), with CRE teacher Mark Staer from the Lakelands YouthCARE Council.



In the photograph (left – right): Mary Boyle (member of the St Augustine's church), David Cuniffe (YouthCARE school chaplain at Bunbury Senior High School), Jean Bindon (Bunbury YouthCARE Council member & member of the St Augustine's church) and Nicole Cuniffe (YouthCARE school chaplain at Carey Park Primary School).

More funds for school chaplaincy

The Uniting Church in Australia runs pancake day events on Shrove Tuesday each year to raise money for community outreach by selling pancakes and tasty toppings. The St Augustine's Church in Bunbury raised over \$850 for chaplaincy in the Bunbury area and the money will be used to benefit disadvantaged students by running breakfast clubs and a range of other activities.

"The pancake fundraising day gives me the opportunity to share with a large number of people who gather to have fun, raise money and support the outreach work of their local YouthCARE chaplains. It also reminds me that I go into a school as part of a bigger team," Bunbury Senior High School chaplain David Cuniffe said.

Shenton YouthCARE Council celebrates platinum anniversary

Shenton YouthCARE Council recently held its 20th year celebration service, which was attended by more than 60 supporters of Christian Religious Education (CRE) and chaplaincy. Shane Scott, the first YouthCARE school chaplain (1990 – 2008) travelled especially from

Queensland to attend the event, held at the Hollywood Bowling Club. Pastor Barry Ryall, initiator of chaplaincy in the Shenton area and now member of the YouthCARE Board, was the guest speaker and challenged guests with his message 'I believe in chaplaincy... because.'

Guests – which included previous and current principals from local schools, members of 11 local churches, school chaplains and volunteer CRE coordinators & teachers as well as YouthCARE head office staff – were treated to a three course dinner whilst being entertained by Emily Yap's Ace Muzik Ensemble.



REFLECTING ON TWENTY YEARS (left – right) Shane Scott, (the first YouthCARE school chaplain to be appointed within the Shenton YouthCARE Council (1990 – 2008), Steve Ritchie (YouthCARE school chaplain from 2006 – 2008) and Coralyn Williams, (the first chair of the Shenton YouthCARE Council) shared some chaplaincy and CRE stories at the Council's platinum anniversary celebrations.



Also pictured at the Shenton YouthCARE Council's 20th anniversary celebrations were Laurel Collin, current chair (left) and Geraldine Jorgensen (right).

Anonymous donor gives \$10,000 towards school chaplaincy

Prior to going to print, YouthCARE head office received \$10,000 towards the school chaplaincy program in the Balcatta area. The donor, who wishes to remain anonymous, requested that West Balcatta Primary School and Balcatta Senior High School be the beneficiaries.

Trivia night & auction dinner raises \$2,000 for school chaplaincy in the City of Wanneroo

School chaplaincy programs in the City of Wanneroo recently got a \$2,000 boost from funds raised at the Wanneroo Business Association's (WBA) trivia night and auction dinner. More than 130 guests, amongst others City of Wanneroo Mayor Jon Kelley and Deputy Mayor Tracey Roberts, attended the event.

Numerous local businesses supported the evening by way of donations of goods and services for silent or main auction and prizes. A 'magnificent' set of four Spirit of ANZAC prints attracted the highest bid for an item, followed by a Matthew Pavlich signed football jumper. The WBA donated 30% of the total net raised to YouthCARE school chaplaincy programs within the City of Wanneroo.

WBA Executive Officer Bev Letton says that YouthCARE is their chosen community charity to support. "I believe our youth today face so many challenges we can't even imagine and YouthCARE school chaplaincy plays an integral part in many children's lives. As a business community we have a responsibility to support tomorrow's business and community leaders in a moral way and with integrity."

\$1,000 secured at Dr Fiona Wood fundraiser

\$1,000 was raised for school chaplaincy in the Moora District recently. Head of the Royal Perth Hospital burns unit and founder of the Clinical Cell Company, Dr Fiona Wood, was the motivational speaker. Dr Wood has received many accolades for her work, amongst others, an order of Australia Medal for service to the Bali bombing victims, Australian of the Year (2005) and the National Living Treasure Award in 2004.

The fundraising event was sponsored by the Moora YouthCARE Council, Central Midlands Senior High School and Moora Primary School.



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