

CONNECT

SPRING
EDITION
2010

Keeping friends of YouthCARE connected



Nathan's our 450th CRE teacher!

Nathan Clifford (24) recently became the 450th volunteer to register as a Christian Religious Education teacher at YouthCARE.

Nathan, who is Youth Pastor at C3 Church Crawley, says he is 'very passionate' about getting involved in CRE.

"I want to be able to play a small part in shaping the lives of the youth in a positive way. Through my involvement in the Live Youth program which runs at our church, I get to connect and interact with youngsters on Friday evenings. Now I've taken it one step further, through my involvement with YouthCARE's CRE program."

Nathan said he knew the time was right to get involved in CRE, when he heard his wife Chanelle was expecting their first child.

"I too, want to play an active role in equipping our youth with good Christian principles and CRE is another great way of doing this."

Rev John Clapton, Head of Religious Education and Volunteer Services at YouthCARE, says that it is encouraging to see young people like Nathan getting involved in CRE.

"Given the average age of our volunteer workforce, it is really encouraging to see young people taking up the challenge to share the stories of our faith with young people in our public schools. Flexible work and study schedules create opportunities for young people that weren't available in the past."

Nathan will be assisting Dorreen Cheah in her CRE activities at Nedlands Primary. His CRE co-ordinator for the area is Catherine Plowman.

Helping girls heal from brokenness caused by family breakdown

Mending girls' broken wings

There is no one better able to help and mentor girls wounded by the pain of divorce and family breakdown than those who have triumphed over similar misfortunes.

YouthCARE school chaplain Kita Stringer and Renee Bennett, the author of 'Broken Wing Butterfly', both experienced the breakdown of their family units as young girls. Although they couldn't change their pasts, they could change their futures – and are now equipping other young girls in similar fate, to do the same.

"In a way I suppose you can say we refused to become victims, but soared as victors above our circumstances, equipping and empowering young teenage girls to heal from the cycle of brokenness, learning not to repeat it in their own lives," school chaplain Kita reflected.

She says she loves the encouraging relationships with the parents and teachers and recently had 'a huge breakthrough' with some teenage girls who worked through Renee's innovative, self-help book at Narrogin SHS.

One such student is Talia Cunningham, who said Kita helped her to deal and work through a number of personal issues.

"Kita has always been there for me, is caring and kind. Coming through this experience has made me a much happier person. I am now glad to face each new day."

She said Kita's mentoring and Renee's book enabled her to see that this time of sadness and hurt represented an opportunity for self evaluation and growth.

"I can't thank them enough. They helped me come to terms with my broken life. I discovered that if the wings of a butterfly could be mended, so could I. The book made me re-evaluate my feelings of acceptance and self worth. It helped me plan the route map to break negative behavioural patterns that stem from rejection."

"It felt like there was someone standing there and telling me that I am loved, unique and beautiful, I was happy that something was going to help me get over my broken family. The self reflection in the journal entries enabled me to evaluate my thoughts about my own self worth, the effects my situation had on me and the way I see the world, and the self destructing behaviours that result from rejection. It showed me how I could move beyond all of this and plan for a bright future," Talia said.



YOU CAN WIN!

The YouthCARE school chaplain, who moved to Narrogin three and a half years ago, said that her experiences as an eight year old - hearing that her dad was leaving - enabled her to develop an understanding and empathy for the difficulties and issues faced by children who miss out on decent relationships with either or both parents.

"My dad meant the world to me – I used to ride to his house and have breakfast with him every morning. Everything changed in my life, later on discovering that my father wasn't a good husband. But children don't see these things, they just know that Dad is gone. I couldn't live with my stepfather and moved out of home at the age of sixteen. I know what it's like to struggle in relationships and therefore love spending time with people, caring for them and helping them discover their potential - and grow," Kita said.

"Coming through this experience has made me a much happier person. I am now glad to face each new day. They helped me come to terms with my broken life."

Talia Cunningham

Talia Cunningham, a student at Narrogin SHS, says her YouthCARE school chaplain, Kita Stinger (right) enabled her to work through personal issues, making her realise that her family's breakdown was not her fault.

Photograph: Alicia Wills

Renee, who experienced her parents' break up as a three year old, said that what she didn't realize at the time, was that the very core of a girl's self esteem, value and confidence was rooted in her relationship with her dad.

"When this is missing, it deeply affects how a young girl views herself. I always used to ask my Mum, 'Does Dad love me?' She always answered, 'Yes, of course'. But I always thought 'How could he? He left us!' To me, actions spoke louder than words. I had been rejected by the man who mattered most, my dad, so I came to expect it again. I couldn't believe a man would love me enough to stay; it had never been modelled to me," Renee said.

She continued, saying that she became very shy and introverted. "It made me grow up a lot quicker and I had to be very responsible.

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EDITORIAL

No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow. Perth is awakening to the season I love the most.

Plants and flowers are blooming. We once again head out into the sunshine with our picnic baskets and blankets, finding a resting place below leafy trees in our beautiful parks. Birds are chirping, children are flying kites and riding their bicycles. Some of us are even energized to start with our new exercise routines!

The soil smells different – some say this unique scent is brought about by the changes in temperature which signals that the surface is ripe for flora to grow.

Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672), regarded as one of the most important figures in the history of American Literature, said: "If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome."

In this Spring Edition with the theme, *personal growth and development*, we wish to

bring honour to those individuals who are courageous enough to move beyond their emotional winters and toils. To boldly go where others haven't gone – and leave a trail.

As one person whom I interviewed recently commented: "I can't change my past, but I can certainly shape my future by making correct and informed decisions – refusing to remain a victim of my circumstance."

Many of our projects would not have been able to get off the ground, or be as successful, without the commitment and involvement of the school leadership, teachers, parents and the student themselves. It takes a community to raise a child.

In this edition you'll read about a YouthCARE school chaplain and a youth worker's combined success in equipping students (who had low class marks and attendance figures) to unlearn old behavioural patterns, relearn new skills and set achievable goals – with amazing results.

Speaking of goals, Margaret Court, the greatest ladies' tennis player of all time having won 62 Grand Slam titles during her brilliant career, recently commented at a YouthCARE function how effective goal setting and listening to God's voice, were the secrets of her success.

With over 43% of marriages in Australia ending in divorce, thousands of teenagers are carrying the emotional scars and crying on the inside. After using an excellent self-help book entitled 'Broken Wing Butterfly', a school chaplain recorded a number of successes with young teenager girls within her school. Connect not only spoke to one of these courageous young women who has committed to not repeating the same mistakes, but also to the author of the book, Renee Bennett, who experienced family break up first hand as a three year old.

Then there is the story about a YouthCARE school chaplain who realised that emotional health and wellbeing amongst teachers are crucial for classroom success – read more about the program that he introduced within his school.

May we never stop learning and growing – even if it results in some painful pruning! And may we always remember – it is in the valleys of life that we grow.

Blessings in abundance
Karen Coetzee
karenc@youthcare.org.au



P.S.

The colourful posters by Justin Smith and Amy Bell, as reported in the previous issue of Connect, have evoked such positive responses from chaplains and school principals, that it will soon be distributed to all YouthCARE school chaplains in the State.

A call of action 'Speak to your YouthCARE chaplain' has been added to the five posters to point students in the right direction. Justin, a chaplain at Kalgoorlie Boulder Community High School and Amy, chaplain at South Kalgoorlie Primary School are quite 'overwhelmed' by the reaction to their posters.

Amy, who designed the posters, said that she was really surprised with the response. "I'm really astounded that something that started off as such a small local high school project has become so big and is now being rolled out across the State. It has the potential to impact the lives of thousands of high school kids all over WA! It's a little overwhelming really, but I love the fact that everybody is so excited about our work."

The posters will be distributed to all YouthCARE chaplains via their area chaplains.



Photograph: Charmaine Lachner

Cover story continued



I remember being very confused most of the time. I felt very responsible for how everyone around me was feeling. It was not a normal childhood, living out of a suitcase most of the time."

Both women agree that their lives are testimonies that one doesn't need to become a statistic. "We see first hand the devastating effects of family breakdown on young people and what a pandemic it is becoming. Young girls can break the vicious cycle, recover and live life to the full. This is our passionate plea to young girls in a similar fate."

- Narrogin SHS, Talia and her mum as well as Renee and Kita signed off on the article and granted YouthCARE permission to publish their stories.



WIN WIN WIN

Five lucky readers can win a copy of the Broken Wing Butterfly, donated by Renee Bennett. Just email your name, phone and address to: karenc@youthcare.org.au with the subject line "Broken Wing Butterfly". The book is available from Word Bookstore at \$19.95 or by ordering directly from www.brokenwingbutterfly.com.au

How to praise a child

The development of our children's self esteem is very important. Always remember to praise them. Here are some different phrases to do just that.

Wow! 😊 Hot Dog! ★ Super work!
Way to go! ❤️ Dynamite! ✓ Super job!
Creative work! ❤️ You are special!
You're unique! ✓ Fantastic! 😊 Outstanding!
Good for you! ★ Exceptional performance!
Excellent! ❤️ You're a winner! ✓ You're a real trooper! 😊 Great! ★ Remarkable job! ❤️
You are so responsible! ✓ Good!
You learned it right! 😊 Neat! ★ Spectacular!
You are amazing! ❤️ Well Done! ✓ What an imagination! 😊 Remarkable! ★ What a good listener! ❤️ I knew you could do it!
You're precious! ✓ You are so much fun!
😊 I'm proud of you! ★ Great discovery!
Fantastic! ❤️ You figured it out! ✓ You're a good friend! 😊 Superstar! ★ You're important!

♥ Nice work! ✓ Hip! Hip! Hooray! 😊 You mean a lot! It's looking good! ★ Bingo! ❤️
You are on top of it! ✓ Magnificent! ★ You belong! ❤️ Bravo! Marvellous! ✓ Hurray for You! 😊 Terrific! ★ I Trust You! ❤️ Beautiful!
You're important! ✓ You make me laugh!
😊 Now you're flying! ★ Phenomenal! ❤️
Great success! ✓ That's correct! 😊 You're incredible! ★ Good achievement! ❤️ You're a joy! ✓ You're fantastic! 😊 You're on your way! ★ Astonishing! ❤️ You're a treasure! ✓
How nice! 😊 Amazing! ★ A high five! How smart! ❤️ I admire you! ✓ Sensational! That's incredible! 😊 You're on target! ★ You tried hard! ❤️ Outstanding performance! ✓ You're wonderful! 😊 Awesome! ★ You've discovered the secret! ❤️ You made my day! ✓ Nothing can stop you now! 😊 I'm so grateful for you! ★ Thinking outside the square, well done!

Source: Childcareworld.com

School chaplain helps family to celebrate their past – and embrace their future

Jillian's journey

During her short thirty eight years Jillian McDowell has experienced more sadness than many people would be able to bear. This strong woman's journey bears testimony that in every negative situation there is a positive – even if you have to face your fears and dig deep – very deep.

The story that unfolds is an amazing journey of how a caring YouthCARE school chaplain assisted a grieving mother and her two daughters, aged 12 & 10, to work through their feelings of anger, sadness and loss after Jillian's husband of ten years died in a motorcycle accident. It was Shane McDowell's first trip on a motorbike and he was the passenger.

Rodger Beermier, who has been a school chaplain at Hillman Primary for the past two years, not only provided emotional and spiritual support to the family, but helped them to celebrate their past – and embrace their future.

He arranged a memorial service and tree planting ceremony at the school and assisted Daylin (12) and Teegan (10) come to terms with their new identities as events of their past extended. But let's start at the beginning ...

At the age of twenty, Jillian was a single parent, raising her son, Matthew, in South Africa. She later met David and they married in 1996. Their son, Michael was born later that year, but sadly died soon after birth.

A year on, Jillian became pregnant again. The couple's joy was however shortly lived when, one month into her pregnancy, David was murdered. Daylin was born eight months later and would sadly never know her father.

In search of a new life and safer future, Jillian moved to Australia with Matthew (then 7) and Daylin (then 1).

Five months into settling into their new Aussie home, Jillian's father passed away and she returned to South Africa for his funeral, remaining there for some time. During her stay in South Africa, Jillian became pregnant with her second daughter, Teegan, but later decided to move back to Australia. Teegan's father remained in South Africa.

Whilst attending church in Australia, Jillian met Shane McDowell and the couple married in 2000. They never had children of their own and Shane accepted and raised the two girls as his own. Two weeks before his death the couple revealed to the girls that he wasn't their biological father.

With Shane now gone, Jillian knew that her daughters not only had to deal with the death of the man they thought was their father, but that they would have questions about their identity.

"As Daylin had become very persistent in questioning me about her real dad, I was unsure how to tell her that her biological father had passed away. This would be a double blow and I knew that she would need a lot of support. Rodger would be able to give her that - he has been absolutely amazing. I can't thank him enough," Jillian said.

After Jillian followed Rodger's advice on how to break the news to her grade 7 daughter, Jillian went home and discussed the unfolding of their lives – not only with Daylin, but Teegan as well.

The next morning Teegan was the first to share her history with Rodger. "Teegan told me that they phoned her dad, Rodney, who still lives in South Africa and that it was 'wonderful' to talk to him for the very first time. Teegan also found out that she had twin half sisters and a half brother in South Africa"

"This would be a double blow and I knew that she would need a lot of support. Rodger would be able to give her that..."

After lunch Rodger met with Daylin, who had wanted to see him all day.

"Jillian shared her wedding album with Daylin before she told her he was her dad. Daylin was elated to know more about her biological father, David, and then focused on telling me that she has grandparents, aunts, uncles and even cousins who are living in South Africa. She then said that Jillian was taking them back to South Africa during the Christmas holidays, when they would meet their families for the very first time."

In view of the latest developments, Rodger questioned the girls if they still wanted a memorial service for Shane at the school as originally planned.

Daylin no longer wanted a memorial service, but her sister did.



"I then asked Daylin if she would like to include David, her biological father, in the memorial service and she agreed. This made her very happy," Rodger said.

The girls later decided to include their brother, Michael, in the memorial service as well.

After the memorial service, which was attended by the family, Hillman Primary Principal Wayne McKay, the Deputy Principal Rodney Graham and some of the girls' friends, Jillian and the girls proceeded to plant a Silver Birch tree and petunias in memory of the men who are still alive in their hearts.

"Now as the tree grows, whenever Jillian, Daylin or Teegan pass by the school, they will remember the special time of sadness, yet gladness that was had at Hillman Primary," Rodger concluded.

Jillian signed off on the article and granted YouthCARE permission to publish her story.



IN CELEBRATION OF THE THREE MEN IN THEIR LIVES ... Jillian McDowell & daughters Daylin (Grade 7) and Teegan (Grade 5) recently planted a Silver Birch tree and petunias at Hillman Primary in remembrance of the men in their lives. YouthCARE school chaplain Rodger Beermier (pictured right) played an 'instrumental role' in helping the family work through their grief and loss. Pictured from left to right are: Daylin Cook, Teegan Cook and Jillian McDowell.



New Pastoral Critical Incident Response course a first for WA

Providing help where it is needed

Like charcoal drawings, deeply etched on a piece of paper, the memory of the devastation of Black Saturday and the more recent destructive fires near the West Australian Wheatbelt town of Toodyay are imprinted in our minds.

In response to these and other critical incidents or potentially traumatic events, YouthCARE, with the support of the Department of Education and WA Government, has developed a Pastoral Critical Incident Response (PCIR) course. This course will help selected YouthCARE chaplains to provide pastoral care intervention to mitigate and alleviate possible emotional or spiritual difficulties resulting from traumatic events within the community.

Close to one hundred YouthCARE school chaplains underwent stringent psychometric testing prior to being accepted to the course and will be able to provide pastoral care resulting from traumatic events within their community. To date, five groups of chaplains have been trained and it is expected that all school chaplains who have passed their exams, will be commissioned towards the end of the year.

Head of Chaplaincy Services at YouthCARE, Fiona Beermier, says the PCIR has the

benefit of supporting a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach to post-incident recovery, incorporating best practice principles and doing no harm.

"The PCIR is designed to support and help adults and children to return to duty, to the classroom or to the community as soon as is reasonably possible, following a critical incident or potentially traumatic event."

"Our school chaplains, along-with other key players will provide pastoral intervention to individuals or groups who have been directly or indirectly affected by the event."

Dr David Cockram, an accredited PCIR trainer, conducted the psychometric testing, interviews and training, which amongst others comprised:

- Brain and body reactions to stress;
- Survivor reactions to a crisis;
- Crisis response and recovery cycle;
- Emotional first aid;
- The impact of trauma on children;
- Gender responses to stress;
- Post-traumatic stress disorder;
- Growth after trauma.
- Secondary traumatisation and
- School chaplain self-care.

"The PCIR is designed to support and help adults and children to return to duty, to the classroom or to the community as soon as is reasonably possible, following a critical incident or potentially traumatic event."



FIRST GROUP OF TRAILBLAZERS ... Pictured with Dr David Cockram (left), accredited Pastoral Critical Incident Response (PCIR) trainer, is the first group of YouthCARE school chaplains who were selected for the accredited PCIR course, following interviews and intensive psychometric testing. Pictured with them is Fiona Beermier, Head of YouthCARE Chaplaincy Services (right), project driver.

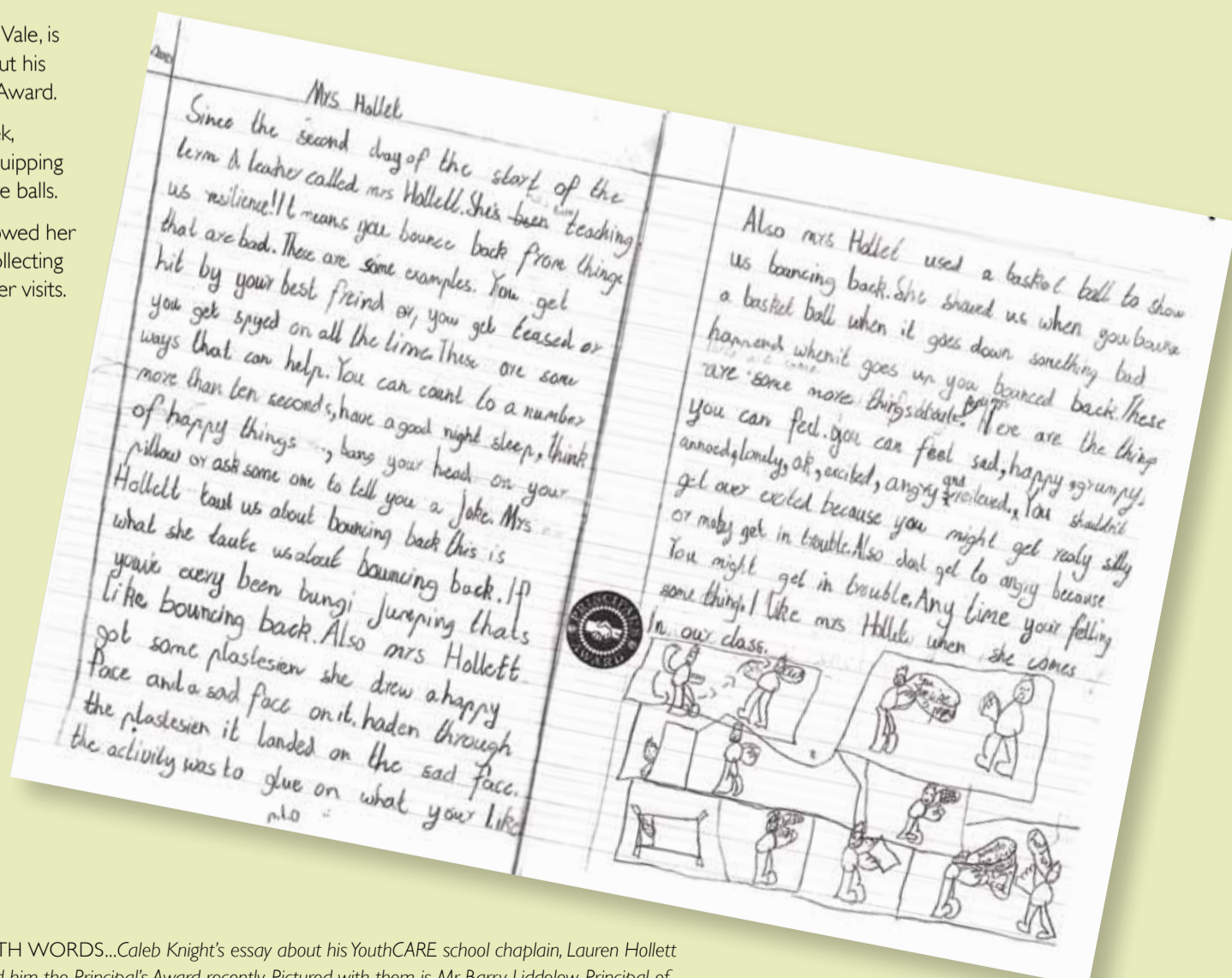
Caleb's letter about his school chaplain earns him the Principal's Award

Caleb Knight, a Grade 3 student at Excelsior Primary in Canning Vale, is not only a good listener, but a budding writer too! His story about his YouthCARE school chaplain recently earned him the Principal's Award.

Lauren Hollett, who is chaplain at the school for two days a week, recently taught Grade 3 students the need to have resilience, equipping them with the skills, to bounce back when life throws them curve balls.

Big was her excitement when the students' Grade 3 teacher showed her a one and a half page story, entitled 'Mrs Hollet', with Caleb recollecting what she has been teaching his class and how much he enjoys her visits.

"His teacher was so impressed with his writing and that he was able to recall the most important skills that I taught them, that she sent him to the Principal, Mr Barry Liddelow, who gave him the Principal's Award. This was really great!"



A WAY WITH WORDS...Caleb Knight's essay about his YouthCARE school chaplain, Lauren Hollett (right) earned him the Principal's Award recently. Pictured with them is Mr Barry Liddelow, Principal of Excelsior Primary in Canning Vale.

Colourful mosaics foster team work, help foreign students to integrate

For students at Osborne Primary a mosaic project represents the celebration of small, successive milestones in personal growth – just like the meticulous art form of uniting small pieces of different coloured, variegated glass to form a colourful and unique end product.

The project, initiated by the school's visual arts specialist, Bhavneet Singh, with the assistance of the YouthCARE chaplain, Mandy Greaves, has enabled English Second Language students to successfully integrate into the school.

"For others, it's milestones of talking and working through issues in their lives in a relaxed, non-threatening environment," said Mandy Greaves who has been a school chaplain at Osborne Park Primary for the past three years.

Mandy originally used this project as an ice breaker and to build relationships with the students, talking about different issues that are happening in their lives.

Where necessary, issues of a personal nature are handled during one-on-one discussions with Mandy, who says the project also instils a sense of personal achievement amongst students, seeing the product of their labour at prominent locations around the school. The first group's mosaic, a colourful sea scene done in 2007, adorns the students' rest rooms.

Unfortunately last year's mosaic (a nature scene with butterflies and flowers) was damaged during this year's hail storm and Mandy said that they were 'still looking into ways to keep what is left, whilst recognising the hail damage.'

“Students started to relax and really got out of their shells, realising that their stories – and their journeys mattered.”



LABOUR OF LOVE ... Back left to right: Zahraa Altaey (originally from Iraq), Edwin Boampong-Appiah (originally from Ghana), Australian Monique Peek and David Jayakody (originally from Sri Lanka) say they love spending time with school chaplain Mandy Greaves (left) whilst being creative at the same time. This group should finish their mosaic, Osborne Primary's third, in about ten weeks.



The group of students – never more than six at a time – meets for an hour on Thursday afternoons. The newest group is busy with a rainbow serpent which reflects the Aboriginal heritage at the school. After consultation with the art teacher and the Aboriginal liaison officer 'to ensure that we used the appropriate symbolism and design', Mandy and the group of four students started working on the blueprint.

In a bid to embrace the diversity of the student population and to involve all students in the school, Mandy asked students to bring silver and copper foreign currency coins which will be mounted in the mosaic, 'possibly close to the serpent's head.' Once completed, the 2m x 1.5m fresco – a total of eight panels – will be displayed on the exterior of the new library building.

Mandy says that they would not have been able to complete this mosaic – or any of the other two murals - without the 'wonderful assistance' from the Osborne Park community. "We've had donations from marine plywood by a member of the Victory Life Church in Osborne Park, various businesses, including Innaloo Bunnings, donated mosaic tiles, grout and glue amounting to around \$2,000.00. We even have a tiler in our church who volunteers his time to professionally do the grouting for us. Isn't it amazing?" she concluded.

Pilot program in Rockingham rocks!

A pilot program, targeting at risk high school students in the Rockingham area, is showing promising results with students recording improved school attendance figures, demonstrating better behaviour in class and a more focused approach to their studies.

The 'Heading In The Right Direction' (HIRD) program is the brainchild of YouthCARE school chaplain Chas Cassey and youth worker, Michelle Dirks, who are part of the student services team at Rockingham Senior High School.

"Michelle and I are involved in delivering various programs, building relationships and having informal discussions with various students, providing them with the tools to build on their academic achievements. The HIRD program combines a variety of topics into one program and addresses issues such as self esteem, resilience, goal setting, attendance, behaviour and effort, whilst recording the progress of each participant along the way," Chas said.

Prior to the program commencing, parents had to provide parental consent and students had to commit to completing the 10-week program. "We made sure we set achievable goals with good outcomes, ensuring students could build on their success," Chas said.

Teachers at Rockingham Senior High School were consulted and preliminary student reports were prepared on behaviour, effort and attendance. Subjects that required intervention were flagged and support mechanisms were put in place by Chas and Michelle.

"We sat down with students and encouraged them during one-on-one meetings. We also approached teachers for additional mentoring or asked for feedback in those subject areas where students were struggling," he said.

Year 10 student Shanae Grigson said the program had really encouraged her to attend school. "When I started the HIRD program, my attendance figure was 50% - now it is 91%! I now understand myself better and I have learnt how to maximise my strengths. It has helped me understand how important school is."

Shanae Grigson's mother, Jacqui, said her daughter's confidence has 'skyrocketed' since she began with the program. "She has really loved the one-on-one mentoring and I have seen a huge change in her attitude towards school."

Another year 10 student, Thomas Jones, said that since enrolling in the HIRD program his behaviour had improved. "I am now handing in my assignments on time and I have a better relationship with my teachers." His mother, Linda Jones, said Thomas has been working very hard. "He has this determined fighting attitude and I am really happy with what he is achieving."

Chas, who has been a chaplain at the school for a year, says the program is not

a 10 week quick fix. "It's about equipping students with life skills. We were created to build relationships and as a school chaplain you have this wonderful opportunity to be available for people when they need someone to talk to. I really love to connect with young people and to encourage them to never be happy with 'ordinary', but to strive to be 'extraordinary' in whatever shape that looks like. The HIRD program is one way of achieving this."

Fiona Beermier, Head of Chaplaincy Services at YouthCARE says that the HIRD program demonstrates the strategic relationships

YouthCARE chaplains have with both the students and the school community. "Working collaboratively is integral to Chaplaincy and being able to deliver a program that ensures students remain the focus, is paramount."

“When I started the HIRD program, my attendance figure was 50% - now it is 91%! I now understand myself better and I have learnt how to maximise my strengths. It has helped me understand how important school is.”



FUTURE FOCUSED ... Thomas Jones (front) and Shanae Grigson are focused on achieving better school marks and attendance figures - owing to the Heading In The Right Direction Program that has been initiated at Rockingham Senior High School. Mentor and school chaplain, Chas Cassey, who has been working with the group of students, looks on.



An initiative by YouthCARE school chaplain Terry Dwyer (left) to address staff health and wellbeing, has been cited as 'a little oasis' for teachers. With him are Kent Street Senior High School teachers Marisa Green (centre) and Christine Kelly.

Terry's helping teachers to maintain balanced lifestyles

An initiative by YouthCARE school chaplain Terry Dwyer to address staff health and wellbeing, has been cited as 'a little oasis' for teachers. The project, which includes a peer staff support program, has been widely praised by staff at Kent Street Senior High School where Terry has been chaplain for eight years.

"If we are to create an optimal learning environment in our schools, we need to create a nurturing environment. Teacher wellbeing in social and emotional competency is vital for effective classroom management. Research has shown that an optimal learning experience in the classroom is linked to teachers managing their stress levels effectively," Terry said.

“Busyness is the adult form of self harm.”

At the end of the first term, Terry ran an informal staff survey to gauge where staff members were at that given moment and presented the results at a staff meeting. Since then, he has been advising staff on how to get the work-life balance right at staff meetings, professional development days, through the peer staff support program and one-on-one sessions with staff.

"Busyness is the adult form of self harm. It is imperative that we focus on strategies to get our work-life balance back so that we can effectively cope with the stressors in our lives. If we do not change, we do not grow. And if we do not grow, we die. The Chinese word for crisis has two characters – danger and opportunity. What we need to do is to learn to walk towards the opportunity," the school chaplain who was a monk at Marist Brothers until the age of 28, explained.

Media Teacher Marisa Green says Terry's initiative is 'unsurpassed'.

"Of the many schools I have taught in, there has never been a program which addressed the health and wellbeing of staff. It is heartening to know that in the stressful life of the modern day teacher, there is a little oasis where personal and professional needs are seen as important. Terry's role has allowed many staff, including myself, to feel safe by creating a more caring environment. He is always on the pulse of how staff in general are coping with the pressures on a day-to-day basis and the topics covered always seem to be just what we need at that given time. I can't imagine working in this school without his loving concern, sense of humour and selfless approach."

Deputy Principal, Paul Currie says that Terry's holistic approach to promoting the need for staff to maintain balanced lifestyles is greatly appreciated by staff - and students.

"Terry's presentations have kept this important item on the agenda by both promoting discussion and providing usable techniques and strategies to assist in modern life as an educator.

He has immensely improved the ability for staff to recognise and effectively manage, if not change, the stressors in their lives."

English teacher at Kent Street SHS, Christine Kelly, says that through Terry's initiatives they know that someone cares about their wellbeing. "Schools are communities and we are human beings. Terry's advice is knowledgeable, sensitive to our needs, driven by staff feedback and is practical. I have used his advice to manage my own stress and work on improving my sense of wellbeing."

TERRY'S TIPS ...

- Your primary relationships are the most powerful strengths you can have to withstand the pressures and stresses of life. Ask yourself: "Who is the person(s) to whom I am the most connected?" and "What am I doing to maintain these connections?" By connecting with, and helping others, you'll improve your mental health.
- Find effective ways of relaxing and de-stressing – and make time for it each day. Learn new breathing techniques, go for walks, start that painting class you've always wanted to do – just make time for yourself – without any distractions such as the iPod or mobile phone. Learn to spend some time each day in complete silence.
- Learn to develop mindfulness or present focus. Be aware of what you are doing now, just enjoy the moment and forget about all the lists of things to do!
- Maintain a healthy work-life balance. Remember the original Labour Day Holiday slogan – 8 hours for sleep; 8 hours for play and 8 hours for work. Life isn't about what I do for a living, but who I am when I am living.

Education empowers our next generation to stand up for great causes



Shane Thaw, YouthCARE school chaplain at Lockridge Primary School (centre) with (left to right) Year 6 students Jordan Healey, Brianna Petrovski and Leasha Robinson.

Shane Thaw, YouthCARE school chaplain at Lockridge Primary School never would have thought that by sharing his personal experiences and recollections of a week-long 'Make Poverty History' road trip with year 6 and 7 students in his school, it would have had such an impact on them.

Students not only designed their own 'Make Poverty History' posters, but expressed the need to initiate fundraising efforts and take better care of their environment. They also sent a petition to the Hon. Stephen Smith MP, their local Member of Federal Parliament who was until recently the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, highlighting Australia's commitment to donate to the UN's Millennium Development project.

"Students were learning about resources, sustainability, human rights and upon my return, teachers asked me to share my experiences of the 'Make Poverty History' road trip with their students. We are blessed to live in a wealthy, well resourced country. As global citizens we have a crucial role to play, especially when one considers that there are 1.4 billion people around the world who live on less than \$1.25(US) a day and a child dies every 3.7 seconds from preventable causes. It was touching to see the penny drop after we had some great discussions," he said.

Year 6 student Jordan Healey was one of the pupils who was touched by Shane's recollections and immediately drew up a petition (which was signed by her entire class) in support of giving 0.7% of Australia's gross national income to the UN's Millennium Development project.

Hon. Stephen Smith to visit school

Minister Smith has subsequently been in contact with the school, commending them for their efforts to speak up for the poor and has accepted an invitation to talk to students about poverty and development.

Minister Smith said that Australia's strong commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) is exemplified by the Government's pledge to progressively increase Australia's overseas aid to 0.5 % of gross national income by 2015.

“The Australian Government believes that we should continue to help people less fortunate than ourselves.”

For this reason, the Government has reaffirmed our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals – the internationally agreed goals to address world poverty – and has placed them at the centre of Australia's aid program," he said.

Shane said it was amazing to see that by sharing his experiences with them, how education has empowered young people – our next generation – to stand up for great causes. "It has really given them a sense of purpose, along-with appreciation for the things we often take for granted."

CRE & VOLUNTEERS

Newly trained Christian Religious Education Teachers



CRE in Narrogin recently held a commissioning service for its newly trained Christian Religious Education teachers.

Pictured, left to right are: Sue Bullock, Lilian Pretorius, Amanda Botes and Tanna McDonald who are now part of more than 400 CRE teachers, who week after week prepare and deliver more than 1,000 lessons in 114 WA government primary schools. Owing to the efforts of our volunteer CRE coordinators, conveners and teachers, an estimated 25,000 children are privileged every week to hear stories about the Christian faith in ways that connect to their lives.

Game, set, (life) match for Margaret Court

Margaret Court, winner of 62 Grand Slam events and Senior Pastor of the Victory Life Centre, attributed life-long goal setting and listening to God's words 'to live your life based on faith' as the secrets to her success.

Speaking at a recent sold out YouthCARE chaplaincy fundraising event in the Hills, she shared stories of her life as a tennis player, a mother and Pastor.



Pictured at the recent annual Food for Thought Dinner, organised by Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Lesmurdie were YouthCARE school chaplains (left – right): Glynis Turpin (Pickering Brook Primary), Terry Denton (YouthCARE area chaplain), Stuart Jackson (Kalamunda Primary), Margaret Court (Guest Speaker), Adrian Wilson (Walliston Primary), Daniel Smith (Lesmurdie Senior High) and visiting YouthCARE school chaplains Daphne Bennett (Wattle Grove Primary) & Tracey Moroney (Darling Range Sports College). Local churches organise activities such as the Food for Thought dinner to raise funds for YouthCARE school chaplaincy and grants are received from the Shire, service organisations and public donations.

Concerts give a 'public face to the wonderful, quiet work' of YouthCARE chaplaincy

Jim's 15th chaplaincy fundraising concert's once again a sold out event

Avid YouthCARE volunteer, music lover and retired architect & town planner, Jim McKinnon, has been running annual YouthCARE chaplaincy fundraising concerts in the Morley area since 1996. His recent 15th fundraiser, featuring the Perth Christian Choir and two YouthCARE chaplains, was yet again a sold out event. Connect spoke to this volunteer whose passion for chaplaincy, music and Christian Religious Education is contagious.

"I suppose it runs in the family, Jim laughs. My wife Vera has been a CRE teacher in public primary schools since 1974 and my son Stephen has been a chaplain in several schools for decades. With my musical background it just seemed natural to stage a concert in support of YouthCARE school chaplaincy," he said.

"I guess the encouragement I get is one factor that keeps me going."

The latest fundraiser featured YouthCARE school chaplains Samuel Oey (Morley Senior High School) on piano and Jessica Kenny (Hampton Senior High School) on vocals, instrumental groups, the Perth Christian Choir and soloists from the choir.

Talented chaplains

Jim says that the rise of talent amongst the YouthCARE school chaplains themselves has been a real blessing over the last 2-3 years.

"I just love Samuel Oey's pianistic virtuosity, Jessica Kenny's vocals with her group, and Paul Montague's comic talent in last year's concert helped to give a public face to the wonderful, quiet work that has been done by YouthCARE chaplains in public schools."

"I have a strong belief in the value of the caring role of Christian school chaplains in public schools, particularly with so many needy family situations. Being at the coal face of the wider community, chaplaincy gives a unique, united and visible expression to the Christian ministry offered by its constituent churches. The chaplains' interview segment as part of the concert program enables guests to catch a glimpse of who they are supporting and the work they do."

Jim says each year since they've initiated these concerts, attendants have voted it 'best yet!' and the loyalty has grown in its support.

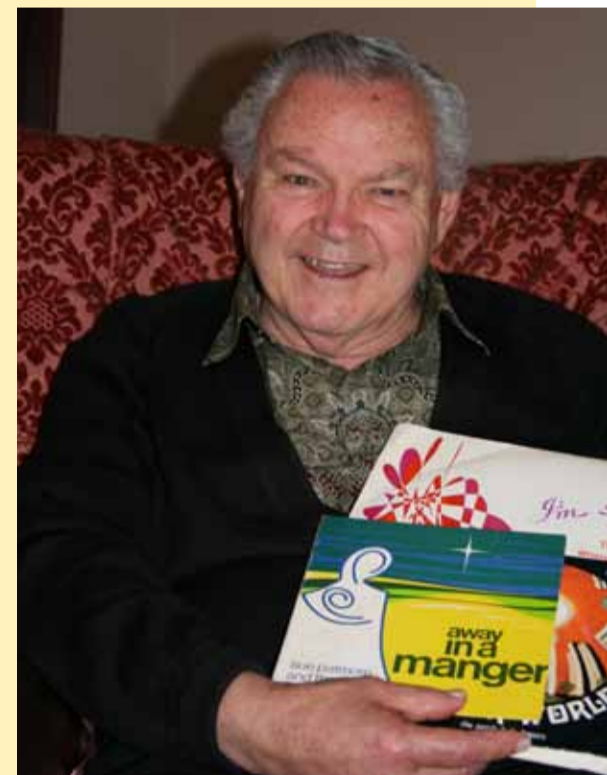
"This year's concert was to my mind certainly the best we have done to date and raised about \$3,000 which is the most ever raised. In the early years we might have raised \$1,500, but fortunately this has grown over the years."

He however remains modest about all the fuss. "We are blessed in that help comes

from many quarters. My wife Vera, who is CRE Coordinator for the Morley YouthCARE Council, gets faithful support from her CRE teachers and from the ladies on the YouthCARE committee to look after the catering arrangements for the generous free supper and the distribution of posters and tickets for the concert to the various churches and schools in the district. One such lady, is Eleanor Le Coultre, the treasurer, who usually looks after door sales and ticket receipts. The choir men do the set up, and this year our own sound technician, Doug Povey looked after the sound and our son Steve directed the parking. I produced the programs, tickets, posters and program notes. Father Peter Manuel has been our Compere for many years, although last year, this was ably done by Terry Denton from YouthCARE head office."

Jim, who has been the conductor of the Perth Christian Choir since 1996, says although he has never been part of a YouthCARE Council, he staged or participated in YouthCARE chaplaincy concerts for Maylands, Mirrabooka and one of the South Metropolitan Councils.

"We are open to invitation from anyone who thinks we may be able to help."



Jim McKinnon, who recently organised the 15th YouthCARE chaplaincy concert fundraiser in Morley, says music has the power to express human feeling and to bypass, to some extent, the cognitive part of the brain. He started singing as a youngster in the primary school's choir, played in the school's band, later conducted church choirs in widening circles, produced several local musicals and recorded three records. His beautiful arrangement of 'Away in a Manger' once caused ABC Radio's switchboard to be jammed after listeners phoned in, enquiring about the record.

NETWORKING

WANNEROO MAYOR'S BREAKFAST

City of Wanneroo Mayor Jon Kelly was recently joined by more than 100 community members, including representatives from local, federal and state governments, local emergency services, businesses and schools at the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast. The breakfast helped to raise funds to support YouthCARE school chaplains in public schools within the City of Wanneroo. YouthCARE CEO, Stanley Jeyaraj, was guest speaker at the event.



Pictured from left to right are: City of Wanneroo Mayor Jon Kelly, Stanley Jeyaraj (YouthCARE CEO) and Joe Forde (YouthCARE area chaplain). Photograph: Wanneroo Times.

Celebrating YouthCARE within the City of Bayswater

The Mayor of the City of Bayswater, City Councillors and representatives from YouthCARE recently celebrated the City of Bayswater and YouthCARE partnership by recognising the valuable contribution of school chaplaincy in the City of Bayswater.

As a sign of the long term partnership between the City and YouthCARE, City of Bayswater Mayor, Councillor Terence G Kenyon, JP, recently handed over \$36,300 to YouthCARE, thanking

them for the immense contribution they make to the children and families in a number of public schools in the area.

YouthCARE CEO Stanley Jeyaraj said that "through collaborative efforts and strategic partnerships such as these with the City of Bayswater, we can continue to contribute to the social, emotional, spiritual, mental and physical development of students and their families."



Pictured left to right: Merryl Custers (YouthCARE school chaplain at Maylands Peninsula Primary School) and City of Bayswater Mayor, Councillor Terence G Kenyon, JP.



Pictured at the event were left – right: Terryll Denton (YouthCARE area chaplain) and Jessica Kenny (YouthCARE chaplain at Hampton Senior High School) who received the \$2,500 grant on behalf of school chaplains in the Morley area.

\$2,500 donated towards school chaplaincy in Morley

YouthCARE school chaplains in Morley recently received a grant for \$2,500 which will enable them to further expand the existing chaplaincy services within their schools. Three schools in the Morley area - Morley Senior High School, John Forrest Senior High School and Hampton Senior High School - will benefit from the donation, made by the Bayswater-Noranda Branch of Bendigo Bank.

Jessica Kenny, YouthCARE chaplain at Hampton Senior High School says that the funding will amongst others, assist her in the development of students' talents and gifts by offering stimulating discussion groups and engaging local community groups to facilitate lunch time activities that promote health and wellbeing.

Dignitaries visit YouthCARE head office



The Hon. Donna Faragher JP MLC (Minister for Environment; Youth) recently visited YouthCARE head office to meet and encourage YouthCARE Board members, staff, Principals, students and school chaplains. The Hon. Farragher commented on the 'compelling testimonies' of principals and students from Belmont City College, Ashfield Primary School and John Forrest Senior High School who attended the event. Pictured left to right are: Pastor John Hardy (Chairman: YouthCARE Board), the Hon. Donna Faragher JP MLC and Michael Kovalevs (Principal at Ashfield Primary School).



Ms Sharyn O'Neill (Director General, Department of Education) recently met with staff at YouthCARE and acknowledged the role YouthCARE is playing in WA educational communities. Pictures with her is John Clapton (Head: Religious Education & Volunteer Services at YouthCARE).



Also present were (left – right) Stephen Larkin (Head: Ministry Services at YouthCARE), Rita Tognini and Anjie Brook.