



# LION TALES



July 2010

The Quarterly Newsletter of  
**St Mark's Community Centre**

(A partnership between St. Mark's, Fitzroy and Anglicare Victoria)

250 George Street, Fitzroy, Victoria. 3065.  
Telephone: (03) 9419-3288; Fax: (03) 9417-5398;

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## FR. PHILIP MURPHY WRITES:

This will be my last message in the Lion Tales before I move on to work in the homeless sector in a different way. As was announced at St Mark's on the 4<sup>th</sup> July I am to take up the post of Executive Officer of "Catchment Youth Services" which provides a much needed service to young homeless people in Victoria.

My last six years at St Mark's has been stimulating, enjoyable and challenging. As I look back on the time, it is the Community Centre which looms largest in my memory and has a great place in my heart. So much so that I leave with great joy that I know the future of the Centre is not only assured, but improved with our partnership with Anglicare Victoria.

I have greatly enjoyed working so closely with the staff of the Centre as well as enjoying their friendship and humour. I must acknowledge my thanks to Ross, Alan and now Robin in their various leadership roles. Their presence 'on site' has provided a much needed collegial feel to working at St Mark's and lies at the heart of priestly ministry here.

I invite you to join us at St Mark's on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September at the 9.30 am Parish Mass as I leave here.

For me it will be a day on which to give thanks for the work of the Centre and to pray for its future as a very visible expression of our Mission as we go forth into the world from our celebration of the Mass. Please pray for me in my future work as I will always pray for the work of St Mark's Community Centre.

*'I leave with great joy that I know the future of the Centre is not only assured, but improved with our partnership with Anglicare Victoria.'*

## OPPORTUNITY SHOP REFIT:

In my six years at Fitzroy, the local Supermarket has been refurbished three times! I would like to think that each time they are doing it out of the kindness of their hearts to make my shopping more pleasurable – but the truth of the matter is that they are spending that money to make more money.

Our Opp Shop is going to have its first makeover since being at its present site. We don't have the money of Woolworth's to throw at it, but we do have good will, donations and volunteer labour!

Notably in the person who has come up with a concept and design for the shop. Trevor Whittaker, who is a friend of mine, is a professional shop designer. He has given us his work and time free of charge and come up with a plan which will help relieve the clutter of the shop and inspire more people to come in and buy more. And at the end of the day the purpose of the shop is to raise money for the work of the Centre. (For the homeless and those in desperate



situations we have always had and will continue to have a voucher system run from the Centre where clients can receive clothing and basic items).

The fit-out is being done for the amazing cost of \$2,500 which has been donated by members of St Mark's. In addition Trevor has already managed to persuade business partners and friends into donating items which will be needed.

What we need now are volunteers to help do the actual work. The work is set aside for six days. If you can do just one (or even all) of the days, we would love to hear from you!

They are Saturday 14<sup>th</sup>, Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> and Monday 16<sup>th</sup> August as well as Saturday 21<sup>st</sup>, Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> and Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> August.

If you can do any or all of these days please email me at [office@stmarksfitzroy.com](mailto:office@stmarksfitzroy.com) or telephone me on 03 9419 4587 giving your contact details and the days on which you can assist.

Thank you.

*Fr. Philip.*

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

- **AUGUST CLOSURE** – the Centre will be closed from **02 - 15 August 2010**.
- **FR. PHILIP'S FAREWELL** – **12 September** at the 9.30 mass.
- **VICARAGE 100<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY** – **24 September**
- **SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY** – **26 September** – 9.30 a.m. Solemn mass for the work of the Community Centre followed by Guild shared lunch and sale.
- **AGM & LUNCH** – **25 November** after the 11.00 a.m. mass
- **CHRISTMAS CLOSURE** – **23 December – 10 January 2011**.

## ROBIN ELLWOOD WRITES:

With effect from 01 July, we are having a change of emphasis at the Centre – with a much greater focus on improving our services for the homeless and asylum seekers. The government has two categories of homeless people – ‘primary homeless’, those who live rough, sleep on the streets and are of no fixed abode, and ‘secondary homeless’, those who live in transitional accommodation, rooming houses, boarding houses, hostels, private hotels and the like.

Through organisations such as Yarra Community Housing and The Hub, a large number of clients come to us who are in transitional housing, good and bad alike. Some are confronted with fellow boarders who are on drugs or are heavy drinkers. They get to the point where they cannot take any more of the disruption that such people cause and often choose to sleep rough to get some peace and quiet – fine in good weather or for short periods of time, but at this time of year, not really an option. The waiting list for Public Housing is ever growing and it is not unusual to hear stories of a 10 to 15 year wait, especially for single people.

Recently I was at a meeting with Canon Ray Cleary, CEO of Anglicare Victoria, and Rev. Graham Reynolds, the Director of Parish Partnerships with a member of Philanthropy Australia who was investigating possible options to assist those coming out of rehab who are particularly vulnerable, especially if they have nowhere stable to return to.

Together with Anglicare Victoria, we hope to be involved with longer term provision for people in this situation, which would be a better use of our resources and a truer reflection on the original purpose of St. Mark's at its inception. Sadly there are no instant solutions and it will take the involvement and cooperation of government and all of the agencies in the locality before we can come up with a viable alternative to the inadequate provision currently on offer, but at least we are increasingly aware of the issues involved so that we can work towards longer term resolutions.

In the mean time, we endeavour to make the Centre a welcoming, safe and secure environment for those who come here – it certainly is a joy to work here and to get to know the clients by name and discover their histories and experiences.

Those clients who currently come to us for food who are not homeless are being encouraged to make use of our sister agency, Anglicare Victoria, at Mission House, in Napier Street who are better geared to families and their care. This means that we can concentrate on providing greater assistance and provision for the clients who come to us, offering them food parcels on a more frequent basis than the current four-weekly turnaround, starting on a fortnightly trial and hopefully more often if our donations hold out. We'll keep you posted anyway!

**CAN YOU HELP?**

**We are looking for a trolley to transport our plastic/metal stacking chairs around the building. If your school or organisation has one going to waste, please let us know.**



## OPPORTUNITY SHOP:

*Goodbye/Hello:*

We were sad to lose **John Naum** as manager of the Opportunity Shop. John had valiantly run the shop for over 18 months, despite the numbers of shoplifters, drug takers and the dwindling number of volunteers. We will miss his contribution, but hope he will come back in a voluntary capacity after his recent holiday in Thailand. We also send John all of our best wishes for the future.

The new manager of the shop is **Robin Croton** – she comes to us from Mount Gambier where she ran a recycling centre, so has a wealth of experience which she will tell us about in her own words later in this newsletter.

We also welcome new volunteers: **Lin** and **Xhe**, together with **Brian**, **Joy**, these students from **Australian Catholic University School of Business**, are working with us as part of their Professional Experience Programme Placement. In addition **Antoinette** has joined our team at the Centre and **Damian** at the Opp Shop - both have come to us through our links with **JobCo Employment Services**. **Denise** is also a new volunteer at the Opp Shop whilst she is accompanying her husband who has been seconded here from the UK. They are already invaluable to the work of the Centre and the Opportunity Shop.

## FUTURE PROJECTS:

We have made the shortlist towards funding for the construction of a kitchenette near the pool area in the main hall. This will be a major expenditure, but will allow for a healthier place for the clients to make refreshments and provide much needed storage, not just for the drop-in centre, but also additional welfare groups such as Narcotics Anonymous. In addition we hope to provide an additional lounge area here, sectioned off from the rest of the hall.

## A BIG THANK YOU:

To Nelson Alexander Charitable Foundation for their generous donation which enabled us to install much needed storage cupboards in the main hall of the Centre. We have photos of the installation on our Facebook page

Thanks also too, to Monty Stevens, the staff and students of Brighton Grammar School for their quarterly delivery of foodstuffs and other goods (two minibus loads) – without them we really would struggle to feed the clients at times.

As always, thanks to VicRelief, Second Bite and Fare Share who make considerable efforts to prevent good foodstuffs from being wasted and going into landfill sites. Centres such as our own reap the benefits of the Feed Melbourne Campaign.

We thank the many individuals, parish communities, schools, organisations and trusts who support us on a regular basis, both with foodstuffs and financial donations. Most importantly, thanks too, to those who assist us both at the Centre and the Opp Shop with their time – a very precious commodity these days.

Thanks as always, to Lyn Wilson for making Lion Tales look as professional as she does and we hope that she is now fully recovered from her broken foot.

We are still looking for a tall, upright freezer so if you know of one which is currently redundant, please let us know.

Together with Anglicare, we will also look at other improvements to the Centre, to provide a better environment for the clients and the staff to gather. Just because people are homeless, they shouldn't have to exist in less than ideal conditions when they visit the Centre – we want to give them that sense of hope when they come to see us.

**OPPORTUNITY SHOP – ROBIN CROTON:**

Many of you will have noticed that John Naum, the manager of St Mark's Opportunity shop is no longer with us. He has retired and is currently enjoying a well deserved rest with a holiday in Asia. Our new manager is Robin Croton – yes another Robin. My background is in welfare, homelessness and recycling centres.

With a new manager we thought it was time to spruce up the shop and make some of those changes that are always necessary to keep up to date and stay in touch with the people we help every day. So over the next few weeks, if you visit the shop you will see painting, cleaning and updating activities. We have been very fortunate in being offered assistance by a friend of Father Philip's who has experience in shop fit-outs.

We always appreciate the help we receive from parishioners and the local community so if there are hidden talents

out there who would like to be part of the renovations please come to the shop and introduce yourselves to Robin.

At this time of year both the shop and the Community Centre are busy with equipping our clients for winter. So we are asking all our readers to help with warm clothing and those essentials of keeping body and soul together during the cold days and nights of winter.

*(A big 'thank you' to all those who responded so generously & promptly to the Winter Clothing Appeal, & the recycled High Quality Clothing Appeal. Keep up the good work – we need to keep the shop regularly stocked.*

*Thanks also to Robin for enthusiastically taking on the shop management. She comes with a wealth of experience which will serve both her, and us well, as the shop looks forward after its new refit. As always, we are in need of more volunteers for the shop – if you can't manage a whole day can you manage half a day, or even two hours on a regular basis?)*

**SPORTING EVENTS – TIM CLARK:**

St. Mark's has put on sport in a number of areas throughout the late autumn and early winter. In bowls we won the A Grade competition at Lilydale in early May. Here players received medallions and a team trophy for their win. It is worth noting that our bowlers are playing club competitions on Tuesdays. Here. Most importantly, they are having contact with local club members.

Pool started in late April. We have had three wins and two losses and look like playing in the finals. We have had wins against Corpus Christi, Coolibah and Finchley and losses to St. Mary's house of Welcome (by one ball) and Prahran Mission. Players have been showing their ample skills and their attitudes have been good.

The football team is mainly made up of young people from the Fitzroy and Collingwood Housing Commission flats. The team is headed by Police Liaison Officer Chris McGeachan and is aimed at putting on a team that the youngsters can feel a part of at a vulnerable stage in their lives. They have responded really well by listening and learning. Recently we recorded two successive wins against Western Storm and Odyssey. Skills are improving and there is much to look forward to.

*(Thanks to Tim for all he does in mentoring and supporting the teams, plus the hard work of co-ordinating with other agencies. The pool table is in need of refurbishment so we are currently looking for grants towards the \$500 costs involved).*

**LION TAILS BY EMAIL:**

*Don't forget that you can now receive your copy of Lion Tales by email which helps us at St. Mark's by saving money on the postage. Please let me know by sending an email to: robin@stmarksfitzroy.com.*



**HAVE YOU VISITED OUR FACEBOOK PAGE?**

*This is directly accessible from our web page: www.stmarksfitzroy.com - so why not become a Fan of St. Mark's? There are some up-to-date photos of recent activities to view, including the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding.*



**BEQUESTS:**

*Have you considered making St Mark's a beneficiary in your will? When writing or updating your will, please consider furthering the work of the Centre in the longer term with a bequest.*

**CAN YOU HELP A YOUNG PERSON LEARN TO DRIVE?**

*Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services are looking for volunteers to help learner drivers aged 16-20 who are unable to access traditional supports to accrue learner driving experience. Safe vehicles, training, insurance and ongoing support are all provided. Further information from Julie on (03) 8412-7316 or visit: www.goodshepherdvic.org.au.*

**PARISH HARVEST FESTIVALS:**

*Thank you to the parishes that have supported us in recent months with produce from their parish festival celebrations. The extra food has been much appreciated, especially on Mondays when we do not normally have a delivery of fresh produce from Second Bite.*



Please send me any future copies of Lion Tales and/or Receipts by email.

My email address is:

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### ON-LINE BANKING

With the new St Mark's/Anglicare partnership, we have a new bank account, so should you wish to make a donation via your bank rather than sending cash or a cheque, the procedure has changed:

1. Go to the Anglicare Victoria website: [www.anglicarevic.org.au](http://www.anglicarevic.org.au)
2. Click on 'Get Involved'
3. Click on 'Donate online'
4. Complete the 'Major Appeals Donations' page
5. In the box marked: Where did you hear about Anglicare Victoria? Click on 'Other'
6. And on: 'If other, please specify' type in "St. Mark's Community Centre"

**A receipt will be issued as is the current practice. Rest assured that all monies intended for St. Mark's will come to us here and will not be sent to a general pot for other programmes.**

### ABOUT DONATIONS

TO:

St. Mark's Community Centre, 250 George Street, FITZROY, Vic.  
3065, Tel: (03) 9419-3288; Fax: (03) 9417-5398;  
Email: [robin@stmarksfitzroy.com](mailto:robin@stmarksfitzroy.com)

"INASMUCH AS YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE MY BRETHREN,  
YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ME." [Matthew 25:40]

Here is my gift of \$..... to support the work of St. Mark's Community Centre  
(Gifts of \$2.00 and above are tax deductible)

Name: .....

Address: .....

..... Post Code: .....

*If you do not wish to contribute at this time, please ignore this form.*



### ST. MARK'S COMMUNITY CENTRE, FITZROY

*The following items are always welcome contributions for our food parcels:*

- Weet-Bix type Cereals
- 400g Tins of Baked Beans/Spaghetti
- 400g Tins of Vegetables, Tomatoes, Fruit etc.
- 400g Tins of Soup/500g Tins of 'Chunky' Soup
- 400g Tins of Stew/Curry/Bolognaise/Pies etc
- Tins of Fish/Meat
- Packets of Cuppa Soup/Packs of Pasta Meals
- Bags of Pasta/Spaghetti & Jars of Pasta Sauce
- Packs of Flavoured Noodles
- Bags of Rice
- Own brand Coffee/Tea/Milo/Sugar – for the Lounge
- Long life milk – for the Lounge
- Soaps/shampoo/toothbrushes/toothpaste/razors  
(Hotel/in-flight type toiletries are always useful)
- [NO BABY FOODS - thanks]

### ST MARK'S COMMUNITY CENTRE

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Email: [robin@stmarksfitzroy.com](mailto:robin@stmarksfitzroy.com)

Websites: <http://www.stmarksfitzroy.com>

<http://www.anglicarevic.org.au>

Our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/stmarksfitzroy](http://www.facebook.com/stmarksfitzroy)) can be accessed directly from the parish website and includes photos from the Centre

OPPORTUNITY SHOP:

298 Smith Street, Collingwood, Victoria. 3066 Telephone: 9417-2965

NEW ABN: 97 397 067 466