

AUTUMN 23

ROSIES



Friends on the Street

SHARING FRIENDSHIP CREATES BELONGING. DARE TO REACH OUT TOGETHER.

INSIDE ROSIES

A message from
OUR CEO
and reflections with
FR MICHEAL

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LIFETIME

Lucky's
ANGELS



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A MESSAGE from our CEO

A warm welcome to 2023, with a wish for love, hope and gratitude for the year ahead.

The 2022 year ended with Rosies busier than ever, experiencing even more significant increases in the number of people that we are seeing across all our outreaches, not just the densely populated areas. There are more people, more new faces, more challenges and a heightened tension on the street. That is, more people looking for connection and our regular patrons not wanting to be left behind as the landscape changes.

This is the very real impact of the cost of fuel, energy and everyday items sky rocketing, increasing rental costs and low vacancy rates, and a serious lack of affordable housing. And while it seems that the worst of COVID and disasters like the floods are well and truly over, for many people the effect on health, home and livelihood continues to take its toll. Whether displaced by floods or fire or due to illness or family breakdown, most often the disconnection and impact to a person's wellbeing is significant. And that impact reverberates through family, friends and the community.

At Rosies, we are fortunate to meet so many amazing people who come to visit us on outreach or whom we see at the courts or youth detention centre. While we often see people at their most vulnerable or at their lowest point, they demonstrate courage to turn up and reach out - and they are met with open arms and an open heart.

The patrons that we meet on the street express a wonderful gratitude for our volunteers and for their interaction with Rosies. What we often overlook, however, is that the connection with those patrons also brings great joy and fulfillment to the Rosies volunteers. Connection offers love, hope and gratitude to us all. "Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy, they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom" Marcel Proust

Wishing you love, hope and gratitude - may your soul blossom.

Jayne Shallcross

REFLECTIONS with Fr Micheal

Each of our lives are full of many moments. Some of these moments are significant and memorable, while others pass us by.

Our treasured Rosies community of patrons, supporters, volunteers, members, Oblates and Board are privileged to be in many of these moments through the outreaches undertaken each week.

Rosies was founded by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1974. It was St Eugene de Mazenod who founded the Oblates in 1816 in response to the tremendous needs of the local people around him.

St Eugene invited the Oblates to see the world through the eyes of Jesus and if they did, they would truly see the goodness and dignity of each person. This challenge is extended through the decades to reach us. While we don't live in the past, the past most certainly lives within us.

At every outreach of Rosies, including the pre-brief, prayer and de-brief that true dignity of each person is present and we are invited to recognise, celebrate and share that belief in our own unique ways. In the Catholic Christian tradition, these moments are referred to by the term Grace, which is understood to mean the free gift of God's love.

Grace can be found in the most surprising of places or times and through the most surprising of people. It is this unexpectedness that is a wonderful ingredient of life. While others might see this as random, those of faith see it as a message and sign from God.

Like St Eugene, I also invite you to reflect on the very special moments that you might have had with Rosies. Maybe you might think of a specific conversation or place that you have had a meaningful Rosies experience. You might also think of the generosity of the many benefactors who have supported Rosies over many years. You might give thanks for the generous volunteers who find the time and energy to contribute to our Rosies family. You might spare a special thought for a patron in the circumstances of their life.

Every time these beautiful moments come back into your mind or heart, I hope that you can see, hear and feel the love they represent. That love is at the heart of Rosies and at the heart of God.

Take Care and God Bless

Fr Michael Twigg OMI

THE COMMITMENT OF A LIFETIME

By Kate Schmidt



Theresa on outreach



Kate and Theresa in the Rosies office

What started as a two-week commitment to assist teenage school-leavers grew very quickly into a much wider outreach – people experiencing homelessness were warmly welcomed by Rosies volunteers and these people not only enjoyed the warm drinks, but they also mostly benefited from the friendly conversations and acceptance.

Theresa Sheppard, 51, a Rosies Life Member and former volunteer, was part of the support team that helped in preparations for the team who worked at schoolies on the Gold Coast in 1987. As she was only 16 at the time, she was unable to join the outreach team that included many of her friends. The following year she joined the outreach team during Schoolies Week. Her mum had told her she wasn't allowed to go to Schoolies, so she joined the Rosies team that set up drink stations for teenagers attending the celebration and got to go anyway. But what she found lasted her a lifetime.

"When the Rosies volunteers packed down after the second year at Schoolies, some of the homeless patrons the volunteers had connected with were disappointed that it was coming to an end," she said.

"I remember one man saying: 'But what about us, we can't wait another year before you come back. We need Rosies now.' And so that's when we realised, we had to make it permanent. Rosies took a new direction in helping people who were homeless through genuine connection and conversation."

In 1990 they began full-time teams with young adult people who deferred their studies or gave up their job for a year to be Rosies volunteers and the outreach focused on people who were experiencing homelessness.

"I thought it sounded like a great thing that I'd like to be part of. For me, Rosies was all about community and as a young person, it was about doing good things for others. And it turned out to be more than that," she said.

"It was fun and I made friendships and we connected with people who were homeless and there was no judgement."

All up Theresa, a mother of four, has been involved with Rosies for 35 years. Most of those years were as a volunteer, but she also worked for the organisation for eight years in a paid position, helping to set up different branches in South East Queensland, Mackay and Cairns. She was awarded a Life Member in 2002. One of her fondest memories of her time at Rosies was a night in Cairns.

"There was a large group of patrons sitting in a big circle on a tarpaulin on the ground. There was an Indigenous man playing the guitar and then two businessmen, who had been out to dinner, walked past and sat down and joined the group, there were a few young girls who had been nightclubbing, some young kids hanging out, some backpackers and some homeless and they were all singing American Pie," she said.

"And I remember thinking to myself 'where else in the world would you see so many different kinds of people mixing with people well outside of their day-to-day contacts/comfort group'?"

"Everyone who stops by a Rosies van is a patron, regardless of their position/status in life. Everyone is accepted. It helps break down those barriers between people and makes it easier for everyone.

"Deep, two-hour conversations where patrons pour out their problems are valuable but a casual banter about a football team can be just as meaningful. Some of the patrons who drop into a Rosies van might not have spoken to another person in weeks. We have people who turn up to our vans every week, so that's a success.

"When you see a patron smile for the first time in weeks you feel that. You know how rough they've had it and you can see that the connection has been meaningful to them. That's a different kind of thank you.

"Patrons have told me that Rosies being there for them every week was what made a difference to them feeling like a person."

Theresa's love for Rosies has also influenced the lives of her children.

"I try to teach my kids that we need to accept people without judgement because we don't know what they are going through, we don't know the journey they've been on and what's got them to the situation they are now in," she said.

"Some patrons don't have anyone else to talk with, so they come to Rosies and talk with the volunteers about their life, and we listen."

Her son Caleb, 17, who graduated from Iona College last year went out on outreach with classmates as part of the Rosies School Program. They played the guitar and sang together with the patrons and he "absolutely loved it".

Her daughter Tahlia, 24, who attended San Sisto College also outreached with Rosies in 2016 through their School Street Retreat Program. Theresa is hoping her younger two children, who are 13 and 15 and attend Iona College, will also take up the opportunity when they are in Year 12. Currently, she is not actively volunteering because of family commitments and recovery from long Covid. However, the Wynnum West local is still actively involved in several smaller ways and says she will always be connected with Rosies.

"I have memories of so many people sitting down together. I have life-long friends that I met with Rosies. If it wasn't for Rosies I wouldn't have those friendships.

LUCKY'S ANGELS

Patrons have many ways of expressing gratitude for the companionship that they share with volunteers. Some draw pictures, or sing songs, but Cahala "Lucky" Lachlan composed a poem to show his appreciation of Rosies and our volunteer community.

Lucky who has been visiting Rosies on and off for 10 years had this to say about his poem, "I love Rosies volunteers and what they do. They are beautiful so I wrote a poem about them called Angels of the Street"

Lucky recited his poem for one of our Sunday teams and we hope this will be the first of many poems that he shares with us.



ROSIES PRAYER



O Jesus,
make our hearts so human,
that others may feel
at home with us,

so like Yours,
that others may feel
at home with You,

so forgetful of self
that we might simply
become the place
where You and they meet

in the power of
Your love and the joy of
Your friendship

Amen

ANGELS OF THE STREET

by Cahala "Lucky" Lachlan

Angels of the street
You're the type I like to meet
Every day you're there
Just because you care.
'Cause you couldn't bear
To just watch, let alone stare
At the seemingly empty.

But empty of what?
Of what you've got?
Or what you've not got?

How do you be free?
Free of dysfunction, completely?
Free to just be me?

I love the angels of the street
Part time, entry level, L plate, training wheels, freedom fighters
Preferring the warmth of the street to the rat race heat.

Friendship - A good investment

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