



Making a Difference

FORWARD THIS NEWSLETTER TO A FRIEND

*Ask them to do the same,
we need your help!*

Welcome

Second Chance is the only charity in Australia raising money exclusively for homeless women and our newsletter is part of our fundraising program.

Our committee of 10 professional women working pro bono organises fundraising events, selects organisations and projects that deliver the best solutions, funds them and monitors progress. We are a charity with no overheads.

We have no building, pay no wages. Our committee has an extraordinary range of skills, ensuring every cent raised goes to help homeless women find a pathway home.

We have assisted more than 500 women find a home and have helped hundreds more - and their children - along a pathway to independence.

AGM

May 9th 2013 was the 11th AGM of Second Chance Programme Fundraising Group. It was a time for us to reflect on the work we have done over the past decade – and how much more there is to do. But we recognised that we have achieved goals that we would have believed impossible only a few years ago – and this is a testimony to much hard work and a lot of collaboration.

We are all volunteers on the committee; we all have demanding day jobs and three of our members have had had babies in the last year! – and one plans to do so in the very near future. It takes a great deal of commitment to maintain the workload that is required and I would like to thank every member of the committee for their amazing efforts and generosity of spirit that make our meetings so efficient and so satisfying.

During the last year Cutting Edge with the support of UQ Business School, made a documentary of SC committee at work. We were filmed at meetings and we were all interviewed separately and asked about our roles with Second Chance. It's not something we had done before – talk to each other about WHY we do it; and we were all very moved by each other's personal reasons and revelations when we saw them on the screen. It's because we have no paid staff that the work is often onerous (anything that needs to be done one of us has to do it – from organizing events, to updating the web page to maintaining the data base, initiating programs, evaluating projects, visiting refuges, keeping the books, writing the newsletter, doing the media, undertaking donor programs, giving talks, liaising with schools. keeping in touch with supporters.....).

The committee members for the next year are:

dale spender, chair: Vicki Scott, deputy: Marjorie Morton, treasurer: Cate Heyworth-Smith, Secretary: Zara Sexton, Sponsorship, Swing into Spring, Facebook and data base: Kathleen Noonan, media coverage, project evaluator and reporter: Molly Hitchcock, committee project manager and web page consultant: Margo Powell, Donor Program and Winter Lunch: Pia du Pradal, prizes and networking: Marise McConaghy, school liaison.



Turning away 150

As the cold winter months close in, it is so disturbing to learn that in this city tonight, there is still a drastic shortfall of crisis beds for women.

Second Chance supports the Anglican Women's Hostel in Bardon, which currently has 18 of the 46 crisis beds for homeless women in Brisbane. (If you think 18, or even 46, are not enough, you are right.) This one Anglicare hostel **turns away 150 women a month**. That's right, 150 desperate women on wet and cold nights and for whom there is simply no space. It traumatises both the woman and the caring and hard-working staff.

There are 10 times as many beds for homeless men in south-east Queensland as for homeless women. This is something Anglicare and Second Chance hope to rectify. In 2013, we continue to support our enduring and most successful projects such as this hostel, as well as Brisbane Housing Company, Najidah, Bahloo, Micah and the Young Mums and Bubs program.

People often ask what they can do to help homeless women. It's simple. RAISE MONEY FOR US.

Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence is now the primary cause of women's homelessness and it can take many appalling forms. There are currently 34 Emergency Shelters in SE Queensland and through the Gateway to a Safe Home program, SC has partnered with the Combined Women's Refuge Group to help to 'bridge the gaps': these are the main obstacles that prevent women from leaving homelessness behind them.

At this stage we have supported nine refuges and the staff report that the funds have made a huge difference - by providing for the daily needs of 140 women and children - with everything from food to go-cards, (to get to court), and clothes. And items for the children.

SC assesses and oversees programs that make a difference to women's lives and there are occasions when we identify a gap that can be fixed by other agencies. In this case, it was when we noted that money was being used for school shoes and clothing; so we explored involving other community groups eg P&Fs and individuals, in providing these - independently of Second Chance - to free up our funding for other things. This happens at several refuges but not all as yet.

On a more positive note: Homelessness ends in Hope Street

Micah is one of the organisations that SC supports through assisting tenants in their revolutionary new

building - Common Ground. 150 of Brisbane's most vulnerable residents live there and nearly half are women. Some are working, some are studying, and some have experienced long term homelessness and are beginning to find their feet! Unlike a few other accommodation projects for the homeless, SC was pleased to learn there were no NotInMyBackYard (NIMBY) objections to locating this building in Hope Street!

Recently the committee was asked to visit Common Ground and it is very impressive. We were warmly welcomed - and thanked - for our support. One woman said she couldn't believe it when she found she had been given new sheets for her new home! SC provided other items for people who had nothing to start with. 'I feel safe here' said Tanya, who has struggled with mental illness living on the streets. Another said 'When you are on the street and leave your stuff, it's gone when you come back. Now everything in my unit stays there; I can't tell you what a difference that makes for me; it was the luckiest day of my life when I got here'.



Second Chance committee at Common Ground

At home in Bonney Lane

Cath Ryan's* husband died four years ago. Grieving and depressed, she struggled to stay in work and quickly could not afford her rent.

She then fell ill and required surgery. After the operation, she accepted an offer to live with friends but it did not work out well, with Cath taking up residence on their balcony before leaving. She couch surfed for some time - "I lived in some awful places" - before Micah Projects referred her to Brisbane Housing Company.

She succeeded with her application for a unit at the newly built Bonney Lane development in Fortitude Valley, where Second Chance boosts female housing through its bridge-the-gap rental subsidy. Cath also received a new Second Chance furniture pack. "I love having my independence back," she says. "Having the furniture has been fantastic. I could not believe my good fortune."



Cath has successfully maintained her BHC tenancy for more than a year and is thriving in independent living. Her mother is coming from overseas to visit. "Couldn't have let her visit me before – too ashamed. But this...this is great." She has bought her first computer and working on her computer literacy skills.



A unit in the Brisbane Housing Co Bonney Lane development where Second Chance's bridge-the-gap rental subsidy has helped house more women

St Mary's Support and Accommodation

Homelessness among women in Australia takes many forms; from sleeping rough to couch surfing and sleeping in cars. But whether you find temporary shelter or no shelter at all, the psychological toll is enormous. You have no home, no base, no life. No bed, shower, clean underwear, no prospect of education, a job, or a life!

Among some of the most desperate cases are those of inter-generational homelessness where mothers and children have had little opportunity to change their circumstances. Second Chance is as committed to preventing such homelessness from occurring as it is to assisting those who have become homeless.

This is why we are supporting St Mary's 'Mums and Bubs' where young pregnant and parenting women under 25 years of age who are homeless, are provided with supervised care and assistance with new babies in their own units for up to 3 months. The pressures on these young homeless women - often rejected by their families - are considerable. No mum to call on emergencies, no grandma for advice: 24/7 days with a baby – and on your own!

This is why they are resourced for becoming independent. And they have courses to assist them which SC supports; (Money-Minded, Kidsafe environments, Selfcare and worth etc).

The staff are exemplary – and their efforts pay dividends; there are numerous success stories with one young woman for example, going on to complete a

university degree in engineering, and others taking up training courses.

SC committee recently visited the facility and we were all impressed – and moved – by the commitment and compassion of the staff. They are doing the emotional heavy lifting which is helping to prevent inter-generational homelessness and in their own quiet way were making a significant contribution to these individual mothers and babies – and to our society.

Prevention of homelessness is something to aim for; SC committee can guarantee that funds that are directed towards these 'Mums and Bubs' are making an amazing difference.

The Changing Face of homelessness – and the need for a new approach

The pattern of homelessness is changing; today there are fewer homeless people on the streets, but the overall number of homeless women (and children) is increasing.

There are more families, and older women – for whom, with the loss of a partner – cannot afford a rental on their own. Women and children fleeing domestic violence, as well as young people, indigenous Australians and often, those who are released from jail. And there are many more migrants who find that their willingness to work is not sufficient to ensure a home.

Gary Moore, the CEO of Homelessness NSW states that 'Tolerating unacceptable levels of homelessness is an economically wasteful and socially repugnant state of affairs': SC agrees. (We would also add that providing 10 times more emergency beds for men than women – which is the case in Brisbane is also socially repugnant.)

SC does not think that patching up the system is the solution as each year the problem is worse. Given that the basic problem is a lack of affordable housing, what is required is a new approach to providing more realistically priced accommodation.

In South Australia, in the case of domestic violence, it is the perpetrator who must leave the family home. While this doesn't solve the problem, a federal law could certainly reduce the pressure on the refuges for victims of domestic violence

Where our money comes from

Most of Second Chance's funds come from donations and events. We thank all those who responded to our November 2012 newsletter and gave generously. We



are most grateful to supporters who attended our fundraising events this year and helped add to our resources.

International Women's Day Lunch: Our thanks to the Alliance of Girls Schools which sponsored the annual Brisbane Club International Women's Day Lunch this year, where the audience was informed and entertained by Rear Admiral Robyn Walker – Surgeon General for the Australian Defence Force. Second Chance was the grateful beneficiary of the event.

UQ Business School breakfast: More recently, at our UQ Business School sponsored breakfast. ABC journalist Leigh Sales won the hearts and minds of the capacity audience at the Customs House on April 15. She was a delight, and a source of fascinating information on the life of a journalist – who was personally chosen by Hillary Clinton for her last public interview as Secretary of State.



UQ Business School table of supporters at the Leigh Sales breakfast



ABC-TV 7.30 host Leigh Sales, centre, with Second Chance's Marjorie Morton, left, and Pia du Pradal at our UQ Business School breakfast

You don't *have* to run a marathon

Thank you to our WONDERFUL DONORS. On the days when the issue of homeless women and children seems ever-growing, we are buoyed by the actions of our donors. We feel that recently there is a new alertness among Australians, a nagging sense that we can do better. It's this atmosphere of such generosity

and a sense of possibility that encourages us to do more. Some of those who help:

- Karen Hayward from Blacklab International was a debater at the annual AIM International Women's Day debate and nominated us as her charity of choice. This resulted in us receiving \$9000 from the raffle!
- Margot McLay and Amy Bent, fleet-footed friends of Second Chance, have run marathons all over the world and raised thousands for us through Everyday Hero. (It's got to be the most painful kind of philanthropy around!)
- At our delightful Baguette Lunch several women heard us refer to the figure of \$700 which, on average when used as Bridge-the Gap rental subsidy, can transition a woman from homelessness into accommodation. It virtually homelessness-proofs one woman. So what did they do? Five of them formed The 700 Club and held a film night. They raised \$2100 so that three women's lives could be transformed. They now have more events planned
- The Aust Property Institute, at a recent event, raised \$1400 for us, with one table throwing in \$700 to fund one homeless woman, right then and there.
- Suzy Wilson, owner of Riverbend Books in Bulimba, generously held an author event with visiting publishing sensation Hannah Kent (Burial Rites) which resulted in a \$750 donation.

Future events

A Winter's Lunch, Friday July 26

What better way than a lovely Winter's Lunch with friends at Baguette Bistrot at Ascot to finish the working week. Gather a table for champagne cocktails, three-courses of heart-warming French food with wine (of course) plus fashion, prizes and a huge serve of philanthropy. Tickets are \$95.

To book, contact Cheryl Le Cerf
clecerf@mpmmarketing.com.au or 3853 5816.

Swing into Spring, Friday September 6

Our fabulously elegant Swing into Spring melds music, dancing, fashion, prizes and fun, and is our major annual fundraising event. This year it's back at the glamorous Mirra, Fortitude Valley.

Tickets for all events on sale soon. Visit our Facebook page and watch our website
www.secondchanceprogramme.com.au

Make up a table for lunch and book tickets for Swing into Spring and feel good that you are making a huge difference to the lives of women needing a second chance.