

The Bethany brief

issue No. 2 July 2003



Circus stars in the making

Circus Oz helped to train performers of the future in a series of special workshops conducted during the Easter school holidays.

Fifteen children from eight families, who access the Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS) at Bethany, took part in the event.

Renowned Circus Oz performers Michael and Michelle conducted the workshops, which ran for two hours each day from Saturday 12 April through to Wednesday 16 April.

While the daily warm ups and stretches proved a little unpopular for some, the various games and activities were an overwhelming success.

During the workshops the children acquired a number of circus skills including cartwheels, somersaults and various other flips and acrobatic manoeuvres on the mini trampolines.

Other activities included learning how to hula up to five hula hoops, perform clever tricks with the yo-ho diabolos, and the art of balance on the roller balls.

Children were also encouraged to take home some of the circus equipment including the unicycles, which proved to be particularly popular.

Bethany staff commented on how exciting it was to witness children experiencing initial difficulty with hand-to-eye co-ordination, who turned into expert jugglers in such a short amount of time.

The event culminated in a sensational performance conducted in the foyer of the Geelong Performing Arts Centre (GPAC) in front of parents, friends and Bethany staff, not to mention a crowd of people arriving for a concert. The special night also included tea at McDonalds and well-deserved ice creams after the show.

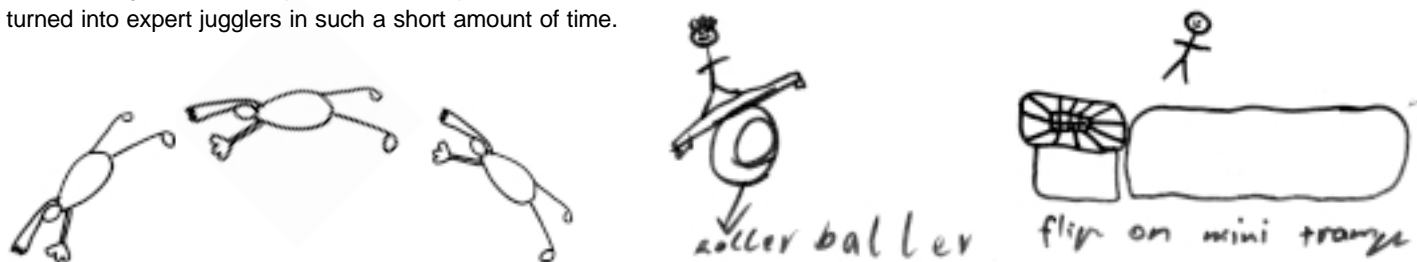
The performance provided many of the families with their first chance for family photos.

It is safe to say that by the end of the evening a multitude of happy snaps were taken.

Many parents expressed their delight at watching their children achieve things they never thought possible. While somersaulting through hoops was a big crowd pleaser, the human pyramid finale proved to be the ultimate showstopper. Although it was hard to determine who enjoyed it more, the parents or the performers.

Bethany Community Support would like to take this opportunity to thank Circus Oz for their efforts during the five-day period. Thanks also to the volunteers who helped transport both the children and parents to and from the workshops and the performance.

Finally, Bethany gratefully acknowledges the efforts of Geelong Performing Arts Centre for providing the workshops and the opportunity for the children to allow their talents to shine.



Friends of Bethany



Above: Members of the Friends of Bethany team.

The Friends of Bethany are a vital part of Bethany Community Support and are an important element of Bethany's history with the group dating back to the early 1900s.

Bethany's Chief Executive Officer, Aileen Ashford says the Friends of Bethany are a fantastic group of women.

"The tireless efforts of these women is inspiring, many of whom live extremely busy lives - with both work and family commitments - but still find the time to volunteer for The Friends," she said.

This group of dynamic and dedicated women work to raise much-needed funds for Bethany, as well as assist in increasing Bethany's profile within the broader community.

Each year The Friends organise various functions, including Cocktail Parties, Musical Evenings and Open Garden Weekends.

The most notable and extremely successful activity is the annual Bethany Art House Film Festival.

This year the film festival celebrates its fifth year and is held at the Geelong Performing Arts Centre.

The fifth and final film for this year's festival can be seen at 8pm on Thursday 7 August.

**For more information on either:
The Friends of Bethany or
The Bethany Art House Film Festival
tel: (03) 5278 8122.**

Community charter to promote co-operation and communication

The launch of a new community charter will bring a sense of pride, belonging and co-operation between residents of the Mandama Avenue/Canowindra Place elderly people's estate.

The charter was initiated by Bethany's Public Housing Advocacy Program (PHAP) and launched on Monday the 7th of April during Housing Week.

The charter will equip them with the necessary skills in communication and conflict resolution required to promote co-operative and harmonious community living.

Aside from strengthening relationships between estate residents, staff at Bethany are also confident the charter will improve residents' relations with the local community and the Office of Housing allowing for more satisfactory handling of future initiatives.

Residents from Mandama Estate and seven other elderly persons estates in Geelong, Winchelsea and Colac attended the launch along with senior staff from the Office of Housing and members of the Housing for Aged Action Group, a state wide service based in Melbourne.

The day commenced with an informative gardening workshop with engaging host Basil Natoli, who provided useful advice and tips on maintaining gardens during times of water restrictions.

The charter was then read out by two residents of Mandama Estate, Ron and Dorothy and officially launched by the area manager for the Office of Housing in Geelong, Roger Dutton.

Residents and guests were then treated to an informal barbecue lunch followed by an afternoon of tai chi, carpet bowls and displays of residents' craft and handiwork.

The day was a resounding success for both the residents and the staff at Bethany. While the carpet bowls proved a favourite, many residents and guests claimed one of the highlights of the day were the tai chi lessons.

Responses to an evaluation of the day were overwhelmingly, with one resident quoted as saying, "I enjoyed every moment, it was just great".

Below: Sewing the seeds of friendship and co-operation: Gladys and Ron at the garden workshop.



A day about men, but not just for men



Above: Talking "secret men's business": Greg Roberts from Bethany's Mens Program, Comedian Rod Quantock, Cr. Heather Wellington and Chairman of Bethany's Board Gerard Mullaly.

More than 500 curious minds fronted up to Deakin University's Waterfront Campus on Sunday 4 May to participate in the 2003 Men's Well-Being Expo.

The Expo was initiated last year as part of Bethany's Men and Family Relationships program and this year Bethany presented the event in partnership with Alcoa and the Men's Agency Network.

The day unfolded with a traditional welcome from the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative, a speaker from the Cancer Council, children's workshops by Waste Werks and music on the main stage.

Prior to lunch, local Dennis Farrugia proved popular with a lesson in the kitchen on how to make bread. From a distance clouds of flour could be seen above the crowd of 50 men, women and children who were keen to see the final product.

One male audience member commented on the way into the Expo that he hoped that Dennis had an example of one he made earlier for a taste test.

As the bread was baking, not too far away in Deakin's courtyard was a group of 30 men and women taking some time out to relax with a class of tai chi.

Onlookers commented that the sight made them feel at peace and that they were amazed that the activity was one that all ages could participate in.

The highlight of the day was without doubt comedian Rod Quantock. Quantock - a pioneer of stand up comedy - entertained the audience whilst challenging them to think about the male's health and lifestyle.

Other features of the day included information stalls, art therapy, seminars on men's issues such stress management and self-care, as well as children's activities and musical performers.

Special thanks to the members of the Men's Agency Network for their assistance in putting the event together, as well as Alcoa for their input as event partner and support sponsors: Ray's Outdoors, The Geelong Advertiser and Bay FM.

Geelong Father of the Year Award 2003

Presented by
Bethany Community Support
in partnership with
**The Geelong Advertiser and the
Rotary Club of Geelong**

proudly supported by Arrows MPS

Featuring former deputy PM Tim Fischer
as key note speaker

Friday 5 September, 2003

Geelong Football Club, Alex Popescu Room

7.15 am for 7.30 am, \$22 per person or
\$200 for tables of 10

**Tickets on sale 21 July,
tel: (03) 5278 8122**



Geelong **Advertiser**



Arrows **ASSY**

Message from the CEO

Aileen Ashford

Thanks to everyone who provided us with feedback and comments about the first edition of the Bethany Brief. In particular, I would like to say a special thanks to the Geelong Chamber of Commerce, including Donna Hopgood and Reg Fischer, who arranged for the distribution of our newsletter to more than 800 businesses in the Geelong region.

These past months we have been paying particular attention to how your donations and support can assist the clients who access our services.

Last month we had great pleasure in giving two of the adult memberships and four junior memberships to the Geelong Football Club (provided by an anonymous donor) to a family who access our Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS).

Families who access this program may have a broad range of issues that affect them including parenting and child behavioural issues, substance abuse issues, family violence, homelessness, emotional health and well-being.

The family who were in receipt of these tickets were very excited about being able to go to the football. Two of the children play football at their school; however have never been to an AFL game before due to the expense.

In addition, cash donations enabled the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program to purchase vouchers for family activities during the school holiday period, scholarships for women to further their education as well as childcare fees.

This program offers a wide range of information and support services for families, single-parent families and single females over 21 who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in the Barwon region. People using the service have a broad range of issues including housing, financial, health and emotional needs.

On behalf of the board and staff, I would like to extend a special thanks to the individuals and organisations that have contributed to Bethany in the last quarter, in particular: Bay FM; The Geelong Advertiser Group; East Geelong Uniting Church; De Grandi Sport and Cycle; and The Geelong Performing Arts Centre.



About us

Bethany Community Support is a dynamic and diverse human services organisation that has a significant presence in the Geelong community and wider welfare sector.

The agency is an independent, not for profit and non-denominational organisation that has been supporting and strengthening the Geelong community since 1868.

Since this time Bethany has responded to the changing needs of the community and has provided a variety of services including: a babies home, adoption agency, mothercraft training centre kindergarten, and day care service.

Today, Bethany Community Support offers a broad range of services to families and individuals in the Geelong region, including:

- Integrated Family Support Service
- Gambler's Help
- Disability Services
- Homeless Services
- Public Housing Advocacy Program
- Children's Contact Service
- Relationships Education
- Men and Family Relationships
- Crime Victim Services

At Bethany, we provide outstanding counselling, educational and advocacy services in order to strengthen the capacity of local people and their families to improve the quality of their lives and the community in which they live.

How can you help?

You can help Bethany to continue to work in your local community by becoming a partner or making a donation by completing the form below. Or, for more information contact Community Relations Manager, Melita Mansfield, on 5278 8122.



Bethany Community Support
PO Box 324, North Geelong 3215
email: bfs@bethany.org.au
web: www.bethany.org.au

Help Bethany Community Support to continue to work in the local community

Yes, I would like to assist the work of Bethany Community Support.

Please accept my cheque of \$ _____ or debit my credit card for \$ _____ Bankcard Visa Mastercard

Card no.

Signature _____ Expiry Date _____

Please send me more information about the work of Bethany Community Support

Please contact me and let me know how I can become a partner

Name _____

Address _____ Postcode _____ Telephone _____