

# The Bethany brief

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## Celebrating fatherhood through children's eyes - the Geelong Father of the Year Award



Left: Elizabeth Tran and her winning entry

Above: Duc Tran and his family Pictures courtesy of Mike Dugdale, Geelong Advertiser

**Eleven year old Elizabeth is entitled to a sense of achievement. Of the 620 nominations received for the 2004 Geelong Father of the Year Award, Elizabeth's is the winning entry. Her father Duc Tran is Geelong's 2004 Father of the Year.**

Duc, a 41 year old father of four, is a former Vietnamese refugee who arrived in Australia when he was 19.

"Me, my twin brother, older brother and my older brother's wife and their son were on the sea for seven days," says Duc. "There were 141 of us on a 14 metre boat. But the engine broke down, we ran out of food and then we ran out of water when a Dutch ship found us and took us to a refugee camp in Malaysia."

When the Australian Embassy came to Malaysia, Duc and his family chose Australia.

"We did not know a bit about Australia but we chose Australia," says Duc. "And I love it. Look at what we have now. I can work to educate my children to a standard where they can contribute to Australia."

Now in its fifth year, the Geelong Father of the Year Award is the result of a partnership between Bethany Community Support, the Geelong Advertiser and the Rotary Club of Geelong.

"The Award celebrates fatherhood through children's eyes," says Aileen Ashford, CEO at Bethany Community Support, "and recognizes the important role men play in families. Children and teenagers themselves make nominations in 100 words or less why they think their father, or father figure, deserves to be Geelong's Father of the Year."

All primary and secondary school students across the Geelong region are encouraged to make nominations.

"We communicate with 125 School Principals and over 300 teachers," says Aileen, "to encourage schools to engage their students in the nomination process. The Award also increases awareness of Bethany's Men and Family Relationships Program and the services it provides."

In 2004 Shell Geelong Refinery is sponsoring the Award.

"Our refinery workforce is predominantly male," says Geoff Ellison, Refinery Manager, "although we are very keen to attract more women into the industry. We are supporting the Geelong Father of the Year Award because we wish to demonstrate that we value our employees - both outside work as well as in the workplace."

# Celebrating fatherhood through children's eyes

## - the Geelong Father of the Year Award Breakfast



**Above:** Brian Deegan, Duc and Elizabeth Tran and Aileen Ashford  
*Picture courtesy of Mike Dugdale, Geelong Advertiser*



### Major sponsor



Shell Geelong Refinery



**Above:** MC Ian Cover with Shell Director John Simpson  
**Left:** Geoff Ellison, Refinery Manager at Shell Geelong Refinery, presenting East Geelong Primary School teacher Greg Kelly with the DVD/Video Recorder donated by Beta Electrical Geelong and Waurm Ponds  
*Pictures courtesy of Mike Dugdale, Geelong Advertiser*

## 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.

An independent, not-for-profit and non-denominational organisation, Bethany has been supporting and strengthening the Geelong community since 1868 providing services that included 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 that include:

- Children's Contact Service
- Crime Victim Services
- Family Choices, including Disability Services and NEWPIN Program
- Gambler's Help
- Homeless Services
- Men and Family Relationships
- Parent Education
- Public Housing Advocacy Program

Each year more than 6,000 individuals and families experiencing difficulties in their lives access one or more of our services.

**At a special Father's Day Breakfast on the Friday before Father's Day, nearly 400 people celebrated ordinary dads in our community at Geelong's 2004 Father of the Year Award.**

Geelong Football Club was the venue and Coudabeen Champion Ian Cover our Master of Ceremonies, continuing his longstanding and generous support of the Geelong Father of the Year Award.

Aileen Ashford, CEO at Bethany Community Support, welcomed all and read out some entries that had captured her heart:

"He's pretty average on the outside but special on the inside".

"He taught us that we are capable of anything, we should do our best and that he will always be there for us".

Then the simple observation from one entry: "He's had a few bad years but is back on track now".

Chris and Mark from Bethany's Men's Group spoke on how the group had helped them be the sons and fathers they wanted to be. "You gain self-esteem in knowing it's not unusual to feel depressed and worried and that there are men out there who will listen, offer suggestions and help you", said Chris. "I was going through a divorce, family illness and increasing work responsibilities, said Mark. "The men gave me the opportunity to grow, to overcome obstacles I thought I never could do."

Guest Speaker, former Adelaide Magistrate Brian Deegan, who lost his son Josh in the Bali bombings, described how overwhelmed he was when a small Indonesian boy Safdar, who had lost his mother in the same tragedy, said to him, "You know, it's so good - your Josh is with my mum up in heaven."

"The idea that this Indonesian boy, not a Christian, was happy with the idea that his mum and a young Christian man could share the same heaven overwhelmed me," he said.

### Supporting sponsors



# Men and Family Relationships Program

In 1999 Bethany Community Support was one of eight organisations selected by the Commonwealth Government to trial the first Men and Family Relationships Program in Victoria. Five years later, Bethany Community Support's Men and Family Relationships Program remains a unique service in the Geelong region - it is the only free counselling and groupwork service for men experiencing difficulties in family relationships.

Today the Men and Family Relationships Program offers three support services: individual counselling for men, the Men Seeking Solutions to Violence Group and the weekly Men's Group.

"There are some common issues faced by men for which they seek counselling," reports Bob Semmens, Team Leader of the Men and Family Relationships Program. "Communication skills, conflict resolution, relationship building, being a father - these are some of the issues men want to discuss."

*The Men Seeking Solutions to Violence Group* is for men who want to understand and change violent, aggressive or abusive behaviours.

"Most of the men are fathers and most self-refer after hearing about the group from other men," says Bob. "They may be experiencing depression, family violence, separation or social isolation. They join because they want to improve their relationships with their family."

The *Men's Group* has an extended membership of over 30 men with around 10 men attending each week. This group provides men with ongoing support as they explore topics relevant to their lives and discuss the options. Some of the men have been with the group since it first began five years ago and now act as mentors.

"The Men and Family Relationships Program seeks to increase opportunities for men to experience constructive social interaction," says Bob, "and that sense of achievement and of belonging."

**If you wish to know more about the Men and Family Relationships Program at Bethany Community Support tel: 03 5278 8122**



## Message from the CEO

Bethany Community Support recognizes the important role men play in families and is proud to present the Geelong Father of the Year Award in partnership with the Geelong Advertiser and the Rotary Club of Geelong. I would like to especially thank all the schools that participated in this year's Award. The outstanding number and quality of the entries reflects the dedication of teachers who encouraged their students to apply. Thank you also to our Sponsor Shell Geelong Refinery for their decision to support this event and their active engagement in the school-based activities that informed students about the Award.

Over the past five years Bethany's Men and Family Relationships program has provided men with a broad range of counselling and group work services in the Geelong region. Over the past year Bethany has expanded this approach to working with young boys aged between eight and 12 years in local primary schools to build their resilience, self-esteem, social skills and their interest in school. Over the next 12 months we are committed to furthering our work with this target group and strengthening our collaborative working relationships with schools.

**Aileen Ashford**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Creative Space - artists at work

St Leonards Primary School has the Creative Space Invaders, East Geelong Primary has the Creative Space Wall Workers and Newcomb Park Primary has the Creative Space Mosaic Artists. These three teams of eight Grade 5 and 6 students aged between 10 and 12 years have created a unique creative space in their school working closely with community artist Arya Lenting. An innovative pilot project of the Department of Education and Training and Bethany Community Support, the Creative Spaces in Schools project is offered to students to enhance their self-esteem, develop friendships and increase their interest in school. Unfortunately, funding received by Bethany Community Support for the Creative Spaces initiative was short-term. If Creative Spaces is to continue to be offered to schools in the Geelong region further funding is required. If you would like to support this initiative and would like further information, contact Aileen Ashford, CEO at Bethany Community Support tel: 03 5278 8122.

*Bethany Community Support wishes to thank the Barwon Adolescent Taskforce Schools Focused Youth Service for funding the Creative Spaces in Schools Pilot Project.*



**Above:** Billy Brownless celebrates the launch of St Leonards Primary School mural as the eight Creative Space Invaders who created it look on  
Picture courtesy of Tony Kerrigan, *The Echo*



Left: Students decorate Christmas trees at last year's launch of the Bay FM Bethany Giving Tree Appeal  
Picture courtesy of Phillip Stubbs, Geelong Advertiser

# ADVANCE NOTICE - for your diary now! Launch of 2004 Bay FM Bethany Giving Tree Appeal

In November 2002, Bay FM and Bethany Community Support launched the Bay FM Bethany Giving Tree Appeal to distribute presents to children and families in our community who have experienced a difficult year.

Last year 28 Giving Trees were established in the Geelong region and 11 community service organisations distributed over 3,000 gifts - a 300% increase on the previous year.

If you or your company would like to host a Giving Tree for the 2004 Bay FM Bethany Giving Tree Appeal, phone Julie Tester, Community Relations Manager at Bethany Community Support on 03 5278 8122.

Your invitation to the Official Launch of the Bay FM Bethany Giving Tree will follow but mark this date in your diary now!

**Friday 19 November 2004  
at 11.00 am  
in the 21st Century Garden  
at Geelong Botanic Gardens**

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

**Bethany Community Support  
Annual General Meeting  
Wednesday 10 November 2004 at 12 noon  
at 1 Gibb Street North Geelong  
Guest Speaker: Coleen Clare CEO  
Centre for Excellence  
in Child and Family Welfare  
Invitation to follow**

Design and layout by Creative Force, printed by Snap Printing

**Yes, I would like to help Bethany Community Support as it strengthens our community**

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

Card no.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to be kept informed about Bethany Community Support initiatives and programs

Please contact me to discuss how I may help Bethany Community Support

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Home \_\_\_\_\_ Business \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Bethany Community Support PO Box 324, North Geelong 3215

ABN 38 633 820 168

If you would like to support Bethany Community Support and are unsure how you may contribute, or if you have any questions or would like further information, contact Julie Tester, Community Relations Manager on **03 5278 8122**

Proudly sponsored by:



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