

Building better lives



Brotherhood of St Laurence

Working for an Australia free of poverty

Building better lives since 1930

Executive Director's message



Tony Nicholson

There is little doubt that successful relationships in all their guises are a mainstay for achieving sustainable, thriving communities. At the Brotherhood the development of beneficial partnerships is also vitally important to our work.

Our ability to provide timely and appropriate assistance to people in our community who are experiencing poverty is very reliant on us developing a range of collaborative relationships with others – individuals, corporations, trusts and foundations, colleague agencies and

all levels of government.

Collaborative partnerships not only help to sustain a range of core Brotherhood activities, but can also help us develop innovative approaches to issues that concern us in our quest to improve social inclusion. In a number of instances, programs developed in

this way go on to provide great benefit to disadvantaged people across Australia.

A recent example of this approach is Saver Plus, a project we developed in partnership with the ANZ in 2003 to assist families on low incomes to develop a savings habit, build assets and improve their financial capacity. The project was delivered in collaboration with Berry Street, The Benevolent Society and The Smith Family, with all participants receiving support and education to help them achieve their savings goal, which the ANZ then matches dollar-for-dollar up to \$500.

Saver Plus proved to be so successful in achieving its aims that it now receives support from the federal government and is offered

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Putting teeth first

A trip to the dentist is not something most people look forward to with anticipatory pleasure. However, for many disadvantaged people who have often been on a public dental waiting list for up to 40 months, finally receiving a dental appointment is wonderful news.

The Brotherhood has long understood that poor dental care has enormous and far reaching implications for people who suffer dental health problems. To help us investigate this issue further, we recently undertook a pilot program in the Frankston and Mornington Peninsula area. The Teeth First research project examined the implications of lack of dental care as well as the benefits obtained when appropriate dental treatment was provided.

People who took part in the Teeth First project had all been unemployed for a considerable time and had dental conditions so severe they created a barrier to gaining employment. The most common problems were rotting or dying

teeth, untreated cavities and chipped, broken or missing teeth, with many people participating in the trial requiring dentures.

All those involved in the Teeth First project were surveyed to determine the range of ways their dental issues impacted on their life. With financial support from the Myer Foundation and assistance from Brotherhood staff, they were then helped to have their dental needs met and were again surveyed following the completion of their treatment.



Dental health is important for accessing mainstream life, including socialising and working.

The resultant research report, *Public dental care and the Teeth First trial: a history of decay*, demonstrates that the importance of timely and appropriate dental treatment for people on low incomes cannot be overstated. It is very clear that poor dental health not only causes embarrassment and humiliation, but also creates a general health risk and can be a significant barrier to employment.

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VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE AT WWW.BSL.ORG.AU

Executive Director's message

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by a range of community agencies in almost 60 communities across all states and territories in Australia.

Recently, too, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the University of Melbourne to collaborate on a new research program to investigate policies that promote social inclusion and develop new joint programs. This work will enrich our understanding of the experiences facing people who are disadvantaged and help to ensure that our research of these issues is rigorous.

We are most fortunate that since the Brotherhood was started 80 years ago our work has been supported by literally thousands of compassionate people who share our concern with providing opportunities for people on low incomes to reach their potential so that they can live independent lives. Assistance has been offered in a range of ways, including volunteering time, offering financial support and sharing of skills. Without these very helpful partnerships much of the Brotherhood's work would simply not have been possible.

Every day as I talk to Brotherhood staff I am reminded of the enormous contributions made by all those who support our work and I am confident that it is through this whole-of-community approach that we will achieve a society where all Australians are able to take part in the mainstream life of our community.

Many thanks for your support.



Tony Nicholson



David fled Sudan when he was very young. Now settled in Australia he is the proud father of daughter Abuk.

A new start

The Brotherhood's Ecumenical Migration Centre is widely recognised as having been at the forefront of the migrant rights movement in Australia for over 40 years. It pioneered the delivery of services to migrants and refugees and continues to provide a wide range of services that assist individuals and families, many of whom have suffered trauma and spent time in refugee camps, to settle successfully and happily in Australia.

As well as providing direct services to migrants and refugees, the Brotherhood is keen to help members of the general community gain a better understanding of the conditions that lead people to risk everything to flee their homeland. A recent film, *War Child*, which the Brotherhood screened at Federation Square in April this year, provided a graphic illustration of these conditions. Nearly 400 people joined us at the film night to see the story of Emmanuel Jal, a child of war in Sudan, a boy soldier,

survivor and refugee. Brotherhood staff member, David Vincent, whose own experience as a child growing up in refugee camps is both compelling and moving, introduced the film and described some of the challenges and issues faced by refugees. David appears in the film, alongside Emmanuel, when both were children in a refugee camp in Ethiopia. For further information on future events, including film nights, please call Daniela Di Cesare on (03) 9483 1301.

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One participant in the Teeth First trial, Joshua, grew up in a sole-parent family on the outskirts of Frankston. Health was not a focus because Joshua and his sister often went without food in the house, let alone a toothbrush and toothpaste. After years of neglect at home, Joshua eventually became homeless and by the time he was in his twenties the teeth he had chipped as a teenager began

to rot. In desperation and after years of extreme tooth pain, with no hope of paying for treatment, Joshua knocked out his own damaged front teeth with a sledge hammer wrapped in a tea towel. For two years Joshua went about his daily life struggling with pain, and with the humiliation of having both his front teeth missing.

Thanks to intervention from Brotherhood case workers, and with important financial assistance from the Myer Foundation, Joshua now has his teeth fixed.

He also has secure employment and enjoys good health. 'I honestly don't think about my teeth. That's probably the best thing, that it's not on my mind, whereas it always was before. I don't even think about my teeth now.'

'Lunch and look' at the Brotherhood



Visiting the Napier Street Child and Family Resource Centre is always popular with guests at our 'lunch and look' events.

It is always a great pleasure for us to meet the wonderful people who help us with our work and so far this year we have been delighted to welcome many people to 'lunch and look' events so that they can see some of our work first-hand.

These events provide an opportunity for people who are interested in our work to chat to staff over a simple lunch and hear more about how the Brotherhood works to help people who are disadvantaged overcome their situation. Our guests are welcome to spend time visiting some of our services so that they can see how their support actually makes a difference to the lives of many people in our community.

If you would like to learn more about the work undertaken by the Brotherhood, we warmly invite you to call Daniela Di Cesare on (03) 9483 1301 and join us at our next 'lunch and look'. We would be very pleased to hear from you.

Learning to be MoneyMinded

Twenty women from refugee and immigrant backgrounds recently gathered at Collingwood Neighbourhood House to celebrate their graduation from MoneyMinded, a financial literacy training course.

MoneyMinded, a project developed as a partnership between the Brotherhood of St Laurence and ANZ, shows participants how to make informed decisions about their finances, with topics ranging from budgeting, goal setting and saving, to more complex issues such as dealing with debt and consumer rights and responsibilities.

Kokoya, a Sudanese mother of six, attended the eight-week MoneyMinded course for two hours each week and says the course has given her the confidence to manage her money.

'Sometimes it's hard for me to organise payment of bills, but now I've done the course it's become easier for me', she said.

All the women who took part in the course participate in the Ecumenical Migration Centre's Stepping Stones program – a program that aims to help women from



Graduates from MoneyMinded proudly display their certificates.

culturally diverse backgrounds develop the necessary skills to plan for their own businesses in Australia.

Kokoya hopes to run her own hairdressing business and says the MoneyMinded

course was an important step towards achieving her goal.

'Before, I didn't know what to do with the money in my hand. Now I know. I have the skills I need.'

BROTHERHOOD IS NOW ON FACEBOOK

We now have a Brotherhood Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/BrotherhoodofStLaurence>. Social media offers us some fantastic tools for connecting with supporters – and Facebook will be great for raising awareness about our work.

If you have a Facebook account, we'd love to have your support and participation!

To join our growing throng of Facebook fans, just hit the 'Become a fan' button at the top of our Facebook page. Please feel free to post comments or suggestions!

Three generations of helping the Brotherhood

Sonya Stephen, the great-grandniece of Father Tucker, founder of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, has a long and proud tradition of family involvement in the Brotherhood's work. Formerly a senior manager in the corporate sector, Sonya is now Manager of Philanthropy at ANZ Trustees.



Sonya Stephen

'Being involved as a donor and volunteer at the Brotherhood has been incredibly rewarding and it is very important to me to remain closely connected to the organisation. I firmly believe in the Brotherhood's mission of assisting disadvantaged people to find a better future.

'I am really proud of the family heritage of involvement in the Brotherhood and I take

every opportunity to talk to others about the organisation and the great work being done to assist people in the community who are in need.'

Recently Sonya also facilitated a valuable link between the Brotherhood and the share registry company, Computershare, thus enabling a range of activities to take place, including a very successful staff

clothing appeal.

The generous long-term involvement and loyal support the Brotherhood has received from Sonya, as well as from other members of her family, has been enormously encouraging to Brotherhood staff and has had a very positive impact on lives of literally hundreds of people who are suffering the consequences of poverty.

The Homework Centre, helping students achieve their educational goals



'They really helped me, without them there is no way I could get to uni' Kamal

Achieving good results is challenging for any secondary student, but imagine how much harder it would be if English was your second language, you had nowhere quiet to study and you had recently moved to a new country.

These were just some of the challenges faced by Ethiopian refugee Kamal who, despite his determination to achieve academically, struggled to overcome his situation. With the encouragement of his friends, he attended the Brotherhood's Homework Centre at the Fitzroy Library every day after school throughout 2009,

where he was assisted by volunteer tutors who coached him in maths, biology and English language skills.

Last year the Homework Centre tutors also helped Kamal apply for a tertiary scholarship and he is now in his first year of his Bachelor of Applied Science degree at university.

Kamal says of the assistance that he received from his tutors, 'They really helped me, without them I couldn't get to uni. When I finish university I plan to help people in my free time by helping at the Homework Centre'.

Winter Appeal – thank you!

We would like to warmly thank everyone who has so generously supported our Winter Appeal. Funds raised through this appeal go directly to assisting the many individuals and families we support. Much of the support offered is only possible through your assistance. If you have not yet made a contribution we would urge you to assist us and donate now.

Please find enclosed my gift of:

\$30 \$50 \$100 \$200 \$_____ my choice

Payment method: Cheque Money Order Visa MasterCard DinersClub AMEX

Mr/Ms/Mrs/Miss/other: _____ Name _____

Street _____ Suburb/town _____ Postcode _____

Daytime phone _____ Email _____

Name on card _____ Signature _____

Card number _____ / _____ / _____ Expiry date _____ / _____

Please send me information about the Brotherhood's regular monthly giving program Please send me information about leaving a gift to the Brotherhood in my will
We respect the privacy of your personal details. The Brotherhood of St Laurence will not disclose your details to any other party. See our Privacy Policy on our website.

Donations to the Brotherhood of St Laurence of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

