

### AN EASTER REFLECTION

– Julie Edwards, Executive Director



Julie Edwards, Executive Director

Since our last newsletter the world has been devastated by the tsunami and its tragic aftermath. We have also witnessed an outpouring of generosity that demonstrates the capacity we have for compassion – for connecting with others and being touched by their suffering.

Each Easter we remember Jesus' capacity to connect with ordinary people and to be affected by their situation. We retell the story of rejection, suffering and death that is often the plight of 'the just one'. We retell the story of the triumph of good over evil, life over death.

In every age there are people who proclaim this story with their lives. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, urged his companions to this sort of love – love in action – when he said "Love ought to manifest itself more by deeds than by words".

But nothing is possible without 'connection' – if our hearts are not touched we will fail to act, or we will respond coldly.

**“ If our hearts are not touched we will fail to act, or we will respond coldly. ”**

The theme of this Easter Newsletter is 'connectedness' – making connections, keeping connections, and expanding connections. Common sense tells us that having good relationships with others is essential to our happiness. Research now backs that up – being connected with others is vital for our health and the wellbeing of our community.

This newsletter highlights some of the work of Jesuit Social Services in doing just that. Our first step is always building strong relationships with the people who engage in our programs – people who don't have a voice and who lack opportunities to participate in our society.

We then use that relationship to foster connections with others – with family, with mainstream health, welfare and education services, with employment opportunities – in order to foster meaningful participation in our community.

## KEEPING THEM CONNECTED

Jesuit Social Services has just completed a national consultation examining how Catholic secondary schools throughout Australia best respond to incidents of illicit drug use by students. The report is titled **Keeping Them Connected**.

There are approximately 1,700 Catholic schools in Australia, with more than 660,000 students in attendance at any one time – one in five of Australia's school students.

Occasionally, in every school across the country, students are detected as having been in possession of, or having used an illicit substance during school hours or a school related activity. How the school administration responds to such isolated incidents can be a critical issue – for the student concerned, for the general student body and for the school community.

Therefore, it is important for educational authorities to be able to distinguish between isolated incidents of experimentation and more serious forms of addictive behaviour.

In earlier years, a 'zero tolerance' approach was often seen to be the best response. Students detected in possession of, or using, illicit substances in a school context were transferred to other schools or expelled.

'Zero tolerance' was seen to have protected the school community and to have given the identified student an opportunity for 'a fresh start'.

In more recent years, many school principals have reassessed this approach. They have had to question whether, in protecting the school's reputation as being 'tough on drugs', the school's duty of care for the students concerned was being neglected.

Many Australian Catholic schools identified that too often, being 'tough on drugs' simply shifted the problem. It also sent the message that school resources such as teachers and counsellors were off limits to students who needed someone to talk to about their drug problem.

There is a growing awareness that a more fitting focus for Catholic Secondary Schools should be: *How best to respond to the interests of the student concerned, while respecting the duty of care to other students.*

The findings of the report **Keeping Them Connected** provide some important guidelines for Catholic schools wishing to further develop their practice in this complex and sensitive area.

Foundational Christian principles need to be central to upgrading our policies and improving our practices in this area.



Policy Director Fr Peter Norden gave more than 20 radio interviews around Australia following the release of **Keeping them Connected** that featured in 6 metropolitan newspapers.

### Keeping them connected



A national study examining how Catholic Schools can best respond to incidents of illicit drug use

Father Peter Norden SJ



The report was released to the national media on 14th February 2005.

This policy dimension could become an important distinguishing characteristic of Catholic Independent Schools and Catholic Systemic Schools in their task of shaping the lives of young Australians through their ministry of education.

Information about the **Keeping Them Connected** report, including an order form, can be obtained on the Jesuit Social Services website: [www.jss.org.au](http://www.jss.org.au)

**“(School principals) have had to question whether, in protecting the school's reputation as being 'tough on drugs', the school's duty of care for the students concerned was being neglected.”**

## INSIDE

**March for Brosnan** – on the second anniversary of his death, Fr Brosnan is still reaching out

**It's Just Fare** – a new workplace training enterprise for our young people

**Art Exhibition for Gateway participants** – creative mentoring on display

**Sharing our expertise** – with health, welfare and education sectors

**2005 Annual Fundraising Dinner** – Guest Speaker Simon Overland, Assistant Commissioner for Crime, Victoria Police

**Helping hands** – volunteers make a difference

# MARCH FOR BROSNAN

## – CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Every day up to a hundred people stop and shake hands with Fr Brosnan – the statue outside the Brosnan Centre in Dawson Street, Brunswick. One year after it was erected “Brossie’s” black hand has been rubbed smooth and gold by the curious, the remembering and those simply drawn to him by the aura and smile of the compelling ‘knockabout priest’.

March 2005 marks the second anniversary of the death of Fr Brosnan who was Pentridge Prison chaplain for nearly 30 years and his statue serves as a stark reminder of the helping hand he offered to those incarcerated or just released from prison.

The work of the Brosnan Centre is based on forming trusting relationships with young men and women, aged 17 – 24, in prisons or youth training centres – relationships which often last years.

Our programs provide help with housing, food and employment. But the most significant aspect of our work is forming respectful relationships and helping connect people back into the community. In the face of fear, distrust and hurt, this work is not easy and often not popular, but it is the heart of our mission: *‘standing in solidarity with those in need’*.

### All Welcome! March for Brosnan

Pentridge Village Estate is holding a family picnic day on **Sunday 20th March from 12.30pm** with a sausage sizzle, band and market stalls in the Fr Brosnan Community Park, Pentridge Village Estate Coburg. Please come along!

The staff are also visiting schools, parishes and special interest groups to talk about the work of the Brosnan Centre. For further information telephone 9387 1233.



Children and adults alike are drawn to the welcoming life-like statue of Fr John Brosnan at the entrance to the Brosnan Centre in Dawson Street, Brunswick.

## LINKING HORN OF AFRICA REFUGEES WITH NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The Refugee Youth Program is responding to the settlement needs of new communities from Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Sudan. Many in these communities have come to Australia as humanitarian refugees, with severely disrupted schooling and family life associated with long periods in refugee camps. Educational disadvantages and also difficulties gaining recognition of overseas qualifications, makes it hard to gain employment.

The program aims to connect young people to recreation and learning.

The tutoring program runs twice a week, with a computer room being set up for community access. Up to 25 secondary school students and 30 primary students meet weekly, and are assisted with their studies by a group of volunteers. The volunteers are mainly from the African communities and understand the difficulties the young people face.

Many of the young men are involved in community soccer teams. While we provide coaching and team development we are always looking for suitable training grounds.

Planning is underway for an after school recreation program for boys and girls, and a swimming program.

All activities depend on the support of local community members and other volunteers. Non-African as well as African volunteers are encouraged to become involved.

For further information contact Cathy Guinness, Manager of Community Programs on telephone 9415 7186 or email [cathy.guinness@jss.org.au](mailto:cathy.guinness@jss.org.au).



The tutoring program in Moonee Valley and North Melbourne is run by youth worker Omar Bayahow with the support of Mr Abdurahman Osman of the Somali Community in Victoria, and other Horn of Africa community members and local agencies.

## SHARING OUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Education and Professional Services Unit is another way that Jesuit Social Services works to make connections between people.

We have been engaging with disadvantaged people for more than 25 years – people coming out of prison, people experiencing family breakdown and violence, young people with mental illness, those struggling with substance misuse, vulnerable families and disadvantaged communities.

Our staff learn from the people who participate in our programs and we strive to give voice to their experience of disadvantage and marginalisation when we teach people working in the fields of health, welfare and education.

Program staff work closely with the staff of the Education and Professional Services Unit to articulate this practice that has been tried and tested in the field. Through the Unit we share this with our sector.

This year, for example, our staff are working with the University of Melbourne and the Victorian University of Technology to deliver education and training to their students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This is another way of working to bring about change – breaking down the barriers between the most disadvantaged people in our community and those who engage with them.

# IT'S JUST FARE – GATEWAY TO EMPLOYMENT

It seems to us that 'it's just fair' that young people who are trying to get a job should get the help they need along the way. Our Gateway program is working closely with disadvantaged young people with complex problems, helping them link up with training and ultimately job opportunities.

*It's Just Fare* is a new commercial enterprise in our Gateway program. It's a catering kitchen and café that gives young people exposure to a real work place that we know increases their success when they make the transition to a job. But it's not just experience they gain. Thanks to our partnership with Swinburne TAFE, these young people get accredited training.

Profile chef Loretta Sartori, is teaching these program participants what they need to know to get jobs in the hospitality industry. Working alongside Loretta is also the way for them to pick up skills that will help them wherever they go – how to behave in a work environment, how to deal with customers, handle money and develop a responsible work ethic.

The first stage of this exciting venture is underway with culinary products like delicious biscuits now available for sale. The catering enterprise will be operating from April and the café from May.

## Can you help?

*It's Just Fare* is seeking a commercial coffee machine for the café and a delivery vehicle for the catering operation. Please call Loretta Sartori on telephone 9429 0267.



*Chef Loretta Sartori who heads up the It's Just Fare team at Gateway, 363 Victoria Street Abbotsford.*

# CREATIVE MENTORING ON DISPLAY

Lily Mae Martin and Asha Duggan, young artists mentored through the Gateway program, held their first exhibition at the Span Gallery in Melbourne in January 2005.

This exhibition was developed through Gateway's Artful Dodgers Studio's Rudder Project, with support from Arts Victoria and the Australia Council. The Rudder Project offered the young artists a six-month mentorship with Melbourne artists Jacqui Stockdale and Laura Woodward, who guided them in all aspects of arts practice from technique to conceptual considerations, business management to networking skills. Underpinning the Rudder Project are the principles of Community Cultural Development – that art provides an opportunity for the voice of the marginalized and the silenced to be heard.



*Self portrait by Asha Duggan*

When speaking of her main influences Asha mentions Frida Khalo's self-portraits "because she didn't hold back in her representation of herself". Asha will soon travel to New Zealand to further her painting.



*"Keeping it together, taking it apart" by Lily Martin who has been accepted by the Victorian College of the Arts this year.*

# INVITATION



Jesuit Social Services

## ANNUAL DINNER

Saturday 21st May 2005  
at  
Moonee Valley Racing Club



Guest Speaker

**Simon Overland**

Assistant Commissioner for Crime  
Victoria Police

Simon has been the Assistant Commissioner for Crime since February 2003. The Crime Department has over 600 people and Simon is responsible for the management of Victoria's most serious and complex crimes. As a member of the Senior Executive Team, Simon is driving a number of strategic projects, including the Organised Crime Strategy 2005-09.

Plus jazz trio and an auction of the creative works of our program participants

Tickets: \$100 per head – tables of 10 available  
Booking form [www.jss.org.au](http://www.jss.org.au) or  
Telephone (03) 9427 7388



This Peacock Sculpture will be auctioned at the Annual Dinner.

## CREATING CONFIDENCE

"My name is Julie and I am 23. After welding for 2 months and gaining more confidence, I decided to tackle making a peacock resting on a perch with its long tail touching the ground. I wasn't sure at the start, very nervous about how it would turn out but I kept at it and after two and a half months it was finished. I couldn't believe I had made it and it felt so good when other people actually liked it too. I love welding and I hope to be doing it for a while yet."

**Julie**  
Participant – Creative Industries, Gateway Program 2004.



Longtime volunteer Judith McCormack.

## HELPING HANDS

After 9 years as a volunteer with Jesuit Social Services Central Office, Judith McCormack can truly say she has seen and helped us grow in leaps and bounds. Judith came following retirement from a nursing career and says she found it a real challenge to master office skills. But her genuine desire to be of service and her commitment to our work is a truly inspiring example of the wonderful support and fidelity of our volunteers. Thank you Judith and good luck on your 'second retirement'!



Michael McCambridge, Deputy Director, Infrastructure Services and David Sabato, Finance and Business Manager of Royal Melbourne Hospital coordinated the donation of furniture to a number of our offices.

*Yes!* I would like to support the Jesuit Social Services Easter Appeal.

Please tick donation amount

- \$50
- \$100
- \$250
- \$500
- \$1,000
- My choice

\$.....

Please make your donation payable to:

The Jesuit Social Services Easter Appeal  The Father Brosnan Appeal Fund

Cheque enclosed OR  Bankcard  VISA  MasterCard

No:

Expiry Date:.....Signature:.....

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms.....  
FIRST NAME (S) SURNAME

Address:.....

.....Postcode:.....

Telephone: Home.....Work.....

Donations to the Father Brosnan Appeal are received by the Jesuit Social Services Foundation to be used for the works of the Brosnan Centre as well as Jesuit Social Services Limited: standing in solidarity with those in need.

Please send me details on:

- remembering Jesuit Social Services in my Will
- joining the Jesuit Volunteer program
- please send me information about the Workplace Giving Program recently established by the Australian Taxation Office.



Jesuit Social Services  
PO Box 271 Richmond, 3121  
Tel: 03 9427 7388 Fax: 03 9427 1819  
Web site: [www.jss.org.au](http://www.jss.org.au)