

MEDIA RELEASE
January 24, 2008



Father Chris Riley to deliver an Australia Day message of unity to the community of Camden as Camden City Council's 2008 Australia Day Ambassador.

On Saturday January 26, Fr Chris Riley, CEO and Founder of the charity organisation Youth Off The Streets, is honoured to take his Australia Day message of unity to the Camden Community.

Father Riley will take the opportunity to challenge the idea of Multiculturalism as an Australian strategy to deal with racism or prejudice.

"Since the 1970's Australian society has been busy placing emphasis on celebrating multiculturalism and rejoicing in our tolerance. We have spent so much time taking pride in our differences, that we are forgetting what we have in common. We are all Australian and we all have the same human needs," said Father Riley.

"I believe that the only way to get rid of our prejudices is to be open to the wonder of each human being. Focusing on what makes us different can't initially do this," he continued.

"On Australia Day, I will try to speak on behalf of all Australians and I will be saying that this is a nation for all of us and no one should be excluded. We should all be able to get on with each other, support each other and support each other's strengths."

"Australian society needs to be aware of our common humanity as well as our diverse backgrounds. Young people need their parents and the leaders in our society to teach them to be happy to look each other in the eye and say 'you are my brother, you are my sister.' We must celebrate our similarities while respecting our differences."

Father Riley will also take the opportunity to acknowledge the fact that Australia's indigenous population see Australia Day as 'Invasion Day.'

Father Riley will spend Australia Day with the Camden community at Camden City Council's Australia Day celebrations. He both lives and works near Camden.

About Youth Off The Streets:

Helping young people discover greatness within, by engaging, supporting and providing opportunities to encourage and facilitate positive life choices.

Youth Off The Streets is a community organisation working for young people who are chronically homeless, drug dependent and recovering from abuse. We support these young people as they work to turn their lives around and overcome immense personal traumas such as neglect and physical, psychological and emotional abuse.

Since opening in 1991, Youth Off The Streets has grown from a single food van delivering meals to young homeless people on the streets of Kings Cross to a major youth specific agency providing a wide range of services offering a full continuum of care.

It is our goal that these young people will leave our care drug free, with a high school education, living skills and a full or part time job in hand.

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**For more information, about Youth Off The Streets please contact:
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