

MEDIA RELEASE  
13 May, 2009



## Help us pave the streets with **gold** to get youth off the streets

On Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May, in an effort to counter the effects of the economic crisis, the charity organisation Youth Off The Streets, will attempt to set an Australian record for the longest line of gold coins made by public donation.

The Pave The Streets with Gold initiative has been created to raise funds to prevent essential services for homeless and disadvantaged young people from becoming the next victims of the economic crisis.

Faced with a decline in donations as a result of corporations and individuals tightening their belts, Father Chris Riley has taken inspiration from the Obama Presidential campaign and is taking the unprecedented step of asking as many people as possible for what they can afford.

*"At times like these, it is imperative that our organisation increases its ability to provide services to protect, educate and rehabilitate homeless and disadvantaged youth. I'm appealing to all Australians to do what you can to help,"* said Father Chris Riley, CEO and Founder, Youth Off The Streets.

*"As the Australian economy contracts, lower socio-economic families will suffer from yet more financial hardship. There will be an increase in unemployment, and a rise in the incidence of mental illness and family breakdown. Sadly, children and young people will suffer the most,"* he said.

**"No matter what the economy is doing, we must never close the door on a young person in need,"** he continued.

Youth Off The Streets currently operates over 25 services for youth in need including: 9 accommodation residences providing out of home care and rehabilitation; 4 schools providing education to young people who can no longer access mainstream education; 5 Community Development Outreach programs providing early intervention programs for at risk youth living in some of NSW most disadvantaged communities and a range of drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs to help young people turn their lives around.

Even before the economic crisis, young people were doing it tough:

- There are already over 32,000 young people living homeless in Australia today, making up over one-third of the nation's homeless population.
- Already, less than one fifth of the young people who are homeless in Australia are receiving support and accommodation from services.
- On any given night one in two young people attempting to access emergency accommodation will be turned away because all services are full.\*

**Please help us Pave the Streets with Gold for youth in need. To donate, visit [www.youthoffthestreets.com.au/gold](http://www.youthoffthestreets.com.au/gold) or phone 1800 06 22 88.**

### MEDIA / PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

**Date:** Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> May 2009

**What:** **The Pave The Streets with Gold Appeal** - Youth Off The Streets will attempt to set an Australian record for the longest line of gold coins that will go towards helping young people in need.

**Time:** 0700hrs – 1430hrs

**Where:** Martin Place, Sydney or visit: [www.youthoffthestreets.com.au/gold](http://www.youthoffthestreets.com.au/gold)

**Who:** **Father Chris Riley**, CEO and Founder, Youth Off The Streets; Sydney Swan's **Jarrold Crouch**; Australian Film's **Veronica Sywak**; Hip Hop artist **Snob Scilla**; South Sydney Rabbitohs' Daniel Irvine; staff and young people.

**To donate to the Pave The Streets With Gold Appeal**, please visit: [www.youthoffthestreets.com.au/gold](http://www.youthoffthestreets.com.au/gold) or phone: 1800 06 22 88.

**For any media request, please contact: Ina Mullin: [Inam@youthoffthestreets.com.au](mailto:Inam@youthoffthestreets.com.au) / Ph: 9330 3543 / M: 0412 377 217**

*\*Figures from 'Australia's Homeless Youth 'Report, The National Youth Commission, 2008*

#### **Youth Off The Streets Mission:**

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

#### **About Youth Off The Streets:**

Youth Off The Streets is a non-denominational community organisation working for young people who are 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.

**To donate to Youth Off The Streets, please call: 1800 06 22 88 or visit: [www.youthoffthestreets.com.au](http://www.youthoffthestreets.com.au) -ENDS-**