

MEDIA RELEASE
6 April, 2009



Please help us save essential services for youth by becoming a volunteer for the 2009 Southern Highlands Door Knock Appeal

On Saturday, 2 May, Youth Off The Streets will be asking for your support through a Door Knock Appeal in the Southern Highlands area.

There are over 32,000 young people living homeless in Australia today*, with the onset of the global economic crisis, this figure is set to escalate.

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.

"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," said Father Chris Riley, CEO and Founder, Youth Off The Streets.

"We are very grateful to the people of the Southern Highlands who have always been supportive of the work we do here at Youth Off The Streets. Over the years, I have seen the community get behind our young people by recognising their community work and supporting their fundraising initiatives. There's a real sense of responsibility and respect for youth here that is quite unique," he said.

"I am now appealing to that sense of responsibility by asking the community for assistance to prevent the closure of any of our essential services for youth. Our organisation has already started to feel the effects of this economic crisis as families and donor corporations tighten their belts. The situation will get worse before it gets better. We mustn't close our doors on young people in need," Father Riley continued.

In an effort to minimise the effects of the economic crisis, Youth Off The Streets, will be holding a Door Knock appeal in the Southern Highlands to ensure that essential local services for youth will remain operating. Funds raised through the Door Knock Appeal will contribute to the operating costs of Matthew Hogan School, an education facility for young people who cannot access mainstream education and 8 long-term accommodation residences and rehabilitation programs for young people in need.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Youth Off The Streets are now calling for volunteers who can provide assistance to the **Door Knock Appeal on Saturday 2 May, 2009.**

To register your interest in volunteering, please contact Emily Gray on: 1800 06 22 88 or via email: doorknock@youthoffthestreets.com.au

To donate to the Door Knock Appeal, please visit: www.youthofftehestreets.com.au and click on the coloured doors or call **1800 06 22 88.**

**Father Chris Riley is available for interview. For any media request, please contact Youth Off The Streets:
Email: lnam@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 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. **To donate to Youth Off The Streets, please call: 1800 06 22 88 or visit: www.youthoffthestreets.com.au**

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