

**2004 OUTCOMES
&
ACHIEVEMENTS**



OVERVIEW OF YOUTH OFF THE STREETS

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.

With over 15 services, Youth Off The Streets offers a full continuum of care through the provision of the following programs:

- Outreach services
- Alcohol & other drugs program
- Life Skills training
- Medium to Long-term residential rehabilitation programs
- Counselling
- 3 Accredited independent High Schools
- Crisis refuge
- Semi-independent living program
- National education program delivering early intervention and prevention initiatives
- Mentoring program
- In-service workshops for teachers

Our national early intervention programs assist mainstream schools with drug and alcohol education, Life Skills training as well as offering specialist care for students who are at risk of dropping out of school.

Since our early beginnings in 1991 as a food van travelling the streets of Sydney's Kings Cross, more than 50,000 young people have been helped through our programs and services.

This document outlines the outcomes and special initiatives of our programs during 2004.

2004 Summary of young people in our care	3
Outreach Services	
Foodvan	4
StreetWalk & Young People Connected	4
Airds Outreach and Airds Home Work Group.....	5
Crisis Accommodation	
Don Bosco House	6
Treatment Programs	
Dunlea Alcohol & Other Drug Program	7
Medium to Long Term Residential Programs	
New Pathways	8
Saroy House.....	8
Debra Benson House.....	9
Foundation House	10
Holborow House.....	11
McIntosh House	11
Education Programs	
Key College	12
Matthew Hogan School.....	13
ASPIRE & Chapel School.....	14
National Schools Program & Get Reel.....	15
Scholarship Program.....	16
Fourth Annual Youth Conference.....	17
Service Learning	
Service Learning.....	18
East Timor Project	19
‘Walking in My Shoes’ Camps.....	19
Brumbies Wild Horses Training Project	20

2004 SUMMARY OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR CARE

Number of young people to whom Youth Off The Streets has provided accommodation: 422

Total number of young people who completed our medium to long-term programs: 178

- 45 reunited with their parents
- 14 returned to Department of Juvenile Justice
- 20 moved to independent living
- 38 referred back to Department of Community Services (DoCS)
- 61 enrolled into other programs

Education and employment summary:

- 1 young person successfully completed their HSC
- 12 young people completed their school certificates
- 14 young people are attending TAFE
- 13 young people are working part or full time

Total number of young people in residential care for more than 12 months: 23

The average length of stay has remained the same as 2003 with the majority of young people staying between 4 – 8 months.

- **Total number of young people accepted into Dunlea prior to renovations in April: 100**
- 53% of the young people completed the program compared to 42% in 2003
- Average length of stay was 11 days

Young people who completed the program were staying for a greater length of time. More young people were accepted into the long-term residential programs once completing Dunlea alcohol & other drugs rehabilitation program (our detoxification program).

Total number of young people referred to Don Bosco House Crisis Refuge: 867

Total number of meals served by the Foodvan: 15,000

Youth Off The Streets' Outreach Programs focus on linking young people at risk with appropriate community services. Outreach has an important role in creating positive networks for young people, introducing them to Youth Off The Streets' services and other agencies that work with young people.

Outreach Services Overview:

- Youth Off The Streets has over 600 volunteers, many of whom participate in the Outreach services
- The Outreach Managers link up with other program managers to provide counselling, recreational activities, referral services, case management and appropriate exit planning
- In 2004 Youth Off The Streets administered three street-based Outreach Projects: Foodvan, StreetWalk and an evening recreational program at Airds (in Sydney's outer west)

THE FOODVAN

The Foodvan delivers hot meals to young homeless people on the streets of Sydney every night and is staffed entirely by volunteers.

In 2004 the Foodvan served approximately 15,000 meals to homeless people. We would like to thank the generous support of the Lahood Brothers and Sargent Pies, for supplying the food every night.

STREETWALK

The StreetWalk Program is an outreach service targeting young people who are chronically homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless, and who may be alcohol or drug dependent. Staff and volunteers connect with these young people in their own environment and provide them with information about positive alternatives to their situation. All volunteers are provided with training as they work with the StreetWalk Manager to provide support to young people on the streets. The StreetWalk program currently operates Thursday to Saturday nights in the inner city of Sydney from 8pm to 2am.

Highlights:

- In 2004 there were more than 40 trained volunteers with 30 on the waiting list
- This program could not run without the support of our many volunteers. We estimate the number of volunteer hours is equivalent to \$80,000 a year
- Support includes information and advice, resume and employment assistance, however the majority of support goes to assisting young people to find a bed for the night. StreetWalk connects with the Youth Off The Streets Foodvan as well as other relevant services such as the Youth Off The Streets Don Bosco House crisis accommodation refuge, Salvation Army Oasis Youth Services, Kings Cross police and the Sydney City Council
- 80 young people on average were assisted through the StreetWalk program
- The average age is 16, with males representing 70% and females representing 30% of our clients
- The majority of the young people we assist are long-term homeless youth

YOUNG PEOPLE CONNECTED

In 2004, Youth Off The Streets launched an exciting new initiative with partners Vodafone Australia Foundation, Barnardos and Mission Australia, using mobile technology to help young people at risk. Throughout the initiative, called **YOUNG PEOPLE CONNECTED**, selected young people are given handsets, donated by Nokia, loaded with a Vodafone red SIM containing five freecall numbers and \$30 credit. This enables young people to keep in touch with their youth workers and vice versa. Our Streetwalk Manager says the initiative will save lives.

YOTS wishes to thank our partners for supporting our Outreach Services

AIRDS OUTREACH & AIRDS HOMEWORK GROUP

The Airds Outreach program, which commenced in 2001, is a community building initiative that provides recreational and educational activities to young people from the local area.

The program is helping to restore a sense of community and safety and is well supported by volunteers.

The program offers a range of activities, which are often arranged and managed by the young people. The activities include:

- Basketball, volleyball, scooter rides, skateboard, music and a free BBQ and sports competitions
- Movies on the big screen
- Outings during school holidays to the Sydney Symphony, Jamberoo and Wollongong Science Centre to name a few

The Outreach Manager also provides young people with job search assistance, general counselling and personal goal setting.

Program Highlights:

- 65 young people (on average) attended each Monday and Friday
- We have seen an increase in attendance from the Islander community with the introduction of different food and sporting activities
- 45% of those attending the program are girls and 55% are boys
- The Outreach Manager has recorded a sharp increase in the number of girls attending the program, which demonstrates the great work the Airds program is doing in boosting self-esteem and self-worth in the community
- The community is strongly involved in the program, assisting with evening activities
- The Outreach Manager has developed strong links with the local Police, butcher, supermarkets and other local businesses

Young people from Airds have worked as companions and activity helpers in our Service Learning 'Walking in My Shoes' Camps for Children with Disabilities.

AIRDS HOMEWORK HELP GROUP

Airds homework help group is a new program established in 2004 for local secondary students. It provides academic assistance and support for secondary students living in Airds. The Outreach Manager was approached by young people who were asking for help with their school work. The program consists of activities and games; followed by helping them complete homework and finishing brief activities.

Program Overview:

- The program commenced in September 2004
- Between five and ten students attend each class
- Two YOTS teachers work with students two afternoons a week after school in the local multicultural community centre
- A core of local students have attended regularly and taken ownership of the program
- In addition to homework support, young people are assisted with resume writing, word processing, and internet access to assist students with research for school projects

Don Bosco House

Don Bosco House in Marrickville, NSW, is a crisis accommodation refuge for male and female adolescents that opened in 1991. It offers vital services to disadvantaged young people such as child protection, emergency accommodation, and care for youth who are addicted to drugs and/or alcohol.

Overview:

- Don Bosco House provides support for up to 16 homeless young people aged 15 – 18.
- We receive approximately 80 – 90 referrals per month from government and non-government agencies.

In 2004 we received 965 referrals to Don Bosco House with approximately 243 young people being able to be accommodated (the rest not meeting the criteria, such as being too old). Of the 243:

- 75% were self referrals
- 15 % were DoCS referrals
- 8% Juvenile Justice referrals and
- 2% referred by family/friends

In this 16-bed facility, a young person was given a bed for a night on 2725 occasions in 2004

Services & Programs

Residents also access vital services such as:

- Counselling
- Legal support
- Links to education
- Employment information
- Outreach and Drug treatment programs
- Key College high school and,
- Youth Off The Streets medium to long-term rehabilitation farm programs offering young people an opportunity to adjust to a healthy lifestyle.

Most of the young people who come to Don Bosco House come from backgrounds of poverty, neglect, abuse and trauma and have turned to drugs and/or alcohol to ease the pain of their suffering. The challenge is to help all of our clients address these issues and improve their current lifestyle.

Without the support of the community, we would not be able to assist young people in need.

We wish to thank Sydney Airport for supporting Don Bosco House.

DUNLEA ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUG YOUTH SERVICE (DAYS)

During 2004 Youth Off The Streets recognised a new trend of drug use by young people. National research figures confirm that these days 1 in 5 young people have used ecstasy and nearly 2 in 5 have used marijuana. YOTS remodelled their drug and alcohol service Dunlea (now DAYS program) to reflect this trend.

The service is innovative in that it works with people who are experimenting with drugs as well as with young people who are abusing and dependent on substances.

Youth Off The Streets DAYS program is working hard to help the community understand the changing face of drug use and to provide individualised programs for young people who want to take back control of their lives.

DAYS Overview:

- DAYS is designed for young people who are experiencing problems with drug and alcohol use
- DAYS provides group and individual services
- DAYS caters to any young person between the age of 14-18 years who would like to seek help to change their levels and patterns of drug use
- This includes a young person who uses marijuana only on weekends as well as the young person who has been injecting heroin for prolonged periods
- DAYS is a flexible program providing multiple entry and exit points for clients

In partnership with the Health Psychology Unit at The University of Technology Sydney, DAYS is one of the few adolescent drug and alcohol programs in the country to use Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

CBT teaches people to change their thoughts and actions. The therapy helps young people to deal not only with their immediate patterns of drug use, but with many other drug related issues as well including:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Anger Management
- Self Esteem
- Problem Solving

Services Offered:

- Assessment
- Alcohol and Drug Counselling
- Referrals
- Case Management
- Taking Charge Program (CBT)
- Harm Minimisation Information
- School Program (ASPIRE)
- Phone Advice/Information

NEW PATHWAYS RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAM

New Pathways is a unique program that provides intensive therapeutic treatment within a highly structured residential setting to male adolescents aged 12-16 years who are moderate to high-risk sex offenders. The development of effective treatment programs for adolescents who have sexually abused is essential if we are to prevent, or at least minimise, the incidence of sexual abuse.

Long term social benefits of the New Pathways Residential Treatment Program:

- Children and young people who learn sexually inappropriate behaviours are at risk of developing abusive habits that can become entrenched, and resistant to change
- Research suggests that many adult offenders commit multiple (sometimes hundreds of) offences over the course of their lifetimes and that over half of all adult offenders started offending in their teenage or childhood years (Abel et al., 1993; Longo & McFaddin, 1981)

Program Highlights:

- Since opening in August 2002, 14 young people have commenced treatment within the program
- At the end of 2004, two young people graduated from the group, reintegrating into the community
- One young person reintegrated to the care of his family

Other Activities:

- Art, including mural painting
- Bushcraft and survival skills
- Music lessons
- Landcare for Service Learning, which involved care and regeneration of a section of the Wollondilly River
- Establishing a workshop and rebuilding pushbikes, which have been donated to the program

Saroy House

Located in the Canyonleigh area in the Southern Highlands, Saroy House opened in March 2004. It is a medium to long-term residential care program accommodating girls between the ages of 13-18 years.

Program Overview:

- The target group for this program are high-risk females who have endured various forms of abuse, have borderline personality disorders, and are self-harming and/or have dual diagnosis issues
- Saroy House accommodated ten young people in 2004
- The structured programs aim to provide opportunities for the young girls to identify and address issues of concern in a therapeutic environment
- Dedicated staff are available 24hrs to provide assistance and support with all aspects of life and living skills in a friendly homelike setting

2004 Outcomes & Achievements

- Young people participated in Service Learning, with the "Walking in my Shoes" program
- Three young girls attended a therapeutic 9-day horse trail riding camp
- One young girl is currently receiving singing lessons
- Another young girl completed her Year 10 certificate and has been restored to the family home
- Five young girls were referred to other agencies, two self exited the program and two are still accommodated at Saroy
- There has been a decrease in anger outbursts, positive interactions with other residents and staff and improved coping abilities

Programs Offered:

- Education at Matthew Hogan School
- Individual professional counselling and case management
- Family support and life and living skills
- Sport and recreational programs and activities

DEBRA BENSON

Debra Benson opened in March 2004 as a medium to long-term residential care program accommodating young males aged between 13-18 years of age. Located in the Marulan area of the Southern Highlands, the target group for this particular program is medium to high-risk males with underlying issues such as physical and emotional abuse. Throughout 2004, Debra Benson has been home to nine young males.

Issues addressed:

The young people who come into our care at Debra Benson deal with issues such as:

- Special learning needs
- Anti social behaviour
- Poor anger management
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Challenging behaviours

The staff at Debra Benson, who are available 24hrs a day, offer support and assistance to the residents and focus on strength based approaches adopting a flexible, professional outlook to provide individual case management.

2004 Outcomes & Achievements:

- Seven young people participated in the community by means of Service Learning with three boys involved in the "Walking in my Shoes" program
- 3 boys took part in life saving skills classes at the Bomaderry Aquatic Centre
- One young person progressed to semi-independent living after acquiring the necessary social skills
- Three young people participated in the YOTS choir, performing in public venues
- Two young people participated in work experience with the community
- Three boys participated in the Kokoda Trail
- Five of the boys attended three therapeutic bush camps
- Two of the boys returned to their family home

Programs Offered:

- Education at Matthew Hogan School
- Individual professional counselling
- Individual case management
- Family support
- Life and living skills
- Sport and recreational programs and activities
- Individual and group sessions focusing on developing skills for assertive communication, friendship, personal development, alcohol and other drug work
- Individual fitness program

FOUNDATION HOUSE

Foundation House offer medium to long-term residential care for young males and females aged between 13 to 18 years. Foundation House was home to 23 young men and 1 female resident throughout 2004 with an average of 5 residents a week.

Residents at the farm are often young people with high needs, who have difficulty with anger management, antisocial behaviour, drug and alcohol abuse, and family abuse.

Programs offered:

- Education at Matthew Hogan School
- Individual case management and professional counselling
- Life Space Crisis Intervention techniques
- Family support
- Positive peer culture group techniques
- Life skills education and training
- Sport and recreational activities

2004 Outcomes and Achievements:

- 5 boys have participated and nearly completed their Duke of Edinburgh Awards
- 6 residents have moved onto independent living, and 2 have reunited with their families
- 3 residents have been involved in the Youth Off The Streets vocal group, which included singing at the Sydney Opera House
- Several boys enjoyed the chance to participate in work experience
- 2 boys participated in the Kokoda Trail
- 7 boys attended wilderness therapy camps learning survival skills, team building and cooperation

HOLBOROW HOUSE

Holborow House is a medium-long term fully integrated residential service catering for a range of homeless youth needs. Targeting homeless teenage boys specifically from the Hunter and Central Coast regions, Holborow House provides programs 7 days a week. Programs include residential, access to education and access to employment services. In addition, the program includes conflict resolution, value skills, behaviour modification and diversional activities combined with schooling.

2004 Outcomes:

In 2004 eight young people resided at Holborow House. Of these 5 have been medium term with the remaining 3 living with us for in excess of 6 months. Two of our residents are attending Tafe, while working part-time.

Programs offered:

- Access to education
- Access to employment services
- Conflict resolution skills
- Behaviour modification and diversional activities

McINTOSH HOUSE

McIntosh House is a semi-independent living and mentoring program that assists young people to continue to develop the skills, self esteem and positive social connections necessary to live drug free, crime free lives and to help them reach their personal goals.

McIntosh was established in September 2002 and can accommodate thirteen residents (6 males and 7 females) at any one time over a two-year period. Young people are 16 years and over and are referred by themselves or other community service organisations.

The program provides each young person with:

- Case Management with a qualified case worker
- A trained and committed Mentor from the community
- Long-term supported transitional accommodation
- Nutrition and health assessment
- Employment opportunities
- Information and access to further education and training such as TAFE, computer literacy training and tertiary preparation courses

There was a total of eighteen clients were included in the McIntosh House program in 2004. The program experienced tremendous improvement in the program outcomes for the young people involved in the service in 2004.

2004 Outcomes:

- 75% of client's successfully moved on to their preferred living arrangements
- 25% were referred to other services that better suit their needs
- The ongoing development and expansion of the Mentoring Program
- Young people participated in Service Learning, with the "Walking in my Shoes" program

KEY COLLEGE

Key College is an accredited independent high school that offers a unique individual learning program for years 7-12. The college provides educational opportunities and youth services for adolescents aged 14 to 19 years who are homeless, recovering from drug addiction or still addicted, and suffering from the after-effects of severe physical, mental and sexual abuse. Students at Key College are referred from youth refuges, DoCS and The Department of Juvenile Justice.

Unique learning environment

- Key College creates individual learning programs for young people
- The College provides students with stability and motivation to overcome barriers to a positive and healthy life
- Personal development is encouraged and is a major component of Key College with several students regularly attending counselling sessions

Outcomes for 2004

Major outcomes for Key College in 2004 were:

- Key College provided education to 19 young people (maximum capacity is 9 at a time)
- Average age when young people arrive at Key College is 15 years
- One student completed her HSC
- Five students gained their School Certificates
- Three Key College students participated in the East Timor Service Learning project
- Three students participated in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards this year, one was awarded with a Silver and two received a Bronze
- Students from Key College represented Youth Off The Streets at the Dusseldorp Skills Forum which showcased alternative educational settings
- Key College received 41 phone referrals, mostly from DoCS or youth workers at refuges
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- Five of the 9 current students now have part time to full time work at Gloria Jeans, McDonalds, Eden Gardens and Garden Centre, Ikea and Absolutely Flabulous café

Community Partnership & Activities

Key College is very proud of the community partnerships that assist us to ensure young people are encouraged to exercise their talents and pursue their dreams. Some of these partnerships were:

- A successful partnership with the Sydney Theatre Company enabling one student to sit the HSC Drama exam
- The students were able to see a number of plays this year through the support of The Belvoir St Theatre
- Key College visited the Botanical Gardens and participated in the Community Greening Program. The students have enjoyed planting and greening up the courtyard at Key College
- Key College students participated in the YOTS vocal group. They sang at the premiere of the Passion of the Christ, the Scholarship Dinner and at Presentation Night
- Key College has established a fantastic partnership with McGrath Estate Agents, who has come to the school to talk to students about careers and have helped with résumés and interview techniques
- One of the students will take up a Traineeship at McGrath

MATTHEW HOGAN SCHOOL

Established in 1997, Matthew Hogan School is an independent high school registered by the NSW Board of Studies. The school provides education for young people with challenging behaviours and complex needs who are residing in our Southern Highlands medium-long term residential programs. The school is named after Matthew Hogan, a young boy who was involved in our programs, who died of a drug overdose.

Young people are taught in a classroom situation according to their educational level. The program is individually-based and flexible – there is a choice of educational programs depending on their prior learning.

The school provides subjects in both the junior and senior school curriculums. Students are also required to engage in drug and alcohol and anger management lessons during the week.

Throughout 2004, 34 students attended Matthew Hogan School.

Outcomes for 2004:

- 5 students participated on the Kokoda Trail project, which was produced into a documentary aired on Channel 10
- A small group of students assisted at Tangarra School, a school for students with special needs
- A group assisted local volunteers and council with a river clean up and tree planting program.
- Another group worked with horse handler Greg Powell, who works with Youth Off The Streets, and developed horse handling skills and whip cracking abilities
- Three students participated in the East Timor Service Learning project
- Five students achieved their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Medallion
- Six students completed their school certificates
- Students attended a careers and employment expo in Canberra
- Students engaged in "Career Voyage," a session where students can match their interest and abilities with different career opportunities

ASPIRE

(Alternative Support Program: Intervention, Rehabilitation, Education)

Focusing on early intervention and prevention, ASPIRE assists young people who are at risk of becoming disconnected from mainstream high school through innovative teaching resources, specialist workshops and time out programs.

The purpose of the program is to offer specialist counselling, creative programming and training to enable the students to remain in high school or to pursue other education and training pathways before they drop out of school and their situation becomes desperate. Both the medium and short-term programs are delivered formally from Chapel School.

ASPIRE assists young people to develop the skills, attitude and attributes to make transitions from school to work and/or further education and training.

The Program:

The program has three main components:

- **Medium-Term Program** – For young people already disengaged and disconnected from mainstream education, including those expelled from high school
- **Short-Term Programs** – For young people at risk of becoming disconnected from mainstream education. This may include students on long or short-term suspension as well as other students who we are proactively working with via a community outreach educational program such as our Airs Homework Group
- **In Service Workshops and Training** - Youth Off The Streets educators deliver educational workshops to NSW schools, parent group and community organisations in values education, anger and behaviour management, alcohol and other drug education, mentoring and student leadership

CHAPEL SCHOOL

Chapel School opened in June of this year and operates at our Merrylands site, which is home to our semi-independent living programs and our drug and alcohol program. The location of the program ensures continuity of schooling for young people in our service.

Overview and Outcomes of Chapel:

- As many of the young people in our service have experienced time out of school, Chapel School acts as a bridge back into mainstream education, assessing student's educational level for when they go back to mainstream schools
- Chapel School also identifies any special needs the students may have such as literacy and numeracy training
- Chapel School embraces the philosophies already working successfully at our other schools – a flexible curriculum with an emphasis on individual talents
- Young people participate in classroom learning from Monday to Thursday and do work experience on Fridays
- Chapel school educated between 10-12 young people in the "time out" program
- Of these current students, four will return to mainstream school next year
- All of the students have had a significant improvement in their attendance, with one student in particular not missing a day of school

We would like to thank The Department of Education, Science and Training for supporting the ASPIRE and Chapel School.

National School Programs

More than a decade of experience has taught us that education is one of the most effective ways to break the cycles of abuse and poverty that can trap so many young people. Youth Off The Streets' National School Program has developed a number of resources aimed at early intervention drug education; these invaluable resources are available to educators across Australia.

YOUth MAKING A DIFFERENCE RESOURCE KITS - With support from the AMP Foundation and the Australian Government Department of Education Science and Training Youth Off The Streets have developed the **YOUth Making a Difference** resource kit. The kit is based on our Service Learning curriculum, which is a value based intervention program, designed to teach young people generosity and empathy for others.

The kit includes 17 **values education** workshops/teaching modules and five **service learning** workshops based on successful Youth Off The Streets Service Learning case studies.

GETREEL Drug & Alcohol Information Kit - This comprehensive teaching unit, comprising of 8 x 45 minute lessons is designed to make it easy to bring early intervention drug education to the classroom. The kit also includes the **GetReel – Design a Drug Ad Competition**, which helps students to develop a comprehensive knowledge about the risks of licit and illicit drug use.

Inhalants - This resource contains valuable information on inhalants and has been designed so that schools, counsellors, and community groups can integrate information on inhalants into the most appropriate setting – depending on their students needs.

The GetReel Competition is an annual competition supported by The Sony Foundation Australia and developed by Youth Off The Streets. Students aged 10-16 are invited to design a drug awareness advertisement targeting youth drug use. This innovative program utilises Youth Off The Streets expertise in the field of drug and alcohol treatment and enables us to share our knowledge to a wide and diverse audience.

In 2004 we received almost 500 entries to the competition. Thirty expert judges from the fields of drug and alcohol, education, advertising, entertainment as well as students from Youth Off The Streets Key College viewed the 12 short-listed entries.

And the winners are:

- The winning entry from the Middle School Division came from Allentown State School in Rockhampton, QLD. The concept was a play on the Mastercard advertisement "Priceless" focusing on the financial cost of using drugs and highlighting the common problem of poly-drug use amongst young people
- The winning entry from the Secondary School Division was submitted by one student from Alice Springs High School and focused on issues facing teenagers today including family, relationships and peer pressure. The advertisement gives the message "drugs will not solve your problems" and was rated highly due to the consideration that had been given to other factors that may affect youth drug use in today's society
- The runner up entries submitted from students in NSW and Victoria focused respectively on irresponsible drinking & how drug taking can affect a young persons dream for a positive future

The winning & runner up schools and students once again received fantastic Sony prizes. The winning advertisements will be produced as Community Service Announcements to be shown on national TV in 2005.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTH

In 2004 Youth Off The Streets launched their inaugural Scholarship Program for Disadvantaged Youth. Scholarships of \$5,000 each were awarded to young people from NSW who exhibited extraordinary potential but who lacked the support and financial resources to reach their goals.

Program Overview & Highlights:

- Scholarships were donated and presented by a range of generous businesses and individuals
- We received 40 incredible nominations
- The Selection Committee consisted of Father Chris Riley, David Koch, Barbara Holborow, Mary Lopez, John Stanley, James Williams and Wendy Tierney
- 10 Scholarship recipients were selected and one deserving young man was also chosen to receive a special merit award
- Nominees were not restricted to a specific field of study or training path, giving them the opportunity to follow a wide range of goals
- Each young person has been matched with a mentor who provide them with support during the year of their scholarship

On October 7th, 2004 the Youth Off The Streets Scholarship Program was officially launched at a gala dinner at Star City Casino in Sydney. Almost 400 people attended this fantastic night, which included entertainment from Jimmy Barnes, Amity Dry, Gina Jeffries and Clint Crighton, performing alongside the Youth Off The Streets vocal group. The Scholarship recipients were presented their awards and their stories of determination were an inspiration to all who attended.

The 10 scholarship recipients all confronted barriers to achieving their best and the scholarship funds will assist the recipients to pursue their dreams. Some examples of what the scholarship funds will be used for are:

- One recipient will use her scholarship funds to cover child-care costs to enable her to complete her secondary school education
- One recipient, who lives with his Nan after the tragic loss of both his parents, will use his scholarship to pursue chefs training at TAFE
- Another recipient who cares for his disabled mother, who struggles to pay for his education, will use his scholarship funds to complete high school

The Youth Off The Streets Scholarship Program 2004/05 has been generously supported by **Tenix Pty Ltd**. Thank you to all our Scholarship sponsors and congratulations to all the 2004 recipients. For details on the 2005 Scholarship Program go to www.youthoffthestreets.com.au.

BUILDING ON STRENGTH 4th ANNUAL YOUTH CONFERENCE

Youth Off The Streets 4th Annual Youth Conference - themed **BUILDING ON STRENGTH** was held over three days November 8-10, 2004, at the Bankstown District Sports Club Conference & Function Centre.

Presentations, workshops and creative discussions were led by international and Australian specialists providing valuable training in strength-based interventions and alternative approaches to working with youth with challenging behaviours.

Presenters and workshop leaders included Dr JC Chambers, Dr Larry Brendtro and Dr Edna Olive from the USA covering such topics as:

- *Learning to Whisper to Youth*
- *The Resilience Code*
- *Positive Behaviour*

Local presenters and workshop leaders included Dr Michael Carr-Gregg, Ms Barbara Holborow and Rev Tim Costello covering such topics as:

- *Mental Health Issue for Young People, Making The Most of What You've Got, and Hope, the Essential Ingredient.*

Fr Shay Cullen and Mr Alex Hermoso of the Philippines based PREDA Foundation joined a local panel/forum addressing *National & International Approaches to Child Protection* with representatives from both the NSW Police & Federal Police. The PREDA-AKBAY Theatre Group presented a moving dramatisation, whilst orphans from East Timor performed traditional song and dance at the Conference Dinner.

The over 180 delegates who participated during the three days were invited to give feedback and their responses were enthusiastic and congratulatory to the program and speakers:

"Top class presentations," "This is the best conference I have been to", "Passionate speakers who equipped and reignited the passion of youth workers".

YOUTH OFF THE STREETS SERVICE LEARNING

Service Learning is a character-building values education program that provides opportunities for young people to develop skills, self-esteem and positive values through service to the community. Helping young people to understand the importance and value of being generous to others is one of the key features of the program's success.

Developed by Father Riley, the aim of the program is to focus on the cause(s) of violent and criminal behaviour amongst adolescents.

The primary purpose of the project is helping young people to develop a lasting moral framework for positive behaviour.

Youth Off The Streets' Service Learning model has three components:

- Classroom based lessons that provide research opportunities for participants
- Project evaluation and follow up which offers an opportunity for participants to assist in the preparation of their service
- The actual project activities

Service Learning projects address the long-term recovery of each young person by equipping them with skills and qualities to help them succeed after they have graduated from our projects and either returned to their families and/or living and working in the mainstream community.

Through thoughtfully designed service experiences that meet community needs, young people learn to view themselves differently recognising they have gifts, which are of value to others. Through Service Learning projects, young people experience feelings of pride and positive self esteem and begin to view themselves as capable of challenges that they had never before thought were within their reach.

Thanks to support from the **Telstra Foundation, the Macquarie Bank Foundation and the St. George Foundation**, Youth Off The Streets was able to implement three main Service Learning initiatives for the disadvantaged young people in our long-term residential rehabilitation programs: The East Timor Project; The Brumbies Wild Horses Project; and 'Walking in My Shoes' Camps for Children with Disabilities.

SERVICE LEARNING

EAST TIMOR PROJECT

The aim of the East Timor project is to improve the life circumstances of orphans in East Timor, and to help young Australians develop a lasting moral framework for positive behaviour.

In 2004 we ran our 3rd project to East Timor. The Youth Off The Streets Service Learning East Timor project visits the Baguia orphanage in East Timor once a year and provides ongoing financial support throughout the year. Along with Father Riley, young people from our services provide a welcome respite for the nuns that manage the orphanage 7 days a week, 365 days of the year. As with the previous trips, the experienced was life altering for them. The participants of the project experience poverty of a developing nation and realise that they can make a difference in the world by reaching out to others.

The young people involved in the project have experienced displacement and trauma for much of their lives. The East Timor Project gave them hope, as they saw for the first time the challenges faced by children younger than themselves. The final stage of the project involves an evaluation of the project from both a personal and program level.

In 2004 5 young people participated in the East Timor Service project, raising \$4,000 prior to leaving, which they donated to the Baguia orphanage.

The stages of the project included:

- Identifying and researching areas of need in East Timor
- Fundraising activities to raise monies for orphans in East Timor and towards their own travel, accommodation and food costs under the supervision of their teachers and youth workers
- Meeting the beneficiaries of the project and seeing first hand the value of their efforts
- Writing up their experiences and speaking to other young people and community groups on what was learned upon their return to Australia

WALKING IN MY SHOES CAMPS

Walking in my Shoes is an annual series of three-day camps for children with physical disabilities, where young people from Youth Off The Streets deliver a specially designed, fun-filled, activity camp in order to give the families of these children a free 3-day respite.

As in previous years, the project accommodated and cared for children with disabilities between 7 and 11 years of age enabling parents of the children to enjoy a well-deserved rest knowing their children are safe and happy. The project also gave an opportunity and challenge to the young people in our service as it taught them empathy and allowed them to better understand and relate to people with disabilities.

The camps are held in accommodations that are accessible to outdoor activities as well as having a sufficient number of rooms to accommodate the young people, workers and volunteers. The children are taken on a number of trips, including Taronga Park Zoo, the Opera House, the Imax Theatre and sailing. Indoor activities are also organised including craft, puppetry and T-shirt painting.

The feedback received from the parents of the children was very positive, with some requesting they be considered for the next camp.

THE BRUMBIES WILD HORSES PROGRAM

The Brumbies Wild Horses Program, which is part of the Service Learning model, continues to achieve great things for the students at Matthew Hogan School. Now in its second year, this innovative initiative developed in partnership with Horse Handler Greg Powell and Father Chris Riley aims at developing important life and social skills, self-esteem and responsibility for one's own actions.

The Project encourages young people to learn a way of communicating that is based on trust and respect, rather than violence. They do this by training wild, endangered horses, guided by the horse handler.

The young people on this program come from backgrounds of severe neglect and psychological, physical and/or sexual abuse, suffered at the hands of those who should care for them. Consequently many of the students find it difficult to trust adults, yet we know from experience that they find interaction with animals therapeutic. Many of the young people already care for animals on the farm, and this project takes their rehabilitation a step further by introducing a challenge and learning aspect in the form of a structured program.

Fr Riley first thought of the idea at a time when he was working with a group of young people who had anger management issues. At around the same time he heard about the brumbies being slaughtered in our National Parks. It seemed to Fr Riley that rescuing these beautiful animals could be of benefit to the animals and to some of the young people who he was working with.

In 2004, five boys ages 13 – 15 participated in the Brumbies program in the Southern Highlands. This group operated around the Positive Peer Culture model, which means that teamwork and group negotiation skills are used to manage young people. The program ran for six months and the new group of boys were fortunate enough to observe last year's participants who returned to demonstrate some of the skills they gained through the Brumbies Program.

Program aims

- To teach damaged young people social skills that will build character and break the cycle of violence in families
- To enhance the school curriculum by extending young people's learning into the community
- To enable young people to learn a way of communicating that builds trust and a respectful alliance
- To encourage students to take responsibility for their life choices
- To provide a character-building program that will facilitate the rehabilitation of damaged young people into mainstream society, including education, employment and relationships

Each horse in the Brumby herd lives by the laws of absolute allegiance. They care about each other and their loyalty to their family is absolute. This in itself is a powerful teaching aid for the boys. All of them have been discarded by their families. They have few attachments to anyone and so this will be a life altering experience for them. This is an innovative way of enabling them to learn some rules about how a family operates so they will be able to bond and nurture their own children in the future, forming the first step in undoing the generational family breakdown they have been entrenched in.

2004 Project Outcomes:

There have been many achievements in the past year as a result of this project:

- The group improved their schooling significantly as they became more settled, focused and responsive to group needs
- Two of the five boys graduated from the program and returned home
- The remaining three boys are continuing in the program and making positive results

Youth Off The Streets wishes to thank our generous supporters

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MAJOR SUPPORTERS

We would also like to thank all the registered clubs across NSW who continue to support the work of Youth Off The Streets in a variety of ways. We are grateful for your support and look forward to meeting more of your members over the coming year.

If you would like to hear more about our programs please contact:
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