# Streets Ahead
YOUR BI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER FROM YOUTH OFF THE STREETS

## Summer 2016

**Celebrating Successes of Young People**

With your incredible gifts, you have...

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Provided around 1,000 INSTANCES OF SUPPORT to kids from our 30 outreach services across Australia</th>
<th>Delivered over 10,000 HOT MEALS from our Food Van</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORTED 88 students to achieve an education through our specialist schools</td>
<td>Given 66 kids case management support and supported kids staying in our 16 properties for homeless young people</td>
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<tr>
<td>Street Walk has helped provide 238 INSTANCES OF SUPPORT transporting young people to refuges around Sydney</td>
<td>SUPPORTED 26 young people to overcome substance abuse in our Dunlea rehabilitation program</td>
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Thank you for your life-changing support!

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Find us on: [Twitter]([#Twitter]) [YouTube]([#YouTube]) [Facebook]([#Facebook])
We like to believe that all kids have every opportunity within their reach. And that every child is born with the same chance of success in this country.

As much as we would like it to be true, it’s simply not the case.

But the generous donations you make to disadvantaged kids, gives them a hand up and out of terrible circumstances. You help kids that have been neglected and abused throughout their entire life... kids who run to the streets because they have nowhere else to turn.

It’s only with your continued compassionate support that we can do this vital work – time and again. The kids you help are so grateful too.

I am often asked: What is the greatest issue kids face today?

My answer to that is not drugs, or homelessness. Instead it is something that often causes a young person to use drugs or end up homeless.

Social isolation in my opinion is the biggest issue kids are facing right now.

It can often lead young people to engage in negative behaviour and take refuge in drugs and alcohol.

Preventing social exclusion through our intervention services and our education programs is key to breaking down the cycle of social isolation.

This is where your support has been vital.

With your help, we have been able to invest in our youth education programs and activities, creating opportunities for young people to learn valuable skills and engage with one another.

When kids feel connected to their community, their school or a group of friends they develop support networks and are less likely to feel isolated or engage in anti-social behaviour.

Our annual National Scholarship Program, for example, financially assists disadvantaged kids to unlock their full potential. With the support of our generous sponsors, the kids are paired up with a mentor to guide them for 2 years along with financial help to pay for their schooling and educational needs.

Many of our kids have thrived in this program. One past recipient has completed a Bachelor of Communication and Bachelor of Commerce with distinctions and currently works for The Department of Finance. Another completed their qualifications in community services and child protection and is now a child and family practitioner; and another has gone on to become a Primary School Teacher.

This is the amazing difference you make.

I know you believe that all young people should be given the chance to achieve their best. That’s why your wonderful donations are used to help young people feel included and valued, and provides them with opportunities to engage in their local communities.

Thank you for your Christmas gifts!

Thank you to everyone who supported our recent Christmas Appeal. Together we raised over $500,000 for homeless and disadvantaged kids!

This is incredible and many young people will have a much better 2016 because of you.
Christmas in our services

On Christmas Day we make every effort to support kids who have nowhere to spend the day.

All of our Outreach services hosted local Christmas parties for disadvantaged young people to help celebrate this special season alongside staff and the local community.

Our Christmas parties involved a range of fun activities such as karaoke, dancing, sporting activities, jumping castles, giant chess and other recreational activities. A Christmas meal and entertainment was provided for all to enjoy.

These celebrations are vital in showing kids who are living through poverty, homelessness or abuse that they do matter, and we will stand by them.

Jack’s story

Jack was once a young kid who never had a stable bed to sleep in. He was struggling with anger issues forcing him to disconnect from everyone around him which led to his expulsion from school.

Your generous support helped Jack along the journey toward the kid he is today. Jack is continually building a sense of belonging in his new school and is re-connecting with his community; he is finally on the way to living a stable and happy life.

From a young age Jack had been living in and out of his family home, couch surfing at relatives and friends places.

Jack struggled through school and was regularly suspended for his aggressive behaviour. His absence from school meant he rarely made friends and found it impossible to interact with other people.

With your help, Jack was offered a different path... one that would allow him to live a happy life, like all kids should.

For the first time in his life Jack was invited to be involved in a school holiday camp and was also awarded recognition for his progression at Youth Off The Streets throughout the year.

Unfortunately, this positivity didn’t last long and Jack could not face this new chapter alone. He again struggled to stay in school and was eventually expelled.

Jack had fallen back into the life of the kid he used to be - one with no direction, support or happiness.

But there was always someone who believed in him – he again found hope, thanks to you.

Jack was assisted with the transition into his new school allowing him to make friends and stay out of trouble.

Now a more confident kid, Jack is embracing being a part of his new school and is continuing to pursue a happy, fulfilling, and importantly, stable life – a huge step for a kid who was about to give up.

A Gift That Lasts Longer Than A Lifetime

Every young person has the potential to make a positive contribution to our world. Leaving a gift in your Will means we can continue to reach out to young people in need and help them to become active and valued members of their community.

All bequests, large and small, have the potential to change lives.

The Father Chris Riley Society has been established to honour the generosity of those who have pledged a gift in their Will to Youth Off The Streets. Members of the Father Chris Riley Society receive invitations to special events, a unique pin and a certificate. There is no cost or obligation associated with membership. For any enquiries please ring our Bequest Officer Cheryl Johnstone on 02 9330 3530 or email us at bequests@youthoffthestreets.com.au
Andrea Gomes wanted to work with kids, but didn’t know how she wanted to work with them. She was working at Qantas when she got her first taste of connecting with kids and her dreams started to materialise.

Andrea was working at Qantas as an administrator and became involved with Youth Off The Streets by volunteering her time during lunch breaks.

“Qantas bought the young people a car to practice driving in. It was called the Qantas iDrive program. I learned how to connect to young people through teaching them to drive. They are quite nervous in the car, so you have to talk to them in a way that builds up their confidence and encourages them so they know they have the skills to drive,” she says.

Andrea knew that she wanted to work with kids and now knew how she was going to do it. Studying Youth Work at TAFE was her plan, but life got in the way.

“I actually put it off for a while. I bought a unit and thought studying and working full time would be too much. My mentor at Qantas said to me ‘look if this is what you want to do and you know it’s what you want to do, then just bite the bullet and do it.’ The next day I signed up for TAFE and did my youth work course.”

Her favourite subject was Aboriginal culture, it was one of the electives she chose while studying youth work, and it’s fitting that she would end up working at South Eastern Sydney Outreach – where the majority of young people identify as Aboriginal.

“I actually did my work placement with South Eastern Sydney. I finished my course at the end of September, but I continued to volunteer after my placement. The previous senior youth worker left and soon after that they offered me that role. I couldn’t believe that I had landed my dream job, very few people can say that.”

Following a dream is what many strive for and never reach. Andrea is one of the very few to achieve their dreams, but did the reality live up to the expectations?

“Youth work has definitely lived up to my expectations. I believe that Youth Off The Streets is a great charity and what Father Chris Riley believes really projects back on to the services we offer. The best thing about it is we’ll take kids no matter what their circumstances are. We try to help all kids… that is the main goal, to help kids in the area unlock their full potential.”

If you don’t know much about our Outreach programs, Andrea wants you to know that above all, we are here for the community.

“I want everyone to know that Outreach is important. I want them to know that we go into the community and engage with young people, alongside elders and community leaders. We employ locally and always know the area well.”

Andrea is now helping young people in south eastern Sydney transform their lives. Even though she has found her dream job, she still volunteers with our Street Walk program. It’s this kind of dedication that make our staff and volunteers so special.
The powerful story of Amy, hard work rewarded

“This scholarship helped re-build my self-confidence and the fact that others believe in me enough to reward me with this prize is a great source of encouragement.”

We first got to know Amy through our Outreach program in 2014. She was a shy and reserved kid who was in clear need of help, but was too afraid to speak up and engage staff.

After months of perseverance we finally broke through her shyness, engaging her in activities and on a personal level.

It became clear that Amy was self-harming and needed support. She was caring for her sick mother and her little brother. The stress of her situation was taking its toll and she didn’t see any hope for the future.

After positive reinforcement and support Amy started to feel hope for her future... things were looking up.

“The Outreach team gave me wonderful and positive support throughout all of my achievements and decision making. My mentor has really helped me step up my game and to think from a different perspective” Amy says.

Amy’s dream has always been to study nursing at university. After school, she missed out getting into her course by only few marks. Not satisfied with the outcome, and not accepting defeat, Amy studied a Diploma in Human Resources while continuing to pursue her dream of studying full-time nursing.

Studying full-time is expensive, especially when you are living off a carer’s payment and looking after a sick mother and younger sibling. Amy knew she needed help and asked us what she should do and where she should go for help.

We encouraged her to apply for our Scholarship Program which helps kids with financial and mentoring support. Last September Amy was successful in her application and is now about to commence her nursing degree.

We are all very proud of Amy and we hope you are too! If it wasn’t for the incredible support of compassionate donors like you, Amy would still be struggling on her own.

Amy sums it up best when she talks about how important an education is to break free from disadvantage:

“I come from a background where education, let alone good education, does not come free or cheap for the less fortunate. Coming to Australia where the education is free, and hard work and resilience is rewarded, unlike the corrupt system where I grew up. I felt extremely blessed and set out to complete a degree which will help me to have a rewarding career and help others. After graduating from high school the only thing standing between me and university was not the lack of motivation or bad work ethic, but the lack of support and money. To say the least this scholarship was God sent, it will enable me to further myself in my current studies by supporting me financially and mentally.

This scholarship helped re-build my self-confidence and the fact that others believe in me enough to reward me with this prize is a great source of encouragement. I look forward to making myself, the generous donors and my family proud.”

*Name and image changed for privacy reasons*
Merchandise
Merchandise is available to purchase online through our eStore:
Father’s new book, resource books, stationery and eGifts

In Memoriam
Create an online tribute page for donations in lieu of flowers or request donation envelopes for a funeral service

In Celebration
Create an online fundraising page for donations in lieu of gifts for your next celebration www.youthoffthestreets.com.au/incelebration

Volunteer
Call Lynette on 02 9330 3515, or visit www.youthoffthestreets.com.au/volunteering

Get Involved

Leave a gift in your Will
Join the Father Chris Riley Society
Call 02 9330 3530 or email bequests@youthoffthestreets.com.au

Become a regular giver
Call 1800 062 288

Fundraise for us
Take part in an event, or fundraise in lieu of gifts
Call Bianca on 02 9330 3531 or visit www.youthoffthestreets.com.au/fundraise

Support our Op Shops
In Bowral, Cessnock, Maitland and Singleton. Call 02 9721 5700

Donate today
Call 1800 062 288 or visit www.youthoffthestreets.com.au

*You’ll understand that although we are immensely proud of the young people we work with, we have huge respect for their privacy, and change their names and photos for their protection.