

You Have A Friend Inc



P.O.Box 637, Tweed Heads, NSW 2485

Our website

www.youhaveafriend.org.au

Issue 2 - March 2009

From the President – “You Have A Friend Inc.”

As I review our efforts over the last 3 months, I cannot help but feel a deep sense of pride at being involved with such wonderful people from all walks of life who are currently supporting our charity. Sponsors, students of all ages, parents and teachers who unselfishly help fundraising, assisting with administration, collecting and giving of their spare time to serve brekkie and be at one of our many outreaches.



The Sunday before Christmas, we had a wonderful Christmas Brunch with over 60 of our “friends” at Coolangatta, only to repeat the event a week later in Murwillumbah. This would not have been possible without the support from our many regular volunteers and some who just turned up on the day to help. Thank you too to our many sponsors who provided so much by way of Christmas lunches, presents, gift packs and financial donations.

I cannot thank enough our many volunteers who without any prompting have taken it on themselves to write letters for donations, to assist at our raffles and at our Bunning’s BBQs. With over 35 registered volunteers, a volunteer roster is now essential and once more a volunteer coordinator magically appeared to help and support us. This newsletter would not be possible were it not for one of our volunteers who tirelessly chases us then spends hours cutting and pasting our articles. Accounting and the keeping of our books is so very important and I thank our “unofficial” bookkeeper whose tireless support and computer input to ensure our accounts are up to date for our annual audit and the dreaded GST, is invaluable. Then there are those who simply turn up each week, to one of our

Please visit us at: www.youhaveafriend.org.au

many outreaches, with no fuss and no matter the weather or conditions. Supplies are bought and collected and distributed. Without you folk, all this would not be possible.

Our “youth group” has done a wonderful job too and it heartens me so to see the hours and the dedication the young people put in to our outreach and supporting our friends. Congratulations to one of our very active volunteers, Caitlin for taking out the Tweed Shire’s Australia Day Young Achiever in Community Service Award for work she does with us and other charities.

To our sponsors who have supported us throughout the year, I thank you sincerely. Once more as the school commences, our students at St. James primary are collecting fruit and other perishables to assist us with supporting our outreaches and year 11 and 12 students are now joining us on the streets as well. This year we were all deeply touched by one of our younger supporters, Alexander McIntosh, who for her 10th birthday, unselfishly asked her friends to provide a cash donation in place of her birthday gift! The donations, totalling \$210, she generously presented to us for the homeless and marginalised. A truly wonderful gesture Alexander.

With the global financial uncertainty and major development taking place in the Tweed district, it is obvious to me that two issues are now serious and need urgent consideration, namely a centralised “drop-in-centre” in Tweed Heads and also more affordable housing. We have been instrumental in organising a meeting with Tweed major service providers and also State member, Geoff Provost, who has been most supportive. A working group has been formed with the intention of addressing the issues and progress will be reported in future newsletters.

As a charity, every effort over the last few months has been made to provide future generations an understanding as to what homelessness involves. At the same time we must never lose sight of the fact that first and foremost, our wonderful “friends” and those less fortunate than ourselves are taken care of and we must ensure in our little corner of the world our “friends” are not forgotten as council, government and others rush to cater for the tourist and their dollars, and development quickly swamps those who have a right to live in this beautiful part of the world. If we do not speak up for our “friends” then often no one will.

Last, but by no means least of all, I wish to thank all our wonderful friends we meet each week. Folks, your friendship and love goes a long way in putting something spiritual in our souls. Something we cannot explain, but know that it is in walking with you and sharing our lives together that we can all make a difference to this beautiful place we call home.

To everyone involved, may God Bless and keep you and your families safe.

John Lee, President



what's happening?

Outreach News.....

THROUGH VOLUNTEERS EYES

Bordered by a muddy Tweed River swollen with rain and a busy main road, the tranquil surrounds of Budd Park in Murwillumbah is suddenly busy. It's 8am on a Sunday morning, YHAF volunteers and friends arrive, greetings are shared and duties begun.



Sounds of cooking, conversation, laughter and the odd belly chuckle resonate from volunteers and friends alike as plates are filled then emptied and bellies and minds contented. Finally items are repacked and cleaning completed. Volunteers linger

and chat with the visitors, finally saying farewell and wishing all a good week.

Driving away, we wonder what challenges lie waiting for us all in the coming week. We are reassured in knowing that early morning brekkie has made the week ahead more bearable for some of our friends and provided us with a real life lesson on gratitude and understanding.

(Sonia & Dianne Murwillumbah Brekkie Crew Members)

I started volunteering my time when You Have a Friend first started up in Murwillumbah in June 2008 and found the camaraderie you get with the other volunteers is invaluable and genuinely enjoy spending time with them.

One of the most outstanding stories I have is the story of one gentleman that when I first met him lived in a tent in one of the local parks; it was the middle of winter and he was doing it a bit tough. He came to our breakfasts for the first few months and then we didn't see him for quite a while. He eventually came back and the difference was remarkable, he had got himself a caravan and he was a different man. I spoke with him 4 days ago and found that he was still in the same caravan, growing vegetables such as lettuce and tomatoes in Styrofoam boxes and doing odd jobs around the caravan park for money off his rent.

(M – Murwillumbah Brekkie Crew Member)

THE ADVENTURES OF SONIA & DIANNE ~

A VISIT TO THE HOUSE ON THE HILL



The three of us spring up the steep stairs (well one of us bad knees. old etc) and make our way to the hospital's front door. Safely inside we make our way to the reception desk to enquire as to the whereabouts of a local friend who has been admitted. We of course use his nickname, which brings a wide-eyed stare from the receptionist.

Up the lift we go-time to recall birth stories, the 16 year old, a son, grimaces. We have time to practise a new dance move before the lift stops.

We walk towards his room and see him there-dressed, sitting on the edge of his bed waiting to be released, like a child on detention. We chat and promise not to stay long. It's easy to tell he would rather be anywhere else.

A nurse walks past the door, stops and backtracks, surprised we guess. Another hears our laughter and wanders in to see what is going on. Good natured and caring they have a challenging job at the best of times.

We say goodbye and leave but worry for days that he has had to hitch a long distance home in bad weather. A week comes and goes, he doesn't show at brekkie. Another week speeds by like the last.

A week later we arrive for brekkie duty and notice the barbeque is already on! We break into a smile. There he is in his usual place. We're glad to see him.

MURWILLUMBAH LUNCH - A GREAT PLACE TO BE !

A barbeque is held each Thursday at lunchtime for the homeless in Murwillumbah. We are indebted to the Community Centre in Knox Park, run by Wendy and her group of volunteers, which not only provides our venue and fresh bread, but also the assistance of some of them in helping prepare the food. Becky is the hardest working of these. Each week she cuts up the vegetables and prepares the attractive salad and fruit plates. Special thanks to our three faithful who never fail to attend and support us each week. Ursula was instrumental in arranging for local businesses to donate food, and we have 5 butcher shops and 3 greengrocers who contribute most generously so that there are no costs involved for You Have a Friend. *(And thank you for your dedication and support Norm and Mary, who are always there to cook up a mean barbie and just be there for our friends - from YHAF)*

We have about 50 friends who attend the barbecue and the atmosphere is always very pleasant. You don't have to be rich to have good manners!

While we are pretty busy while the meat and vegies are being cooked there is still ample time for mingling and communicating with these fascinating people.

(Norm – Murwillumbah Lunch Crew.)

If you would like to “**get involved**” with our charity and have some fun and meet some wonderful and unique people along the way.... we have a number of ways you can assist.

Street outreach, Court Assistance, School Outreach, Fund Raising, Crafting plus many other ways. Contact us and we will be only too happy to welcome and assist you.

Please visit us at: www.youhaveafriend.org.au

CHRISTMAS LUNCH AT COOLIE

On Sunday, 21st December 2008 the sky was blue and the sun was shining as bright as the smiles on the faces of 50+ of our friends as they gathered to enjoy a typical Aussie Christmas lunch in a fabulously decorated rotunda by the golden beach of Coolangatta. Today our friends enjoyed the pleasure of feasting on ham, chicken, various salads and rolls as we all sat together and were thankful for the meal we were able to share. Carols played in the background and some of our friends played guitar and sang. Homemade cakes and desserts, prepared by the vollies, of shortbread, Christmas cake, white Christmas, rum balls, minced pies, trifle and apple crumble and custard were served and our friends were overwhelmed with the delightful tasting sweets. Although Santa was unable to attend he sent his elves in green t-shirts to deliver toiletries gift packs, food hampers and toys for the children. Such a delight to see the kids beaming faces as they tore open their presents to reveal their first Barbie doll or put together a new puzzle. A most enjoyable day was had by all. If only for a day, bellies were satisfied, as tomorrow is unlikely to bring such satisfaction to our dear friends. Let us remember this Christmas lunch as friends together enjoying one another's presence (not presents) this day.



Special thanks to Tweed Heads Bowls Club for providing the lunch. Knit wits for providing the toiletries gift packs and toys. The children of St James Primary School for their donation of non-perishable foods. Monetary donations received and the staff at The Professionals Coolangatta / Tweed Heads for volunteering their time to help out.



OUR YOUNG SUPPORTER!

Every so often, acts of kindness and concern towards our many friends, really touch our hearts and the recent donation of 10 year old Alexander McIntosh was no exception. For almost a year, Alexander was adamant that for her 10th birthday, she would not accept presents from her friends, rather ask for the money that would have been spent on presents, to be donated to our charity to support the homeless and marginalised.

Alexandra raised \$210 and our friends at the "brekkies" and street outreaches, signed an appreciation for her wonderful gesture. This we presented to her, with a gift voucher that was donated by our friends as well.

Alexander, your most wonderful gesture goes a long way in showing love and support to those who need it and we really do look forward to the day you will be able to attend street outreaches with us. It's the little acts of genuine kindness and love that make such a difference.

God Bless you and your family and thank you from all our friends and us at "You Have A Friend".



Homeless on the Tweed

The 2006 Census indicated there were 654 homeless in the Tweed on census night. I have supported the homeless in the Coolangatta/Tweed district for almost 4 years now and strongly believe this figure to be far greater with hundreds in the area now sleeping on beaches, in cars, toilet blocks, river banks, parks, shacks without facilities, outside churches or on friend's couches.

Homelessness in my experience is never “wanted or chosen”. To “become homelessness” is perhaps one's greatest fear. Suddenly contact with other humans becomes very difficult, as they often look the other way as you approach - you are a “homeless person”. The realisation that tomorrow, the next day, month and year will bring just the same loneliness, emptiness and despair, is often just too hard to bear and thoughts of suicide creep into your mind. Perhaps it will rain again or be even colder than today. Your chances of a job are now extremely slim as somehow there are always people better dressed than you and had a hot shower and a good night's sleep and besides, it's very difficult to get a job without an address and almost impossible to get an address without a job! Time and again the realisation that leaving school at 14 because of family break-up or abuse was not a good idea, but what option did you have? Then there are the constant hunger pains which never leave as you sit waiting for your fortnightly payday to perhaps “shout” yourself a night in a cheap motel and take in a bit of “tellie” and a hot shower and a meal, before heading out once more to the lonely streets. During the day you are forced to hide your meagre possessions and sleeping bag and now there is a new concern. Are they safe? When tidying up, have the council workers disposed of that “junk bundle” they found - your only possessions? And what has happened to the family you may not have heard from for years? And who in the family has died since your last contact? There is always the nagging concern that your family has no idea as to whether you are alive and what stress are you putting them through? Yet, you do not want them to know you are now homeless and a failure!! Your thoughts quickly return to the present. Where will you sleep tonight - the rocks, beach, toilet, bushes? You must find a safe place to sleep, away from other persons with mental disorders or are drug or alcohol affected. And stay away from the late night pub revellers who's fun it is “bashing streeties” in the early hours of the morning and you are unable to seek police assistance as you should not be sleeping on the streets anyway. No, that is vagrancy or trespassing and is a crime. Is it not perhaps worth ending this miserable life and finally be done with it?

Sad as it may be, all I have related is actually what takes place each and every day and night, right here on our Tweed streets as we are safely locked away in our homes. I regularly meet women who are running from abusive relationships and our shelters are almost always full, so they are forced to sleep on the streets – from one abuse to another. Recently I have witnessed people



“self-mutilating”, which is cigarette burning or cutting themselves, as they tell me “the pain inside is greater than that on the outside”!!!! In the last few months here in Tweed, I have come across boys and girls as young as 14 years old, living on the streets, to escape the abuse from people who should be protecting them. At 14 years old, no organisation can legally take them and police will return them to the abusive family. So what option is left except to head for the streets, gangs and an almost certain life of crime, alcohol and drugs - simply to survive. *Has our society not failed them miserably?* Often, the only form of a roof over one’s head is to sleep in one’s car. At present, those



sleeping or living in cars are fined as much as \$110.00 if found in a “no overnight camping zone”, which in many cases are our beaches and scenic spots!! An accumulation of fines will eventually lead to a jail term and then life takes on a whole new turn. It’s now official, where accommodation is concerned the Gold Coast district is the most expensive place in Australia to live and has the least affordable housing.

Ten months ago, I registered “You Have A Friend Inc.” to support the local marginalised and homeless people in the Tweed district. To date we have over 35 wonderful volunteers who support our six outreaches with breakfasts, lunch and dinner in Coolangatta, Murwillumbah and in the coming weeks, we are looking to service Chinderah and other local areas as well. Each week on average, we provide over 160 people (some children as young as 4 years old as well), with food, clothing, love and support.

Despite their plight, it never ceases to amaze me as to the unconditional love our friends give back to us. So too the concern for each other, their many talents, sensitivity, humour and amazingly, their strong belief in God. Our volunteers are a wonderful bunch of people and I know they are personally touched by the love and friendship our friends give back to us. For me, there is no better way to praise our God than by supporting, advocating and loving His people and those less fortunate than us.

Donations are always welcome as we are a 100% not for profit organisation and there are always bills to pay. You are at all times most welcome as a volunteer. No matter your age, there is always a spot for you with us. You can visit our website on www.youhaveafriend.org.au. All donations are Gift Receipt Status and receipts are provided for donations over \$2.00.

May God Bless you and your families and please always include a prayer for those less fortunate than yourselves. They honestly do appreciate it – to know someone cares and is praying for them.

John Lee, President, You Have A Friend.

GO CAITLIN!
GO CAITLIN!
GO CAITLIN!

Australia Day
26th January 2009

Congratulations to Caitlin McGibbon-Goode for being selected as Tweed's Young Achiever in Community Services Australia Day Award Winner. Caitlin, 16 years old, is one of our "You Have A Friend" volunteers and her serving brekkie to our friends on many Sundays in the Murwillumbah Budds Park was something the judges took into account. Also Caitlin's efforts in supporting our Gulu Walk, where she assisted Emma Walsh (another of our very dedicated youth volunteers), in raising over \$1,000 for the children in Uganda, was a wonderful effort and also noted in her selection. Well done Caitlin and we are all very proud of you.



You Have A Young Friend Inc



A lot has happened since the last issue in late December. But where do I start? Do I write about John Lee's red face after standing over a hot BBQ at Bunnings? Or do I tell the tale of the barefoot Mrs. Bearded Santa Clause?

I think we shall start with the quenching summer of 2008.....

A gathering of green 'You Have a Friend' shirts cluster in the community centre of Murwillumbah, hacking ham, truncating turkey, and sharing insights for the need of wine whilst they prepared a glorious feast and awaited the arrival of our friends. We had a game of cricket going while everyone



started to arrive and the fun began...

Then came the serving with the option of turkey, or ham. Sides of salad and bread and all other foods I can't remember. Then came the eating. Then the cracking of the crackers, followed by desert. After a rowdy old chat amongst everybody, it was finally time for Santa to arrive. Bare footed and beared up, I came bearing gifts for all the wonderful children. For this event came one child, one child too frightened to accept the gifts off the female, bearded imposter (keeping in mind that I am a 16 year old girl and this was all in the spirit of good fun). Eventually though, he warmed up to the idea that presents weren't so daunting, and he was soon on his way home with a bag full of new shiny trucks and dinosaurs. So after a bit more eating and fun conversations this

Please visit us at: www.youhaveafriend.org.au

concluded a fantastic post christmas lunch with our Murwillumbah friends.

Next on the agenda was the Bunnings's fundraising BBQ. What man couldn't find himself in heaven on earth eating a snag

sanga at a hardware store at 8:00 in the morning? The crowds came steady as Mum, myself, John and Robyn ordered the drinks into the eskies, threw a few kilos of sausages and some onions on the barbie and buttered up some bread. Slowly but surely the

Get involved

customers came, ordering their 2 with onion, 1 without, mustard, tomato sauce and 3 cans of coke. Gently the pace of people started to pick up. As the day grew hotter and the sun blistered our skin (not to mention mum's hand when she put it on the BBQ) my 3 hour shift was up. Perfect timing. The queues were kilometres long. Word had spread of mine and Mum's amazing snags. People were coming



from as far away as Finland just to have a piece of bread wrapped around the remains of who knows what parts of an animal. Come 10:00 my shift of cooking was over. It was time to venture home and wash the smell of BBQ out of my hair and prepare for work. And you'll never guess where I spent the last 5 hours and 15 minutes of my day serving customers with their needs – yes I also work at Bunnings's. Good thing there was a BBQ at the front door that I could borrow a drink and a snag from on my break. Because the You Have a Friend team is so amazing at making snag sangas - do you know we actually came back to Bunnings in January and did this all over again !! talk about awesome dedication.....

Watch out for our next installment - (Ema - 16)



Please visit us at: www.youhaveafriend.org.au

Introducing Adam...

Why did you become involved in YHAF?

Mum made me and also to broaden my understanding of people on the streets and the conditions in which they live and have to deal with.

What encourages you to get out of bed very early on a Sunday morning to help at the Murwillumbah Brekkie?

A nagging witch-like mother prodding me in the chest is incentive enough.

Your best memory from YHAF is?

Getting bear-hugged by a 4year old boy as a thank you.

What do your teachers and friends think?

My teachers think it's excellent and some of my friends are keen to become involved-especially when I told them about the young sheilas who volunteer. Sorry Sonia!

If you had the power to change one thing worldwide what would it be?

A world without poverty and inequality.

You most admire and respect whom?

John Lee. Also Burt Munroe (a New Zealander) who broke the land speed record on a 40-year-old, \$10 motorbike in the 1960's.



And Jannarli...(who doesn't often chat)

Why did you become involved in YHAF?

For the experience and to help the community.

What encourages you to get out of bed very early on a Sunday morning to help at the Murwillumbah Brekkie?

The chance of meeting a beautiful sheila helping out at the BBQ.

Your best memory from YHAF is?

Eating donuts and leftovers.



What do your teachers and friends think?

I'm not really sure-hope it helps with my marks though.

If you had the power to change one thing worldwide what would it be?

Equal opportunities for everyone, less corruption and a fridge that is never empty.

You most admire and respect whom?

Mick Fanning and Josh Fuller because they are both awesome surfers-sheilas like that!

For the freshest fruit and vegies on the Tweed – call into.....



Farmer Charlies Fruit Market

(Pacific Highway, Tweed Heads – opp Shell Servo...ph:55993677)

Thank you for supporting
You Have A Friend Inc

Consider Advertising With Us

You Have A Friend is a non-profit organisation reliant on the support of the public and business community.

You can contribute by donating directly by cheque to us, or direct debit.

You may consider advertising with us. Simply visit our website for more information.

- Sponsor a Webpage
- Advertise in our Newsletter
- Advertise in our calendar
- Support one of our major events
- Pay a month's fuel supply
- Pay a telephone bill
- Donate towards our insurance bill
- Donate to our "Van Fund"

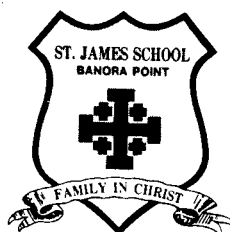
*Please support
Our
sponsors*



St Joseph's Parish
Thomson & Frances St
Tweed Heads
Ph: 55367522



**St Joseph's
College**
Doyle Drive,
Banora Point
Ph: 55249002



**St James
Primary**
Doyle Drive,
Banora Point
Ph: 55249404

I would like to support 'You Have A Friend' with a donation.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CONTACT NO: _____ EMAIL: _____

Please post donations to ~ P.O.Box 637, Tweed Heads, NSW 2485

(A Tax Receipt will be forwarded to you)

Please visit us at: www.youhaveafriend.org.au

Brisbane Star Cruises



**Thank you to our Sponsors for
your loyal support**

Coolangatta/Tweed Heads Sponsors

AIDGARA P/L
Coolangatta Pies - Coolangatta
Dominoes Pizzas – S.Tweed Heads
Farmer Charlies - Tweed Heads
Milt Crompton Butchery –
Tweed Heads
The Muffin Break - Coolangatta
Tweed Heads Bowls Club –
Tweed Heads

Murwillumbah Sponsors

A & B Blue Ribbon Meats
Fresh Picked Tomatoes Fruit Barn
Mick & Mary Loades Butchery
Southern Cross Organic Butchery
Video Ezy Murwillumbah
Wollumbin Street Bakery
J & B Meats
Tweed Fruit Exchange
Fruit Barn - Newmans Service Station
Singh's Fruit Shop
Grant's Quality Meats
Brisbane Sponsors
Brisbane Star Cruises



“You Have A Friend Inc.” Registered Charity Inc. INC9889330.

“You Have A Friend Inc.” Deductible Gift Recipient Status.

**Bank Details: Suncorp Metway ~ Account Name: Fundraising Account
Branch: Tweed Heads Bank Detail: BSB 484799, Account No: 029894926**

P.O.Box 637, Tweed Heads, NSW 2485

Please visit us at: www.youhaveafriend.org.au