

YOU HAVE A FRIEND INC

IN THIS EDITION ~

- ♦ Presidents Report ~ catch up on what's happening in YHAF
- ♦ Alarming Statistics
- ♦ National Homeless Week
- ♦ A Day in the Life
- ♦ News In Brief
- ♦ Young Friends
- ♦ Sign our petition
- ♦ Thanks to our sponsors!!
- ♦ If you would care to donate

ISSUE 7 ~ August 2010

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

Our website www.youhaveafriend.org.au

A homeless person is homeless
Because they do not have a place to live
.....Think about it.....

Brisbane Star
Cruises



Island Style
Promotions

KIRSTY
LEUKEN

Tweed Valley
Banana Festival



2010
Banana Queen

***"People are not homeless because they are physically disabled, mentally ill, abusers of alcohol or other drugs... or unemployed.
These conditions do not explain homelessness....
Homeless people are homeless because they do not have a place to live".***



From The President!

Well, it cannot be said our charity is dull and uneventful. In the last 3 months, so much has taken place in our endeavour to support our wonderful homeless and marginalised friends. We've slept in cardboard boxes, organised surfing competitions, sold

pikelets to school children, started bingo sessions, raised questions in parliament, and very excitingly, the 2010 newly crowned Banana Queen, Kirsty Leuken, had chosen YHAF as her nominated charity in recognition for the support we provide the homeless and marginalised local people.

Sadly if our outreaches are growing, it is a sure sign that the homeless and marginalised numbers are increasing alarmingly. This is the case as we support many in Coolangatta, Tweed, Chinderah and Murwillumbah not only in cars, beaches, abandoned buildings, caravans and parks, but also single parent families often with children as young as one year old sharing beds for warmth. And yet the authorities still do not hear our desperate appeals for a simple **'drop-in shelter'** let alone badly needed **'crisis accommodation'**.

Tweed Heads has the unenviable title of the most homeless people per capita (120 every night) in NSW. The housing waiting list in Tweed Heads is 12 -16 years. A newly born is often finished their schooling before their parent is provided accommodation through the Housing Department. Average rental accommodation is now well above what destitute people receive in unemployment benefits. Without our wonderful, caring volunteers, many would simply fall by the wayside.

I cannot thank enough our current bunch of 55 volunteers who support and give so much of their time if required. Without them we could not support our many outreaches such as our famous Sunday 'brekkies' at Coolangatta, Chinderah and Murwillumbah. Not forgetting our Murwillumbah team who each Thursday provides a wonderful BBQ lunch often for as many as fifty friends. Our Tweed Heads Court outreach on a Monday and Tuesday works like clockwork and is highly respected and appreciated by court staff and those attending court. Our newest outreach we have aptly named our 'food drops'. Three local Woolworth stores now provide us fresh fruit, veggies and bread which they consider nearing its used by date. We collect and deliver this food on most days to caravan parks and housing estates in Chinderah and Tweed Heads. We have also started a 'bingo' weekly session to alleviate boredom and provide fun and support to many in Murwillumbah. Prizes are most generously donated by the women's Rotary Club of Mt Warning AM (Murwillumbah). Without our vans which now number two, we would not be as mobile and supportive to our friends.

Our second van, most generously donated by the Mamma Lena & Dino Gustin Foundation, is now being put to good use at night outreaches as we transport our volunteers, food and clothing to locations around Tweed. Night outreaches in Coolangatta and Murwil-

lumbah are supported by year 11 and 12 students and teachers from St. Joseph's College (Banora Point) and Mt. St. Patrick's College (Murwillumbah). The primary schools of St. Anthony's (Kingscliff), St. James (Banora Point) and St. Joseph's (Tweed Heads) provide tinned food on a weekly basis for us to distribute as food packs to many families and those living in their cars or on the streets. Outreaches do though require funding for such things as insurance, fuel, supplies etc.

Our biggest fund raising event this year was our National Homeless Week functions in the first week of August. In raising awareness of the homeless and marginalised, we started the week with our very successful inaugural annual Inter School's Surfing Competition. A beautifully crafted perpetual surfing trophy designed and made by Ian Shaw, was won by Kingscliff High, one of five local schools who competed. At three schools we sold pikelets and had a BBQ breakfast, with Homeless Week ending with our very successful second "Jimbo's Sleepout" on the St. Joseph's College oval. The weather was kind to us this year and our numbers increased to over 50 sleepers. We had a wonderful fun time with the students, adults and children sleeping in cardboard boxes, had soup and sausages for their meals and enjoying good old-fashioned games such as egg and spoon races, wheelbarrow races and even a race against the 'oldies'.

August is the famous Tweed Valley Banana Festival where beautiful young women raise money for their favourite charity as part of their quest for the enviable title of "Banana Queen". This year we are so proud to announce that Kirsty Leuken who was crowned the 2010 Banana Queen, had chosen YHAF as her preferred charity and in the process not only won the beauty title but raised almost \$1700 for our charity. We are so very proud of Kirsty and sincerely thank her and her mother for their wonderful support and effort in raising this amount for the local homeless and marginalised.

Our charity moves forward each day and was it not for our generous sponsors and our fund raising efforts, we could not support the many friends we have on the streets, in their cars, caravans and hotels and motels. Although we provide love, food, clothing and blankets to our wonderful friends, it is our friends on the streets who give back so much to us in a deeply spiritual way that only those working with such people understand and experience at some time or other.

We thank all who have been involved in whatever way with our charity and may God bless you and your families. **John Lee ~ President**



Homeless Persons Week
2nd - 8th August 2010

Alarming Tweed Homeless Statistics

Just after the 2006 Census, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare released a detailed report – 'Counting the Homeless Report 2006', using information sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census and other appropriate statistical data.

Did you know?.... Tweed Heads has the highest homeless rate in NSW yet in 2009/2010 received on 1% of the \$69 million dollars that the NSW government allocated to homelessness. The majority of the funding went to the Hunter/Illawarra/Sydney district with a homeless rate of half that of Tweed Heads and far North Coast.

- ♦ Coastal NSW has the highest number of homeless people per capita in NSW.
- ♦ Coastal northern NSW has a homeless rate of 63 per 10 000.
- ♦ Hunter and Illawarra is 34 per 10 000
- ♦ Inland New South Wales is 50 per 10 000
- ♦ Sydney is 39 per 10,000
- ♦ Tweed Heads 67 per 10 000
- ♦ Lismore 80 per 10 000.
- ♦ There were 4428 homeless people in coastal New South Wales

Specifically Tweed Heads homeless statistics as recorded in the 2006 Census alarmingly note;

- ♦ If marginal residents of caravan parks are included in the rate of homelessness, Tweed Heads has the highest rate of homelessness in NSW (125 homeless persons per 10 000 population)
- ♦ In 2009/10, the NSW allocated \$69 million to homelessness in NSW and of that Tweed Heads received just \$713,000 to support people whose tenancies were at risk. That represents just 1% of the allocated funding.
- ♦ 24 per cent of the homeless in Tweed Heads were in improvised dwellings or sleeping rough
- ♦ In Tweed Heads most of these people were in sheds or garages that were owned or being purchased and some people were probably 'blockies' (people building houses).

Quoting from the Census 2006 report concerning the Tweed District;

"A census collector recorded 'people in tents at the football ground, a man living in a car, and another living in a shed'. Another described 'people camping in the sand dunes ... and sheltering under awnings'. Sleeping rough was a significant issue in this community. but many were in poor quality dwellings. One informant talked about 'unapproved sheds out in the backblocks'. Another talked about 'dongas (shipping containers), tepees and shacks' and another talked about 'people in substandard dwellings, such as a caravan with a lean-to and a decrepit old shed'.



Native American Prayer

Let us know peace
for as long as the sun
will shine
for as long as the grass
shall grow
for as long as the moon
will rise
for as long as the rivers
shall flow
Let us know peace

*Remember that not getting
what you want is sometimes
a wonderful stroke of luck -*

- Dalai Lama

“ A person who never
made a mistake never
tried anything new ”

Albert Einstein

*"I have lived a long life and
had many troubles,
most of which never
happened!"*

Mark Twain

Speak tenderly to them.

Let there be kindness
in your face,
in your eyes,
in your smile,
in the warmth of
your greeting.
Always have a cheerful smile.
Don't only give your care,
but give your heart as well.
- Mother Teresa

YHAF Embraces National Homeless Week 2010

Jimbo's Sleepout 2010



Tweed Heads - Australia

Linda Lingle the current Governor of Hawaii was recently quoted as saying "We have come dangerously close to accepting the homeless situation as a problem that we just can't solve". National Homeless Week is held in Australia each August to raise awareness that over **110,000 Australians are homeless and sleeping rough**. The Week is a great opportunity for us to ensure students, teachers and local citizens are aware that Tweed Heads has the unenviable title of the highest homeless number per capita in New South Wales.

We started our Awareness Week with our inaugural Inter School's Surfing Competition held under sunny skies that had been threatening heavy rain all week. The event was a great success and five of the local schools each entered a team of 12 body boarders, long boarders and surfers. Banora Point High School, Kingscliff High School, Mount St Patrick's College (Murwillumbah), St. Joseph's College (Banora Point) and Tweed River High School, all entered teams with a high standard of surfing and provided surfing students an opportunity to compete in events not normally open to them. Much of the success of the event can well be attributed to the professionalism of the organiser **Sean McKeown of Island Style Promotions** who is no stranger to such events, being responsible for the highly successful International Malfunction Surf Carnival held each year. Sean donated his time, expertise and equipment to the cause and was ably assisted in the judging by Ian Pearson. Ian and Sean are both international surfing judges and did a wonderful job providing judging of the highest standard. We are most appreciative to both gentlemen for their efforts. A beautiful perpetual trophy was made, donated and presented to the winning team by Ian Shaw. Kingscliff State High school will forever hold the honour as the first team to win this wonderful wooden trophy, made of local wood with some timber over 100 years old. We are assured the school will strongly be defending their title again next year as we do it all again in our endeavour to keep the awareness of homelessness alive.

Mid week we concentrated on our School Homeless Awareness program which involved visiting two local primary schools, St. James Primary (Banora Point) and St. Joseph's Primary (Tweed Heads) where we sold pancakes to the students with a short talk on homelessness. A BBQ "brekkie" was also held at St. Joseph's

College, which was well attended by students and teachers before the start of school. The success of the events can be largely attributed to Allira Epich and her wonderful band of five year 10 students who throughout the week supported us at the surfing carnival, the BBQs and the **Jimbo's Sleepout** and even dressing in 'pj's' to advertise the Week. They were our tireless ambassadors spreading the word of homelessness and the upcoming events to their friends and other students. There is no doubt; the success of the Week had a great boost from our girls and Allira who we thank for their magnificent efforts.

A wonderful new idea, our Dine Out... Help out Cards to raise awareness and much needed funding was this year trialled successfully and will now be a regular part of our Homelessness Week events. The idea was the brain child of Maureen and Alan Hann, two of our dedicated volunteers. All restaurants and eateries in Murwillumbah and along the beachfront in Coolangatta, were approached with a request that during the Week, cards be displayed on restaurant tables requesting customers donate a small amount to our cause or alternatively they deposit change into our donation boxes strategically placed on the counters. The project proved most successful and will be bigger and better next year. A special thanks to those volunteers who spent time and effort designing the cards, organising the printing, obtaining the donation boxes and then delivering them to outlets, before organising their collection and finally banking of donated funds during the most important Week in our calendar.

National Homeless Week for us ended with our second annual "**Jimbo's Sleepout**" once again held on the oval of St. Joseph's College at Banora Point. We sincerely thank the principle of the college, Mr Peter Lyons who so generously made available the school hall, kitchen and facilities to our cause. It is obvious that the word is spreading and the numbers of sleepers who took part doubled this year with many reporting they will return in 2011. Our volunteers began arriving on the day at 3.00pm to begin the setup of food and drinks. One of the most important functions was the preparation and fencing off the zone for sleeping, food and fun events. This was with pickets, witches' hats and tape generously donated by the council. As they did last year, SES volunteers arrived to assist us by pegging the sleeping zones and other safety areas. It is a manual job needing professional support, which these wonderful SES people provided. At 5.00pm, we officially launched the start of the **Jimbo Sleepout**, with a welcome speech on behalf of the traditional owners and residents, by Ms Jackie MacDonald. It is also most appreciated that Geoff Provest our local State member once again attended the opening and as always provided his wholehearted support for our charity and cause.

By now, our 'sleepers' had begun arriving. Mothers, fathers, students, children with cardboard boxes, sleeping bags and other 'food items' for the long cold night ahead. Quickly positions were selected and boxes erected before night fell. Soup, rolls, tea, coffee and juice were served from the back of our outreach van so that participants experienced what we do when we support our friends at our night outreaches on the streets. After food, old fashioned games such as Egg and Spoon races, Wheelbarrow races, Three Legged races and so on provided great fun and laughter as kids raced 'oldies' and then the cardboard boxes were judged for generously donated prizes.

An appropriate movie on homelessness was screened before heading off to bed, or should I say, dew affected cardboard boxes and sleeping bags. Generator lights were extinguished at 11.30 and it was truly a sight to behold as the 50 participants could be seen sliding into their boxes as they settled down to experience in a small way what so many "homeless" throughout the world are forced to endure on a nightly basis.

The night passed peacefully and with the stirring of the kookaburras the chefs began barbequing sausages and boiling the water for a most welcome cuppa once the sleepers emerged. Once again our ever reliable SES crew materialised and in their most efficient manner, began dismantling the fences and cleaning the area. It truly was a sight to behold as mothers and fathers straggled to the "breakfast" table, sleeping bags over shoulders, bleary eyed and comments such as "I can't wait for

a shower". For many the life of a homeless person became a reality with the realisation that shower, breakfasts and a place to stash sleeping bags out of the rain or away from council workers does not exist in real life.

By 10.30am, the school grounds were once more returned to the crows and birds with no hint that some 50 people from all ages and walks of life had just experienced 12 hours in the life of what **Jimbo** our wonderful friend who passed away in 2008, experienced each day and who we will remember each year with our ever increasing and popular "**Jimbo's Sleepout**".

And so, another National Homeless Week draws to a close and You Have A Friend is proud to know we acknowledged and remembered the estimated 110,000 people who sleep rough each night in Australia. In Tweed Heads alone, according to the 2006 Census, each night over 120 people sleep on beaches, cars, abandoned buildings outside churches and the like. It is our dream that one day in the not too distant future; we will have a "drop-in centre" and "crisis accommodation" for our friends on the streets. Our many members, who contributed in so many ways, can hold their head high knowing their wonderful efforts brought the plight of the homeless and marginalised to many students, teachers, children and locals in this, our most beautiful Tweed District of Australia, during the 2010 National Homeless Week.



Homeless Person's Week 2010

CARDS ON TABLES FOR HOMELESS WEEK

A short while ago my wife spotted a simple stand up card on our table at Oskars restaurant. The Charity in question was one of those huge institutions and we discovered that they collect massive amounts by way of these cards up and down the Eastern Coast. Anyway, with Homeless Week fast coming up we talked it over with the Fundraising Committee and got their go ahead, plus clearance from the Big Charity. Maureen went into overdrive! Cards were designed, printed and collected. Collection boxes quickly became an obvious add on and these were sought out on the web, designed and printed, then shipped to our home. Half of them needed a chain attached. Not so easy for a ham handed husband! We ran a reconnaissance of the Murwillumbah eateries with names and street addresses. Would you believe there are over forty of them in our little town, or not so little town. This included six pubs, the RSL and a host of "High Class" restaurants down to Fish and Chip shops. We decided to give them all a go, not knowing which way the cat would jump on this first effort. Then we added the four eateries in Tumbulgum and Mavis Kitchen out near Wolumbin and a small selection of fourteen in Coolangatta. Good old Mur/bah reacted in its usual generous way and just four rejected us (names not to be released!!). We got to know the various owners and managers and their staff. A great bunch of people willing to listen to the story of our Friends. Yes, of course there were some who did not have a particularly good attitude towards the Friends, but this was usually because they had a distorted view or knowledge of their circumstances and a word or two from us helped to overcome this disparity of feeling. We also learned that pretty well across the board, eateries and businesses in general in Murbah were having it tough and had experienced a strong downturn in business for over a year. Nevertheless, when we went back to collect the money at the end of Homeless Week, we discovered that at many establishments the owners and staff themselves had contributed very generously and in some cases more than their customers. Now that is Charity in action. We gathered in some \$1,570 for the coffers. A very worthwhile effort and we may well be doing it all over again next year. Mind you we wont need to design or print either the cards or the collection boxes and of course we shall know exactly which types of eateries to target and where they are. Plans could include a proposal to widen coverage to include many more eateries in Coolangatta and add on such places as Kingscliff and Tweed Heads. Volliers needed!!! **THE TEAM:** Maureen Meijnen, Alan Hann, Rachel Deguara & her friend, Karen Spencer, Karen Cavenagh and a lot of well meaning interjection and help from John Lee et al.



I see trees of green and red roses too
I see them bloom for me and you
And I say to myself, what a wonderful world.

We all remember Louis Armstrong singing this beautiful song with its haunting melody and lyrics. The fortunate ones said "yes there are roses at the bottom of my garden". The homeless said "roses in the bushes means thorns, and not a good place to sleep tonight" It is so sad to see the plight of these forgotten ones. These are the people that governments don't want to know about and the Mr. and Mrs. Average in suburbia turn their nose up at. They have a misconception about these people. Admittedly some are alcoholics and drug addicts but most are either suffering some form of misfortune or have given up; and there are those with an untreated mental illness that needs immediate help as well. One in seven people have an addictive gene in their body that can turn them into alcoholics if they drink. Alcoholism is recognised by The World Health Authority as a disease. How many people do you know who have a drinking problem? The answer, if you are truthful, is plenty. Depression ...excess drinking...alcoholism...leads to despair and in many cases dropping out of society and suicide. These are the people we see every day. We feed them, clothe them, give them blankets and most importantly a **SHOULDER!** All this is done with little government help and we rely on donations and volunteers. Too often we see a missing face only to learn that they have taken their life or died. This is so sad. They were once part of a family; a dad, mum, brother, sister, uncle or someone's friend. These are beautiful people. What you see is what you get. They are unpretentious and all they have to bare is their beautiful soul.

Next time you see a homeless person show a little compassion. Give them a smile and it will not only brighten up their day it will brighten up yours as well.

Contribution by Thor Eriksen



Homeless Person's Week 2010



Homeless Persons Week
2nd-8th August 2010

A reflection on Homeless Person's Week 2010 from St Joseph's College students. At the start of Homeless Persons Week, five enthusiastic girls from St Joseph's College, Yr 10, volunteered their time and efforts to promoting, organizing and participating in the event. The following is an account of some of their personal thoughts, feelings and reflections of the week.

When asked why they wanted to participate in Homeless Week the girls state that they wanted to participate to raise awareness of the issue on homelessness, however confessed that as the week progressed they came to the realization that they had no idea how big an issue it was in our society. One says "Our eyes have opened in regards to worries of the

homeless people" and another adds "Definitely opens your eyes, when nothing like that has happened to you, you feel so sheltered. When Mr Lee was talking about homelessness, I thought, I wouldn't like to be in that situation and I wanted to do something to help." Another firmly states "We were not doing this out of force but because we wanted to help".

The girls helped out at the You Have A Friend surf event, organized a BBQ Breakfast at their school and diligently walked around to all classes each morning dressed in their PJ's to promote Homeless Week. However it was Jimbo's sleep-out that challenged them both physically and mentally the most. When asked how the night progressed, the girls all agree "It was rough" followed by "Our boxes were wet but luckily it wasn't such a cold night, having so much clothes made it better." However each agree that it was through all these factors that "We realized all the things the homeless people have to go through." One girl states "Sleeping out definitely made us appreciate more what we have." Another girl adds "We worked together as a group which made it better as we supported and helped each other through it. An additional thought was "Physically doing something has more value then just giving money because it made me realize that people can give to homeless people but if you don't have compassion for them it's less meaningful."

And the effect Homeless Week had on the girls? "We see things with a different perspective now, we now know that it's not enough to just to *feel* like that we should help but to *know* that we have to help. Definitely do it again next year!! By Jenai, Rhiannon, Ellie, Rose and Olivia ~ Year 10, St Joseph's Catholic College

Pancake Day At St Joseph Wednesday 4th August. On Wednesday our school held a pancake day to raise money for national homeless week.. Mr John Lee helped us set up the tables and sell the delicious pancakes that Mrs Lee made.

Karen also helped sell the pancakes. We sold 200 pancakes in around 15 minutes - WOW! Holly.S and Isaac were busy jamming the pancakes whilst Elizabeth and myself were successfully selling them. I joined YHAF to help people but i never thought that selling pancakes would help any one." It should be pancake day everyday" added Isaac. Thank you to Mr Lee and Karen for helping. We hope the money raised helps.

Murwillumbah BBQ Thursdays ~ Chris & Norm do lunch!

Murwillumbah BBQs are doing well it seems and most profitable too -- though no money passes hands Norm and Mary have somehow managed to expand their world view by cruising the Indian ocean! "tamanegi" Phil has not been seen for a while and Vicki has been soaking up the sun, sand and surf at Coolangatta. Dave "will you be there" continues to assist at the BBQ and noticeably his appetite for snags has subsided. Young Margaret has decided to hang up her onion knife and prefers to be verbally caustic to this poor scribe. Her charity to same person is unbearable??!! Colin, Karen, Norm, Mary, Barbara, Richard are the mainstays of running the BBQ lunch. Colin, Richard and Norm have perfected the art of flipping, flattening and flavouring the snags and veggie patties; and caramelising and sometimes charcoaling the onions. Karen's speed at food preparation and her organisational skills are becoming renowned. Barbara maintains the work ethos of the team with slicing, decorating and cleaning up. Mary besides having to put up with Norm is comfortable like this scribe of being the servant to all the above when the need arises- which is often.

Colin and Karen, Norm and Mary have brought soups, delicately homemade; Barbara has brought Pavlova and other delicacies to whet our friends' appetites

John ("I shall return ") Stevens sends his regards to all from Holbury, Southampton, England. He is most anxious to don the green t- shirt and apron to serve his old friends.



A Day in the Life

Morning dawns and it is raining as you look out of your window – your car window that is - and the cold and damp is still there from past days. Your sleeping bag and possessions are soggy and today will be no different from other days. No hot shower, just cold water in the public toilets. No facilities to cook a warm meal and most of the day will be spent in your car or perhaps the local library or reading a book on the beach if the sun comes through. Perhaps a walk along the beachfront or a bit of window shopping but unable to buy as finances are a major issue.



Lunch approaches and still no word from the housing commission who have said they will get back to you. The jobs you sought remain a distant hope as they have not returned your calls. It slowly sinks in that the 12 to 16 year waiting list for government assisted housing in Tweed Heads may not be worth waiting for. Real estate agents are not helpful without a bond and a month's rent in advance. In most cases you need to find in excess of \$2,000. Hocking your meagre possessions to raise that amount would be impossible. The only immediate form of cash available to you is a visit to the local pawn shop who welcomes you with open arms. And why not with short term interest rates around 30% for your watch, a ring or other valuable possessions. If only you could get a job. But without accommodation, you will not get a job and without a job, you will not get accommodation!

The day slides into evening and a group from a volunteer charity group arrives with a meal, hot drinks and a chat with you and others in a similar situation to you. They hand out food, clothes, blankets and on occasions small packs of tinned food or other items that will help during the days ahead. The meal is over, the charity friends leave and slowly other street friends return to their "homes". Many are not as fortunate as you. They do not have a car in which to avoid the rain. They return to where they stashed their bedding some twelve hours ago in the hope council workers or others have not discarded it as unsightly junk. Their heart skips a beat.... their possessions are still there; but joy quickly turns to despair with realisation the rain has soaked their blankets and sleeping bags. They know another cold, lonely night beckons, sitting huddled in a doorway, around a church, in a public toilet or wherever the authorities will not move them on.

"Street sleepers" face different dangers and threats to "car sleepers". Cars provide some form of shelter and

meagre protection from the weather and the late night thugs who roam the streets looking for 'homeless people' to bash. In a car, council workers and police by and large warn one of the illegalities of sleeping in a public place and order you to move on or be charged. Your identity is checked, recorded, your car registration is photographed and you quickly leave the area, noting your fuel is low and your fortnightly payment is still days away. Now where do you park as even public car parks are illegal overnight stops and you have been recorded by the authorities?

"Street sleepers" cannot move on as easily and are not afforded immediate protection from being urinated on, bashed or in some cases threatened with a night in jail. If the location they have found to sleep is private property such as a church or abandoned building and the owner does not object, the authorities in general cannot move them on. However a complaint from a neighbour may well change that. The fear though is the exposure to those whose enjoyment is bashing the homeless. Or danger may well be from other homeless people with mental conditions and who have given up on their medication or whose desperate life is drug or alcohol affected. People our politicians and hospitals have abandoned and returned to the streets and whose carers in some cases have mental condition worse than those they are to care for. And yet, our medical system ignores their plight and commits these people to the streets.

The night is long and was uneventful. It was a good night. You were not forced to move a number of times to avoid the rain or to run in order to avoid bashing. The police, security guards or council authorities did not find you and threaten you with trespassing in areas reserved for other citizens to enjoy when the sun rises. But at last the sun is rising and daylight approaches. Another day.... same as yesterday.... same as last month.... same as last year....does anyone really care?

YHAF -News In Brief!

You Have A Friend is donated another van for outreaches: On the 16 April 2010, a second eleven seater van was purchased by the organisation to assist in our delivery of food, clothing and also transportation of our volunteers to our street outreaches. The purchase of the van was made possible by a most generous donation from the Mamma Lena & Dino Gustin Foundation, who provided not only funds for the purchase of the van, but also funds to outfit the van for our street outreaches and the signage. The organisation sincerely thanks Rosalba Gustin and Peter Campbell, who made the donation possible.



Charity Vans are Named and Christened

"If jets and ships can be named, I see no reason why we cannot name our outreach vans" said John. He believes that the vans should be named after the major local rivers in the district. Accordingly our first van was named "The Tweed". Our newest addition will be "The Rous" and the van we are hoping will be available before Christmas, will be "The Oxley".

"There may be a problem after that, as there are only the three major rivers in the Tweed Valley, but I am sure we can come up with something



for our fourth van" said John rather tongue in cheek.

Kirsty Does Us Proud – 2010 Tweed Valley Banana Festival Queen

Congratulations to Kirsty Leuken who was crowned the 2010 Tweed Valley Banana Festival Queen on Saturday 21st August 2010. Kirsty chose **You Have A Friend** as her nominated charity. She and her mother Jenny did a wonderful job in selling tickets, washing cars and other fund raising events. Kirsty was also a regular supporter at our street outreaches serving food, tea and coffee and her welcome smile and friendly nature was always appreciated. We even had a few of our Friends proposition her!!!! In all Kirsty raised \$1691 for us, which is a



wonderful effort and we thank you Kirsty and Jenny for your support and we are so proud that our charity now has a Queen for a year.

Bingo - off to a great start.

Thank you to one of our major sponsor The Rotary Club of Mt. Warning AM in Murwillumbah, who are sponsoring our newest venture and that is "bingo" we are currently running each week in the Murwillumbah Community Centre. Boredom is the biggest threat to depression for those without a regular job. A game of bingo, costs our friends nothing to play and prizes are the donated tins of food donated by our sponsor. Our bingo to date is great fun and in the coming days we hope to start in caravan parks and other areas around the Tweed.

'Woolies' comes to the party

A year ago, Woolworths advised charities they were operating their "Food Rescue Program". A program to provide recognised charities with food they would not sell in their stores, but food that is still fit for consumption. Our charity is only too happy to be involved with the local Tweed Centro branch, distributing fresh fruit, vegetables as well as bread, buns and cakes to caravan parks and housing commission units in Chinderah and Tweed Heads. *You Have A Friend* has requested and granted approval to obtain food from Woolworths Tweed City and at time of writing we are negotiating with the Woolworths Kingscliff branch to obtain their discarded produce.

Goodbye to Two Special Friends

It is with much sadness that we farewell two of our wonderful Friends who passed away recently and whom we got to know and love so dearly over the last year. Carmel was a regular at our Coolangatta outreach and such a bundle of joy and fun. Also farewell to Brian who was a regular at our Chinderah outreach and we will miss his cheeky smile and support. May God bless you both, rest in peace and we will always remember you and pray for you and your families.



YOU HAVE A FRIEND INC



YHAF has in it's ranks some truly awesome, and amazing people, sometimes we are lucky enough to get a little bit of inside info into what makes up some of our vollies and their families....

For years I've wanted to study English literature and become one of those famous new age authors who takes the world by storm with a series of novels involving normal teenagers living extraordinary lives. You read stories from authors like Stephanie Meyer, JK Rowling and Charlene Harris and can't help but feel just that little bit jealous that they've written something amazing, something you wish you could write about too but can't seem to find the right sentence to begin with, or the right characters to use and so on and so forth...

I have ideas, characters I could use but I'm stuck! I don't have – what some call – 'writer's block', I'm just blank. As soon as I bring up another blank document on my laptop everything goes blank and I get so upset with myself because I can never type anything that's in my head. And, as I sit there at the desk for hours on end trying to figure out what it is I'm supposed to be doing, I get bored. I don't write. And if I do, once whatever I've written is on the screen in front of me and has been re-read a few times, I shake my head, hold down the *back space* key and watch as the words disappear and I'm again left with a blank page.

It's hard enough watching the people around me sit down and just start writing when I can barely get a sentence onto the page without freaking out and having heart palpitations. I've never been in a boy/girl relationship before so I don't really know what it feels like to be both physically and emotionally in love with someone. I've never been traveling far enough to see the places other people have seen because I don't have the funds. I've never even been in a proper job long enough to experience just how fulfilling it must be to earn the amounts of money other people earn or to make the friends other people have made. The only friends I have are two girls I went to school with; my mother and a few of the older people whom I volunteer work with in Murwillumbah.

My mum is definitely someone I look up to. She's a single mother of two who works damn hard to provide for herself and her two children. She's strong, has a wickedly ingenious sense of humor and spends almost all of her spare time giving to those less fortunate than her. I remember she once said to me, 'If you don't like the way you look or feel about yourself then do something about it.' And she's right. I absolutely hate the way I look and feel but I'm happy. I don't want to plaster my face with makeup in order to change my appearance so that boys will notice me. It's not who I am. What I will do though is smile and take the compliments I do receive with a light-hearted nature and a simple 'thank you'.
Thank You Bree



Lend a Helping Hand ~ By Cassandra

It's difficult for many to contemplate being homeless. To have no security, adequate housing or any means of financial stability. To have no social connections or support; simply having no one. To emotionally feel drained and cut off from the outside world. Homelessness is a serious problem which unfortunately many turn a blind eye to.

Homelessness within the Tweed District is continuously rising. So much that Tweed holds the highest rate per capita of homelessness compared to any town or city within Australia. This means that on average one hundred and twenty homeless people are continually being exposed to the harsh conditions by living on the streets. That people are constantly going without shelter, food and safety because they have no other option. That children as young as one **need vital and immediate support but have been unable to obtain it.**

"You Have a Friend" is a momentous organisation which aspires to supporting and providing for the homeless. This is a NSW non profit organisation, which aims to reducing homelessness within the Tweed district. "You Have a Friend" partakes in regular outreaches, distributing the essentials to people struggling to provide for themselves. They are an inspiring and motivating group of volunteers who are extremely dedicated to helping those less fortunate.

There are endless opportunities for those wishing to contribute to helping the homeless. From giving a one off donation to permanently joining an organisation like "You Have a Friend", it all makes an enormous difference to the lives of those suffering. So please, consider what you can do to assist those in need.



A Petition for a Drop-in Centre for the homeless, marginalised and lonely in Tweed Heads?

There is a 12 to 16 year waiting list in Tweed Heads for state assisted housing; and to put that in perspective, a single mother with a new born child applying for housing assistance may only be eligible for affordable housing once that child has left school. The 2006 census figures confirmed that Tweed Heads has the highest number of homeless people per capita in NSW. In 2009/2010 Tweed Heads received just 1% of the \$69 million dollars the NSW government allocated to homelessness. The majority of the funding went to the Hunter/Illawarra/Sydney district with a homeless rate per capita, half that of Tweed Heads and the Far North Coast. Affordable accommodation in Tweed Heads for those on social benefits is almost nonexistent.

Homeless persons in Tweed Heads not only face limited affordable accommodation, but the services they require such as housing, hospital, counselling, social benefits, job search and so on, are spread over a five kilometre busy stretch in the Tweed Heads district. Access to the services often involves public transport or walking from one end of the Tweed to another and having to repeating their story time and again and then perhaps needing to return from whence they may have just come.

And yet, Tweed Heads has no crisis accommodation and no drop-in centre that so many other towns and cit-

ies take for granted. A small form of comfort for those experiencing homeless difficulties where a coffee or tea and some company before heading out once more to the lonely, cold and dangerous streets in their search for accommodation or a place to sleep, would be so welcome.

Drop-in centres need not be elaborate or expensive buildings or constructions. Just a place the homeless can sit in safety for a while, where they may be able to wash their meagre possessions and take a shower. A place with a kettle, some coffee or tea, a fridge with cold milk and perhaps a freezer for short term storage. A central service zone that housing, Centrelink and the like can utilise on different days. Perhaps even a computer for people to send emails to families or seek jobs. Over the past 18 months, our request for crisis accommodation or even a simple drop-in centre, have been regularly ignored by the Federal, State and local governments.

We ask that you consider signing our petition that will be presented to the state government with a request that at minimum a drop-in centre be provided in Tweed Heads as soon as possible. Our petition sheet can be downloaded from our website (www.youhaveafriend.org.au) and returned to us once completed or partly completed.

Thoughts on the Homeless Week Donation Drive: Over the past few weeks, I have gone out around Coolangatta Restaurants, seeing if they would agree to have a donation box placed on their counter for 10 days for the donation drive. Because most of them are very casual, and located in very windy places, having cards placed on their tables was not feasible.

Out of the 30 or more that I asked, 16 were agreeable to having the boxes. Because a number of them really didn't have good places to have the boxes, sometimes the results weren't spectacular. But in the restaurants that did have, we received quite a good result. The other challenge I had was many places had their bills delivered to their tables and paid there, so didn't even see the box. However, the main impression I got was that most restaurant owners are happy to help if they could, especially when I explained that we help a lot of mothers and children who are not doing well. Perhaps next year, we could get a few more fliers or news items out about Homeless Week, so more people are aware of it. Altogether, I feel that we didn't do a bad job, considering this was our first time at it. Looking forward to helping again next year. **Karen**

Thank you for your support!
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Tweed Heads 0755367522

St Joseph's College 07 55249002

St Joseph's Primary 07 55362519

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You Have a Friend
P.O.Box 637, Tweed Heads, NSW 2485
Please visit us at:
www.youhaveafriend.org.au

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

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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