

# welcome sister clare



Sr Clare Rafferty R.S.M.

I was born, raised and educated in WA and most of my life has been lived in the suburbs of Perth. For over forty years I have been a Sister of Mercy and have spent most of that time involved in primary education as a teacher for the most part and a Principal for eleven years. One year in the country gave me an introduction to the wide-open spaces and country life then it was back to the city.

When I moved out of school I was offered a position as a consultant at the Catholic Education Office. I was responsible for coordinating

the Principal Appointment Process. This work was very interesting and challenging but after almost nine years, I became aware of the need to move into another field of work.

In March, 2001, I undertook a Pastoral Ministry Course at Mariannella in Dublin. This was a great chance to take time for study and reflection as well as thoroughly enjoy the northern springtime.

On completion of the course, I took the chance of some travel in parts of Europe and throughout Britain and loved the experience. On my return to WA in July, I was seeking work, preferably in some pastoral capacity and the position of LifeLink Relationships Officer came my way.

I am looking forward to a new challenge where I can hopefully make good use of the experience which I have accumulated over the years.

## Another Free Wills Seminar

Following the overwhelming response from parishioners to Archbishop Hickey's "Wills Information Evenings", another has been planned for April.

These information evenings are conducted by two experienced and professional solicitors from Blakiston & Crabb Solicitors, who provide basic details on "what is required when drafting a Will", and are available to answer guest's questions.

This is a free service sponsored by LifeLink, and we see it as a way of "giving something back" to the parishes and supporters who support LifeLink.

**THIS IS NOT A FUNDRAISING EVENT.**

The next seminar will be held on  
**Date** Tuesday 16 April 2002  
**Time** 7.30 pm.  
**Venue** Sacred Heart Parish Centre  
 Cnr Ovens Rd & Discovery Dr  
 Thornlie

**Reservations are essential, please contact Kim on 92231315 to make a booking today. Everyone is welcome!**

(Tea and coffee will be served at the conclusion of the seminar)

# LIFELINKS

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The material in this newsletter may be reused for school projects with our compliments

Pictured left to right  
 Fr Paul Baczynski,  
 Marion and Don Byfield,  
 Brett Regan (counsellor)

when  
you  
are  
at  
the



a personal story by Mrs Marion Byfield

## crossroads

We have four children, two girls aged 31 and 22, and boys aged 30 and 26. Only our 26 year old son has not become an addict. All our children were welcomed into our hearts and our home with much love, not only by us, but also by an extended family of great-grandparents, grandparents, aunts and uncles.

For me, they were my own special miracles.

My husband and I were married young, and he worked hard while I stayed at home with the children. We had a

**"My husband and I have been parents of three drug addicts for approximately 15 years now."**

nice home and the children always had plenty of home cooked meals, lots of love, and were taught respect and good manners. All the children were Baptised Catholics, went to Catholic schools, and Mass every Sunday.

We weren't perfect parents of course, but we did our best. There were bad times, but there were also lots of good times and a lot of love between us and our children. Our oldest son started experimenting with "Pot" in his teens, and progressed from amphetamines and then to heroin.

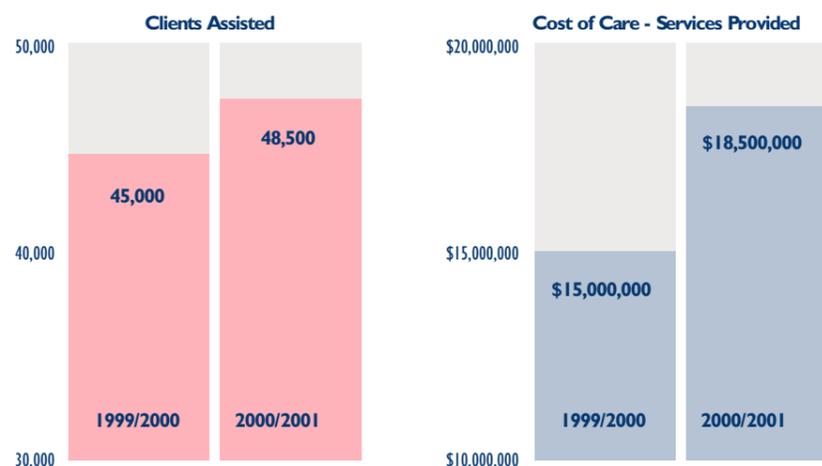
## LifeLink - doing it by the numbers

LifeLink social service agencies continue to see an ever increasing demand for their supportive services from those in need within our community.

LifeLink agencies have experienced a significant growth in the number of Western Australian families and individuals calling on them for assistance.

Thanks to your generous support, we are able to meet this challenge and continue "a tradition of care for people in need" here in WA!

Demand and Cost of Services Increased



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continued

It's a fallacy that Marijuana doesn't lead to other drugs. By 15, he was stealing to feed his habit, and at 18 went to Fremantle Prison. Most of his adult life has been spent on drugs or in prison. As a young boy he was an exceptional sportsman, he was very popular and he still has a beautiful personality.

Our 32 year old daughter had a terrible experience at the age of 15 which devastated our family. She had become a very rebellious teenager, and started running away from home until she was involved in a serious car accident up north after hitch-hiking (we thought she was still in Perth).

She suffered serious head and other injuries, however she did recover and for awhile, it looked like we had our girl back. At 18, she gave birth to a son, and settled down being a doting mother. At 21, she was introduced to amphetamines by her son's father, and was almost immediately addicted.

Her life has spiralled downhill, and she is currently serving her 2nd prison sentence, and has suffered years of abuse both physically and mentally. Our grandson lives with us and is nearly 13. He is a beautiful child who loves his mum and is very protective of her. He was never baptised and at the age of 8, chose himself to become a Catholic.

Both his parents are addicts, but he copes very well and he

is surrounded by love.

Our 22 year old daughter grew up amongst all this turmoil, as we tried to save our other two children. We thought she was ok, but she wasn't. Her world was falling down around her, and we were simply too overwhelmed to notice what was happening.

She found solace firstly in food, then marijuana and then amphetamines. Eventually going down the same road as her older sister.

Through the years, I have always had my faith to keep me strong. My husband often said he wished he had my faith but did not pursue it. Over the first six months at CrossRoads, he learnt forgiveness for himself, and for our children.

Over the next six months, he accepted God into his life. His faith is simple and honest, and last year, he became a Catholic. I now have the great pleasure of going to Mass every Sunday with my husband, and discussing matters of faith with him.

We have come a long way in the past two years. Our two oldest children are still using, but we can see improvements. Our youngest daughter has now been drug free and healthy for over a year, and has a beautiful 6 month old son who has brought much joy into our lives.

They have all had contact with Father Paul and CrossRoads, especially our youngest.

At Crossroads, we have learnt to love God, our children and ourselves. More importantly, my husband and I now have dignity and strength, acceptance of our lives and the courage to keep going. No, we are not like most families, but this is our life and we are going to live it the best we can.

We are using our own experiences and knowledge to facilitate the Parents Group at CrossRoads, and if we can help just one person through a tough time, then our lives have been worth it.

There are a lot of miracles happening at CrossRoads through the power of prayer, and the genuine love of people for each other.

**Thanks be to GOD**

*CrossRoads is an agency funded and supported through your generous donations to LifeLink.*

*CrossRoads offers support and practical assistance to people fighting drug and other addictions, and support and care for their families and loved ones.*

**YOUR SUPPORT DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

when you are at the **crossroads**



# Finding an enduring solution to homelessness

Homelessness is not an issue that normally engenders huge interest in the community. It struggles to get noticed among the myriad of other matters that impact on us day to day. The common perception of homelessness is that only a few individuals experience it.

It is thought that these people roam the streets and sleep on park benches or similar places. The reality is a different one. Homelessness affects thousands of people both directly and indirectly.

It involves children, couples, singles, the aged, refugees, migrants, the disabled, and those addicted to various substances, people with mental health difficulties and those escaping domestic violence.

Homelessness particularly affects Aboriginal people, with more than 20% of Aboriginal households experiencing overcrowded accommodation. Homelessness is more than not having a roof over one's head. It involves all those fellow citizens who do not have a place to call home. It includes

those living in emergency shelters, those in refuges, people in makeshift, temporary or insecure accommodation.

Potentially, each one of us can experience homelessness. It can be the result of natural disasters, personal tragedies, ill health, long term unemployment and similar, significant life situations.

There is little doubt that the availability of appropriate and affordable housing is crucial to the resolution of homelessness. There has been a steady decline in State housing stock in recent years. This decline needs to be arrested if we are to successfully deal with homelessness. Additionally, creative solutions need to be explored as to how the private housing market can be engaged in providing housing solutions.

We also must recognise that poverty and lack of opportunity often locks people into a cycle of homelessness. Addressing homelessness necessarily means making every effort to reduce disadvantage. We need to ensure

that our social security system is genuinely supportive and that issues such as long-term unemployment are resolved.

Without tackling these fundamental issues, any response to homelessness will struggle to provide an enduring solution.

We need to change our community's attitude towards the homeless.

Homeless people can no longer be perceived as being at the margins of our world. The children, men and women who we refer to as the homeless form an integral part of our community.

They are often people that we know and, not uncommonly, those that we love. In providing assistance to those experiencing homelessness, we are supporting our own and building a stronger and more inclusive society.

*Tony is Chairperson of the State Homelessness Taskforce which recently presented its report to the WA State Government.*

## LOOKING FOR A CHANCE - AND A CHANGE!



For over 20 years, Emmanuel Centre's Barbara Harris and Rev. Paul Pitzen have joined together to fight for the "inclusion" of all people with a disability into the community, challenge the stereotypical attitudes, and draw attention to issues of access for all.

**Pictured (L-R) are Corinne, Greg and Debbie, who have all undertaken a range of skills development programmes at Emmanuel, with a view to entering the workforce.**

The Emmanuel Centre is an inspirational place to visit. It is a self-help centre for learning enhancement and lifeskills development, specifically designed to assist people with a disability - their family and carers.

What they really need now is some help gaining more experience in a work situation. Greg said he wants to find a gardening or cleaning position. Debbie is an excellent kitchen assistant and said she

would love to work in a café, canteen or restaurant. And Corinne is an excellent administration assistant who has a good knowledge of computing and desktop systems, so it's an office/admin position for her.

**So if you can help give these eager faces a start in life, then please call Barbara on 9328 8113.**

Even half a day a week, either on a basic paid or volunteer basis, would afford Corinne, Greg and Debbie the opportunity to put what they have learned into practice, and build up their self-esteem.

**"Together, we can make a difference"**