



Soko (centre) pictured with her father, Tar Roo Doo and her mother, Janet Way

Soko, her daughter and family are "Karen Burmese" a minority ethnic group which in Burma, is discriminated against, persecuted, prosecuted and generally abused.

In the desperate hope of making a better life for herself and her child, Soko and her family escaped Burma and made their way to a refugee camp in Thailand.

After two years in what they describe as "a miserable camp" her refugee application was accepted by Australia.

Soko and five year old daughter Pwelluguie arrived safely in Perth in May 2007.

They were greeted at the airport by a Centrecare Catholic Migrant Services case worker and a bilingual worker. Soko was provided with temporary accommodation, received life skills training and was linked with other supportive external organisations.

She was helped to secure permanent accommodation and also received counselling from the agency's experienced torture and trauma counselling team.

Despite her growing happiness here in Perth, Soko was concerned for her parents who remained in the camp awaiting the outcome of their own refugee application.

Thankfully, with help from the agency's Migration Advice Team, she was guided through the visa process and six months later, her parents arrived in Perth to be happily reunited as a family once more.

Soko's ability, willingness and dedication to help her people, created an opportunity for her to receive casual employment as a bilingual worker with CMS.

As a bilingual worker, she is assisting Case Coordinators with language and cultural support for refugees during initial orientation, life skills training and finding and securing rental accommodation.

She is actively involved in cultural awareness activities by presenting refugee's life at camp and settlement issues at relevant meetings and gatherings.

Soko is happily and comfortably settled in Perth. She is undertaking an engineering course with a view to studying law in the future and works on a casual basis. Her daughter is attending school and has already made many friends.

This is Soko's story - an example of the wonderful work of the Centrecare Catholic Migrant Service, which supports and assists refugees and migrants here in Perth.

In 2005, Centrecare successfully tendered for the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS) – a service providing intensive settlement assistance to newly arrived refugees in Western Australia for the first six months of their settlement – and in the same year, amalgamated with the Catholic Migrant Centre.

Centrecare Catholic Migrant Services (CMS) was established to include the existing business of the Catholic Migrant Centre and the new IHSS service.

CMS provides assistance to all refugee and migrant families regardless of their race, religion, nationality or cultural background. Its aim is to facilitate the settlement of refugees and migrants in Western Australia.

If you would like to know more about this agency's services or are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact Nigel or Josephine on (08) 9221 1727.



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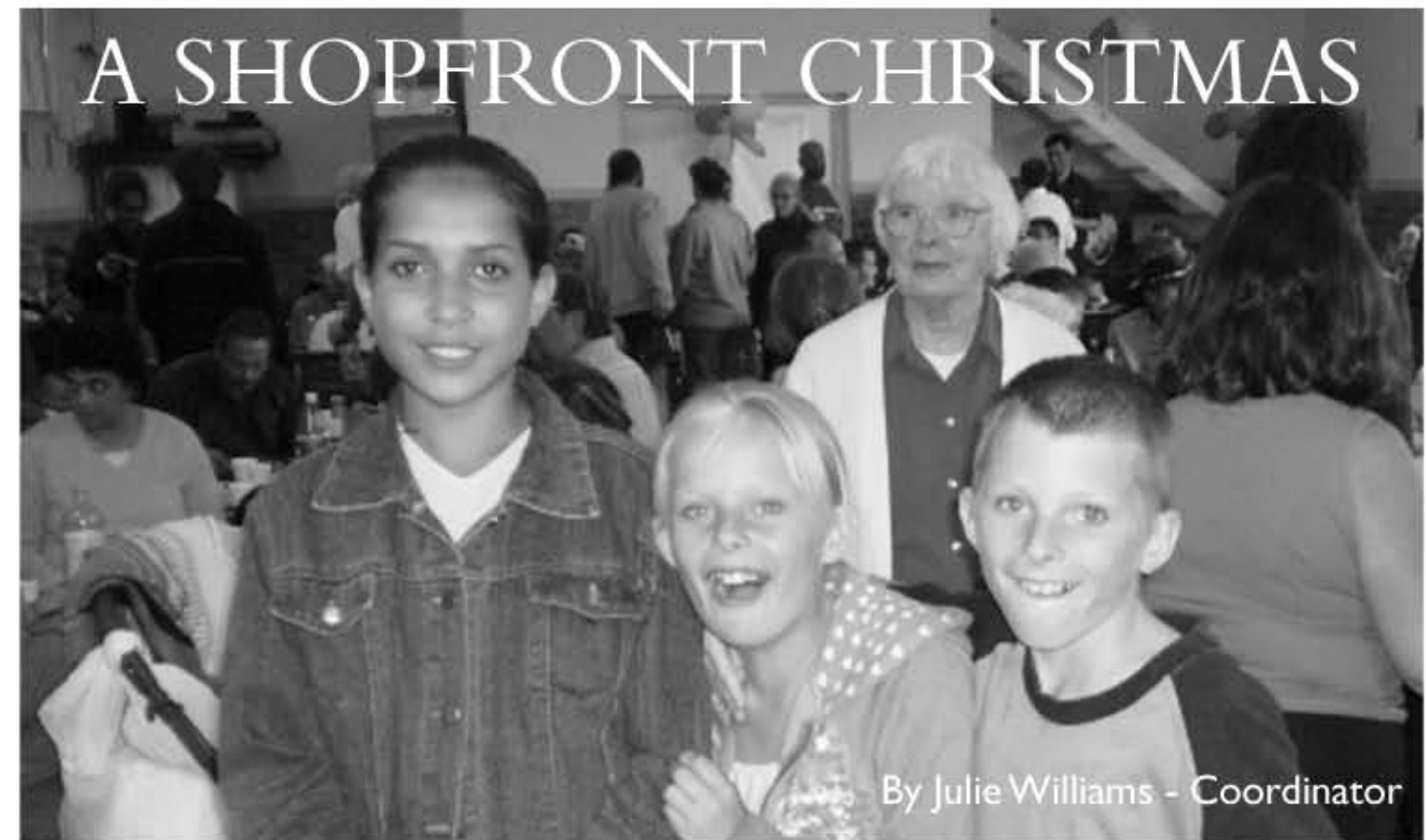
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By Julie Williams - Coordinator

Having first opened its doors in late 2001, 'The Shopfront' celebrated another wonderfully blessed year in 2007.

The Shopfront, based in Whatley Crescent, Maylands, is an initiative of the Archbishop, and funded by the generosity of people through Lifeline. It aims at helping people in practical, simple and genuine ways.

At The Shopfront last year over 420 people came to seek help or assistance, a cup of coffee and a friendly face. They received a warm welcome and kindly word. Many return each day. In total, over 6000 visits were made by people who are disadvantaged, lonely, destitute, homeless, people with young families and those living with mental illness.

The desperate shortage of rental accommodation has seen an increase in the number of people with nowhere to sleep. **Shopfront provided more than 220 nights emergency accommodation through crisis shelter organisations.**

Each year our friends who visit The Shopfront eagerly anticipate our Annual Christmas Party. Our Christmas Party for 2007 was held on Saturday 15th December.

The celebration brought together volunteers from the Shopfront, parishioners from the Queen of Martyrs, Maylands Parish and all our friends from the Shopfront. We joyfully came together with those who are poor to celebrate in a spirit of solidarity the message of Christ's coming into the world.

Approximately 170 people attended the party.

Liz Hare and our team of volunteers spent many hours preparing for the Christmas party. Sandy Louis and the Thornlie Parish Youth Choir kept us entertained all afternoon with a wonderful selection of songs, Christmas carols and a beautiful Nativity play.

Helping young people discover the miracle of their bodies & relationships

by Derek Boylen, Director, Natural Fertility Services



Young boys and girls about to experience puberty ask a lot of interesting questions:

- Can you breathe in the uterus?
- How do multiple births occur?
- What's inside the testes?
- How do sperm cells know where to go?
- Can you run out of eggs?

These examples barely scratch the surface. In spite of our sex saturated culture, it is surprisingly more difficult than ever before for young people to get honest, helpful, genuine advice that respects the life and dignity of all.

That's why Natural Fertility Services developed their Becoming a Man and Becoming a Woman programs. For over three decades Natural Fertility Services has reached out to thousands of secondary school students throughout Western Australia.

LifeLink funding helps us reach young people to talk about sexuality, fertility and relationships. Our highly trained Family Life Educators cover topics such as Natural Family Planning, contraception, sexually transmitted infections, life before birth, what makes healthy relationships and marriage.

Becoming a Man and Becoming a Woman are two programs targeted at year sixes and sevens. The programs were launched in 2004 and each year has seen a dramatic increase in the number of our Catholic schools accessing this service. Currently, 37 primary schools in the Perth and Bunbury Dioceses enjoy the programs.

"It is vital that children know the truth about themselves; that they are beautiful and good, to love themselves as they are, and to look forward to the changes in their growing bodies, their emotions and their relationships," says Christine Fernandez, the Family Life Education, Operations Manager.

Natural Fertility Services plays a key role in the challenge of supporting parents and teachers to educate children about Catholic values with regard to human sexuality and to keep their fertility healthy and safe for the future. Most of our Family Life Educators are parents too. They have plenty of personal stories, are passionate about their work, and understand first-hand the challenges of parenting.



Christine Fernandez explores life before birth with Catholic primary students as part of the ongoing development of their bodies, and discusses the changes they can expect in the future.

Another vital area of our work is teaching Natural Family Planning to couples. Highly trained staff teach the very effective symptom-thermal method of Natural Family Planning to couples at every stage of life. Our clients include those wishing to avoid pregnancy, achieve pregnancy, coming off hormonal

contraceptives, breastfeeding and peri-menopausal. They are a diverse group of clients wishing to take a real interest in their bodies and use a family planning method that is natural, healthy, effective and in keeping with the Church's teaching of life and love.

It's very rewarding work, particularly when a couple are trying to achieve a pregnancy. The joy of helping a couple who really want a baby to achieve pregnancy is just wonderful.

Natural Fertility Services is a vital agency of the Archdiocese helping young people and couples to live the kind of life **God** intended for them. Without the generous support of the people in parishes all over the Archdiocese through the LifeLink appeals **His** work wouldn't be possible.

These funds make it possible for Natural Fertility Services to be the link between young people and couples throughout Western Australia and the Church's vision of life and love celebrated every week in our parishes.

For more information on Natural Fertility Services we can be contacted on (08) 9223 1396 or email admin.nfs@aanet.com.au

from page 1 A SHOPFRONT CHRISTMAS

Gus Irdi made a great entrance as Fr Christmas. He was greeted enthusiastically, especially by all the children who were very excited about his visit. **Santa had plenty of gifts for everyone thanks to the kindness and generosity of many people, especially the Sacred Heart Primary School children and Sacred Heart Parish at Highgate.**

The volunteers worked tirelessly setting up the hall, serving the Christmas food and cleaning up afterwards. The Christmas party is a wonderful event full of love, laughter and joy.

Early in the year, Br Peter Negus, a Christian Brother commenced his role as Director of The Shopfront, with Liz Hare as his Support Officer.

Together they will continue to be assisted by an excellent team of Religious and Lay volunteers.

If you would like to visit us or are interested in volunteering one afternoon or evening a week, please know you will be most welcome.

Telephone Julie during office hours on 9422 7901.



The Thornlie Parish Youth Choir entertained the guests



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