

THE IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE...

Pictured: Kevin (left) and John enjoy catching-up at Shopfront

Kevin and John, are regular visitors to Shopfront, they come to share a cup of coffee, grab something to eat, have a chat and enjoy each others company. Their individual stories are very different, yet they represent the experiences of many who call the Shopfront "home".

"I came from Holland as a boy and couldn't speak English, so I had trouble fitting in. When I was young my mother, a violent person, wasn't nice to me. It's funny, I never had a problem with alcohol, I don't drink – never have... it's drugs that ruined my life for so long.

I tried marijuana, harder drugs and eventually, heroin. It made me steal and got me 8 months in jail. I'd been on the streets in Perth for years. Then I met a girl, she got pregnant and we had a beautiful baby daughter. **That's what saved me.**

My partner couldn't get off the drugs, but **I knew I had to take care of my little girl.** She's 9 years old now, we don't have a lot but we do the best we can. I make sure she's healthy, happy and knows that she's loved. That's what my life is... it's her.

Shopfront helps us with the things we can't afford and we always have a friendly face here if we need help. It's a real calming place, I like that" said Kevin.

John, a quiet man, a good man, is always on hand to help out at the centre with whatever needs doing.

John said "Mate, I had a bad motor bike accident as a young bloke. I was in a coma for months and I have trouble with my memory. I can't work and it makes life tough, you know. I am a fairly calm sort of person, I don't get stressed and I don't need a lot to get by, but things are getting bad now.

You know I pay \$150 a week rent which leaves me bugger all for food, clothes, medical things.

Without Shopfront, I just wouldn't be able to manage to eat every day. This is my home, the people here are my friends and I feel they know what I am going through".

Editor's Note:

Kevin has shared his story at a number of schools and has made a great impact on young people. It's his way of giving back for all the kindness he has received, and is helping re-build his self esteem.

Kevin will make a special appearance in the Bishops' Webcast to Secondary Schools on 3 June 2009.

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FAITH, HOPE & FAMILY...

Pictured: Brother Peter Negus, Director of Shopfront with Michelle and baby Tim

"I first visited **The Shopfront** about three or four years ago, at the urging of someone who had been going there for awhile.

I have to say that when I walked in and saw the people sitting there, it was a bit confronting at first.

But I soon started chatting to one person, then another and another, and I soon realised... they were just like me, people who need help and someone to care.

In a nutshell, my life has not been easy or what I suppose most people would call "normal". My childhood was traumatic; I'm the oldest of ten (now eleven) and we were exposed to domestic violence.

My mother brought us to Western Australia, I trained and became a registered nurse. I met a man, married and had four wonderful children.

After 12 years of marriage, suddenly it was over.

I was on my own, working to support the five of us and fighting a distressing battle with my husband through the courts.

It all became too much, I suppose I just burnt out... life wore me down. I suffered mentally and had a breakdown of sorts, brought on by stress.

I lost my job, my children were living with their father, I found it difficult to keep accommodation and I lost my way.

I never thought this would be my story. I was what I suppose you'd call a typical "middle-class" woman; someone educated who had a good job, a family.

I was raised a Catholic but had drifted away, but I always remember what I was taught by the nuns when I was just 5 years old, that God loved all children, that we all had special gifts and were unique and I have carried that message in my heart these 40 odd years.



Pictured: Brother Peter Negus, Julie Williams and Father Maurice Toop with Michelle and baby Tim

I know that this must be true. He has most certainly restored me and continues restoring me every day.

At the Shopfront, I found friends who cared about me - Julie Williams and Brother Peter, the other "visitors" who come each day, just like me, and all the volunteers. They are just so welcoming, so caring. They helped me think positively about life again.

They have become like family to me, a real family.

I always had an interest in drug and alcohol rehabilitation, so I enrolled in study at TAFE and completed a Community Services Certificate IV. I even undertook my practical at the centre.



Pictured: Bill, Michelle and baby Tim

The Shopfront is also where I met Bill. Though two different people, we connected. Friendship developed over time and eventually turned to love. In December 2008, our beautiful baby boy, Tim, was born. He is a Blessing, a joy... **our joy.**

Today, I have reunited and reconnected with my four older children, who now fuss and delight over their new brother. I have a home and I am working towards making a better life for me, and all my children.

This simply would not have been possible without the support of everyone at Shopfront. They have been with me, and continue to be with me, on every step of my journey.

At my darkest hour, just like Job when he lost everything, God restored me and he continues restoring me each and every day.

The greatest gift that the Shopfront has given me is **HOPE**. How can you repay that?", said Michelle.

The Shopfront is one of the many social service agencies funded through LifeLink, which is in turn funded by your generous donations to the Archbishop's appeals.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS LEAD BY EXAMPLE!

Pictured in The Shopfront kitchen are students from:

Santa Maria College
Phoebe Lee -Yr 11
Philippa Bourke -Yr 11
Taylor Harwood -Yr 11
Courtney Sofield -Yr 11

Emmanuel College
Chanise Fisher -Yr 11
Jordan Cross -Yr 11

Trinity College
Jakob Norman -Yr 12
Joseph Marino -Yr 6

Chisholm College
Ann Dias -Yr 10

Sacred Heart College
James Soresi -Yr 12

Sacred Heart Primary
Catherine Rennison -Yr 6
Gabriel Sharra -Yr 2
Jack Wojtowicz -Yr 1
Cynthia Nguyen -Yr 1

Editors note:
Mercedes College is missing from schools represented.



Brother Peter Negus, Director of The Shopfront, is so grateful for the tremendous support Catholic schools and students continue to provide.

"When the Archbishop started Shopfront in 2001, it was to be a community organisation, one which relied on the goodwill of supporters and volunteers - focusing its resources on those who reach-out for help, not on those who serve.

Since 2004, an increasing number of schools in the Archdiocese have embraced what it is we do at the Shopfront, and actively participate in helping here at the centre. Emmanuel, Chisholm, Mercedes, Servite and Trinity Colleges all send their students to us as a part of their community service programmes. They prepare lunches, chat to our "visitors" and discover how much need there really is in our community - right here at home.

Santa Maria College students are simply wonderful, for many years preparing and cooking literally hundreds of pre-packed meals and cakes. Sacred Heart Primary and Sacred Heart College donate Christmas hampers and presents and also prepare pre-packed meals.

We have some remarkable young people in our schools. I cannot express how grateful we are to all the principals, teachers and especially the students who help out.

I want you all to know that you do make a difference. You bring such a smile to the faces of our Shopfront family, thank you all!" said Brother Peter.

Editor's Note:

Schools wanting to find out more about joining our Shopfront Family are warmly invited to contact Brother Peter on tel 9371 9109



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