

ON THE VERGE

THE WAYSIDE CHAPEL NEWSLETTER.
ISSUE NO. 18, SPRING 2009



LEAD STORY

THE PAIN OF LOVE



You used to love me and now you don't; I'm hurting!" is the theme of countless love songs but not the kind of pain of love that we learn and learn to embrace at Wayside. The words "love that the love required is not cheap love. It is not sentiment alone. There is a cost that must be borne at Wayside that in due course, sorts out the eagles from the pigeons; the good from the do-gooders; the talkers from the doers. It not only sorts us but it puts wind under our wings, enabling us to know what is the best and highest of humanity – hence the angel wings on our logo.

A few weeks ago a four year-old girl asked me if I could bring her daddy back from the dead. The moment was agonizingly poignant because of the open little face that asked a genuine question. I will never forget the eyes that sparkled with the expectation that I might actually be able to have daddy walk back into the room. Normally, I am well familiar with the disappointment that love brings when a heart is set on magic. Normally, I am content to be along side of someone, that well familiar that I am not Santa and able to grant wishes. Normally I can sit with someone in their weakness and know that my capacity to be along side, is all I have.

Looking into that little face, I ached to be superhuman. I so wanted to grant her wish and be the miracle worker that she thought I might be. It took me days of agony to remember that all I have is love. It's all I ever had. I remember the burden I carried as a young social worker and especially as a young minister, when caring for people in dire circumstances. The illusion that I knew something or could "pull strings" with God, created a burden of devastating loneliness that made me an emotional cannibal. It was a never-ending self-bluff that robbed energy and life.

The pain of love that Wayside delivers on a plate, is the pain of knowing your own humanity. In order to be alongside people who live in illusion; in order to be with people who are stuck with people who have been victims of unspeakable injustice; a human being is required. One who is not absorbed in their own need to be anything.

They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles..." the Scripture says. I've come to know in my old age that the verse is talking about the power of the wind not the power of the wings. I've never been more frail than I am today and I've never been more fully alive.

PASTOR GRAHAM LONG

VOLUNTEERING STORY COMMUNITY LUNCH AT WAYSIDE

In late 2008 Wayside received a grant from Clubs NSW to put on a Community Lunch at Wayside every week as a way of encouraging healthy eating, and healthy social interaction. With the help of our Community Development Worker, Beres Jackson, and two volunteers, Pam and Marilee, the lunch program was officially launched in April of this year. Many of our visitors have come along to lunch over the last few months. We have seen people who are normally quiet come out of their shells, and others who offer to gather the plates and cutlery for washing – all enjoying the simple joy and hospitality that sharing a meal can bring.

PAM
I came off the street and walked in the door looking for voluntary work in Feb 09. Two weeks later I got a call to say that we were starting a Community Lunch and would I like to be one of the cooks. I said yes, but was very nervous as I've never cooked for large groups of people. And to be perfectly honest, I've never really liked cooking. The best part of the lunch program is getting to work with Marilee and producing a sit down family style lunch for our visitors. Sometimes people arrive for lunch unhappy and leave after lunch much happier. This may be to do with the conversation as much as the food, as people get to share their stories. Sometimes there's a clash in opinions but generally people are happy to talk and to listen. People have also shared their favourite recipes or asked for the recipe for the lunch they've just been served. Roasts and stews always go down well but I think our Apricot Chicken was the all round favourite.

MARILEE
I was already volunteering at Wayside, doing the washing, when I was asked if I'd like to be part of the Community Lunch. Like Pam, I was nervous as I'm not a very confident cook but agreed to give it a go. It's been great! We generally have a full house and sometimes we have to turn people away which I hate to do. We have some regulars who come every week but we also have new people each week which really adds to the dynamic. Many of our guests are smokers so it's a challenge to keep them at the table for a chat after the meal. Some people are also really shy so we need to make time to sit and chat one-on-one. Pam and I work together really well. We work hard but we have fun. The kitchen is tiny but we never bump into each other. The stove doesn't work that well but we still get the meal out on time every time. And after the meal, when all the cleaning is done, we sit down with a cup of tea and plan the menu for the following week.



Marilee (front) & Pam preparing lunch

If you would like to come to lunch as a guest, please get in touch with Beres Jackson – 9358 5582, and he will be sure to accommodate you at the table.

Volunteering at Wayside
Our volunteers are incredibly important to us and contribute over \$2 million in terms of the time they give to Wayside. Quite simply, we couldn't afford to open our doors without them. If you'd like to become a Wayside volunteer, it's as easy as...
STEP 1 – Ring Stephanie or Rose on 9358 5582 to book in for the next Information Evening; the dates are on the website – www.thewaysidechapel.com
STEP 2 – After attending the evening, make an appointment for an interview.
STEP 3 – After a successful interview, you'll be placed on your first shift where an orientation process will help you gain skills and confidence. If you feel uncertain, Stephanie and Rose and the Wayside staff will be there to support you.



Rose and Stephanie

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FINDING SOLACE AT THE WAYSIDE A SUPPORTERS STORY

My name is Richard, and our advertising agency Urna helps out the Wayside from time to time with their communications (including publishing OTV). A few years ago my life was tracking along swimmingly. I was partner in a successful business that employed over 50 people. My family was happy and well, and I'd just married my long-term partner. Who could want for more? Fortunately for me (although at that time I didn't realise how fortunate) our company had also recently struck up a friendship with The Wayside. Not long after, my life was sent into a tailspin when my marriage unexpectedly disintegrated.

I don't pretend that my crisis was a patch on others who might access services at The Wayside, but suffice to say in my world this was a crisis of epic proportions. It seemed to mercilessly infiltrate every corner of my life, and cast a long shadow over my future. As much as people like to believe there is an infinite distance between everything and nothing, it's simply not true. We're all far more vulnerable than we think. At least I was.
After a few months of darkness, I vividly remember driving to work and searching my mind for something positive to grasp onto. Even one small victory (I hoped) could get me back moving in the right direction, and give me hope that life wasn't going to be like this forever. As it happened I had a meeting with The Wayside that day, which turned out to be the catalyst for a range of communication initiatives that have gone on to raise vital funds for Wayside services. This meeting, and my involvement in the establishment of those activities, turned out to be a magic moment that signalled the start of my own personal restoration. So rather than helping The Wayside (as I'd originally planned), it turned out that The Wayside had actually helped me in the most profound way. So I'll always be a Friend of the Wayside.



Richard

SERVICES

SOUL
The Wayside Chapel is a Parish Mission of the Uniting Church in Australia, a place for those of all faiths and none.

Sunday Service at The Chapel
10am every Sunday
Worshippers and Nourishers
Phone 9358 5582 for an appointment

The Chapel
9am till close 7 days a week

Friends
Phone for an appointment

BODY

Benaks & Behemions Op Shop
9am – 4pm Mon – Fri
10am – 2pm Saturdays

Emergency Clothing Store
Every day, 10 – 11am and 2 – 3pm

Nomad Cafe
9am till close 7 days a week

Community Services Centre
Mon – Fri 9am – 8pm
Sat – Sun 9am – 5pm

Activities Program Visit
www.thewaysidechapel.com
for the weekly calendar

Wayside Youth
Mon – 9am – 2.30pm
Tue-Fri – 9am – 1.2pm & 1.30 – 6.30pm
Sat – 9am – 12.30pm & 3 – 5pm

Outreach – Street-based outreach
Services are provided
Mon & Sat afternoons,
and Wed to Fri evenings.

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PHANTASMAGORICAL MICROCOSM THE MUSICAL

Had you been at Wayside on a chilly mid-June afternoon, you may well have attended the World Premiere of Phantasmagorical Microcosm the Musical. Presented by our Day to Day Living Program with original music devised by Waysiders and the very energetic, Abi Tucker, the musical traversed the imagination and sought to personify temptation, addiction and depression and the resilience to overcome. We asked Day to Day Living Participant, NIKKI and Abi to tell us about the experience.

ABI
There is a sense of community at Wayside. I believe the arts, leisure and entertainment are basic community needs. Being part of a community group can bring about trust and understanding and communication amongst people from all different walks of life. I love Kings Cross for the aspects that make it lively. I don't like the things that happen through hurt, hardship and helplessness. If there are a few small things I can do in response to reality's sometimes cruel twist of fate, then I will. In saying this, for what I gave to Wayside, I got this, for what I gave to Wayside, I got this, for what I gave to Wayside, I got this back so much more. I've been blessed. It's hard to articulate. It's more a feeling than a phrase. "Somewhere where imagination resides, is a community that we all belong to. I'm pleased I get to celebrate it."



To see the video of the performance, check out the Day to Day Living page in the What We Do section of our website – www.thewaysidechapel.com



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A SATURDAY IN THE LIFE OF JOHN WALTERS

COMMUNITY SERVICES WORKER AT WAYSIDE
I'm up at 6:30am to walk our border collie, Murphy. Have breakfast on the run and leave for Wayside at 7:45am. Listening to 101.7 on the 40 minute drive to the city.

On arrival at Wayside – on a cold Saturday morning – there are 15 people waiting for the doors to open. The Amma group are in the throes of preparing breakfast. One of my first tasks is to check that there have been no break-ins overnight, then change the fit bins, fill the toilet paper dispensers, and tidy up the courtyard. Need to start the first 3 loads of washing and check the shower and chapel.

9:00am – Phones are turned on and we're open for business, the Amma group have said their prayers. Breakfast is ready to go (cereals, toast, fruit, porridge, tea and coffee) and now 40 hungry visitors waiting outside to line up to be served. I have 2 volunteers working with me today. Trish has been volunteering every Saturday for over 10 years and Paula is a new volunteer on her first shift.

9:30am – There are over 80 visitors now having breakfast and five people at the counter needing help with showers and making phone calls. Another person just wants to talk.

10:00am – Breakfast's gone very well today with 80 visitors fed and happy. Paula gets clothes for two visitors, while Trish is on the shower run. Many people this morning need warm showers. Our coffee shop is in full swing. Chantal has been a volunteer for over 25 years, she is an amazing lady. The conversation in the coffee shop becomes a bit boisterous. I ask people to keep their voices down and they decide to move outside.

12 midday – Where has the morning gone????
Paula has finished her first day. She loved it and cannot wait to come back next week. Clare, our new volunteer of just two weeks, arrives for her shift. We have just hit our 11th shower and much of the morning we've been on the phone assisting our visitors accommodation for tonight. It's tipped to be a cold, wet night. We've given out lots of blankets and warm clothes already this morning.

2:00pm – A young man outside has asked for help and wants to go into detox. I phone a detox unit that does an immediate phone assessment and gets him booked in for 6pm tonight. It's a great win, we all feel fantastic for him. Mission beat (transport) comes and picks up 3 people and takes them to overnight accommodation. Most places are filling up for tonight already so all we can do is give out blankets and sleeping bags.

4:00pm – A group of visitors are chatting out the front, swapping their stories and just hanging out with their friends. Our day is coming to an end. 20 people have had showers today, some have been given train tickets home and lots of people have been given fresh, clean clothes as well as soap, new toothbrushes, toothpaste, socks and undies.

4:45pm – Start lock-up and check the buildings. Check the chapel is locked up and ready for church service tomorrow morning.

5:00pm – Trish (who has been here all day), Clare and I leave for the day. Driving home I think of the fantastic day we have had, the great people we have met and the wonderful conversations we've had. I think to myself what a privilege to be doing what I do. How lucky am I? Well!!!!



The Wayside Van

SUPPORT OUR SERVICES BY BECOMING A FRIEND

We will never stop working to ensure that love and support are always there for the homeless and disadvantaged in our community. But while the essential work we do will never stop, the money we need to do it sometimes does. To ensure our vital work continues, we encourage you to become a friend of The Wayside – it's your opportunity to help provide a range of services for Sydney's many homeless, including health and accommodation referrals, counselling, food and clothing.

HOW DOES IT WORK

For as little as \$42 per month (\$1.40 a day) you can sponsor a day at The Wayside and help provide a range of services:

- 31 servings of food
- 25 'mission beat' referral trips
- 15 referrals to services & agencies
- counselling for 8
- 150 drop in visits
- 36 incidents of support for people aged 25 and under
- Clothing for 10 people
- emergency accom for 8
- showers for 11

So if like us you hate loneliness, love community, hate ignorance and love understanding, we'd love you to become a friend of The Wayside and make a regular donation. Join us as a friend at www.thewaysidechapel.com or by completing the form enclosed.



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A VERY HUGE THANK YOU LIST WE THANK...

John Berry for running our computer classes, Lilli for sharing her hairdressing skills & Anna Partridge for keeping our name in the media. Michael Steele for his extraordinary generosity in so many ways. DJ Warehouse for lighting our Phantasmagorical Musical and Deloitte for their auditing adventures in September. John Walters for the fabulous Sara Lee cakes & Salesforce.com for their cooking and serving our guests at Christmas in July. Janni Kyritsis and all the volunteers who made our Christmas in July event so special this year. The Friday Knitters, A Unique Hug and all the home knitters who sent in bagloads of beautiful beanies and scarves to save off the winter chill. Penny Wong and the NSW Parliament, the ABC and all the organizations who held clothing drives for winter. BT Financial for their office bucket fundraising drive. Richard Wylie and the team at Urna for their extraordinary and ongoing contribution to Wayside's marketing, fundraising & communications. Marcus from AMP for the new TV, stereo & DVD player in our coffee shop and for volunteering ever Wednesday night. Abi Tucker for working with our Day to Day Living Program, through two weeks of workshops, to produce the World Premiere of Phantasmagorical the Musical. Ascham School for donating children's clothing, and to everyone else that we haven't named but wished we could, and without whose support we would be a far poorer organization.

SIDEWAYS
Every Wednesday at 7pm a group of regular wayside visitors chat, share ideas and put pen to paper in a creative writing group. This column showcases some of their work.

A Piece of –
A little piece of heaven had fallen
Out of the evening sky
Spilling the never ending star dust
Leaving me helpless, with a never ending sigh

The star dust is
In a shape of you
The finest little chapel
I ever knew

From Ivan the poetry man
An immigrant from Croatia lost in the promised land

TIRE YOU WONDERING WHY YOU RECEIVED OUR NEWSLETTER
If you've received this and are wondering why, it's probably because someone like you know has nominated you! We hope you are! It's a good read, but, if you don't want to receive On The Verge again, send (post or fax) back the cover sheet saying you would like to be taken off our mailing list and we will happily oblige.

Tel: 02 9358 6577 Web: www.thewaysidechapel.com Email: mail@thewaysidechapel.com

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The Wayside Chapel