

SHARE SNAPSHOTS

SPRING 2009



Abdulkadir Muse, Premier John Brumby MP, Special Adviser to the Premier on Victoria-Asia business relations Mr Hong Lim MP and Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development Ms Maxine Morand MP. Photo by Shane Bell

Young Australians work on making poverty history

Abdulkadir Muse is the winner of the 2008 Connections UnitingCare Anti-Poverty Award. The awards, to recognise young Victorians and Tasmanians (aged 16 to 30) working to eradicate poverty, locally, nationally or internationally were presented by the Premier of Victoria, John Brumby. The overall winner receives a grant of up to \$4000 to continue their work and others receive encouragement awards of up to \$1000. The SHARE Community Appeal was one of the Anti-Poverty Award sponsors.

The 2008 winner, Abdulkadir Muse, came to Australia with his family as a Somali refugee after the civil war. He has since spent his time planning and delivering education and social engagement programs for young Africans, as well as advocating through the United Nations for Somalia to sign the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. See page 6 for more of Abdulkadir's story. Encouragement Awards were also presented to Emil Kogan, a young entrepreneur who founded Embrace

Education to help students from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and to Fiona Stenning, who organised the Uthando Project at her school to help children in Kwa Zulu Natal whose parents are affected by HIV AIDS.

The 2009 awards will be presented during Anti-Poverty week in October. For more information about the awards visit www.connections.org.au/anti-poverty. The SHARE Community Appeal is the major sponsor of the Anti-Poverty awards.

From the Director



We saw devastation wreaked on Victoria by the bushfires in Kinglake, Marysville, north-east Victoria, Gippsland and Bendigo, and we

think of those struggling to rebuild homes, schools and communities. Thank you to each of our donors. You helped us raise and deliver more than \$1.5 million through the Uniting Church National Bushfire Disaster Appeal, and we will let you know how this is used to support bushfire survivors in a bushfire update shortly.

Not long after the bushfires, we launched our SHARE Winter Appeal, supporting those in need in Victoria and Tasmania. As part of this, we asked Anne Garrow, director of SouthPort UnitingCare, to tell us about her experience and about the stresses faced by homeless and local families. We had a great response from our donors.

At SHARE, we are inspired by the wonderful work done in so many communities.

Some of the \$1 million-plus we raise each year is distributed through CommunityCare food vouchers and through SHARE grants to community service agencies, which are highlighted on page 5.

Our sincere thanks to our donors, our 7,330 volunteers and our 4,100 staff. You are changing the lives of more than 350,000 each year in Victoria and Tasmania.

Many thanks and kind regards,



David Hickey
Director of Appeals

Appeal updates

SHARE Appeals

Winter

The Winter Appeal 2009 was designed to help with emergency relief in Victoria and Tasmania. The appeal highlighted work of two agencies, South Port UnitingCare and Ballarat UnitingCare Outreach. The appeal raised \$365,248.66 – an amazing response! Your generosity has allowed us to fund 46 SHARE grant applications. See page 5 for details.

Christmas

The Christmas Appeal 2008 targeted emergency relief at UnitingCare agencies during the festive season, particularly for families feeling the effect of the economic crisis. The appeal raised \$219,427.86, which helped us fill 65 urgent requests from agencies and congregations for food vouchers during the Christmas period.

Disaster Appeals

Bushfire

The SHARE Appeal coordinated the National Bushfire Disaster Appeal on behalf of the church. So far, \$1,956,744.09 has been raised and more than \$1.5 million delivered to UnitingCare and other community agencies supporting bushfire survivors.

Fiji Floods

In January, Fiji experienced its worst flooding in 50 years. The appeal raised \$14,017.45, which is being directed through UnitingWorld and its partners to ensure the money is used to alleviate poverty.

Burma Cyclone

In May 2008, Burma was devastated by a cyclone. A generous response by Uniting Church members has allowed us to send \$111,645.78 to the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) to help with immediate emergency assistance and supplying early recovery material, including food, water, shelter, basic household items, tools and seeds.

China Earthquake

A fortnight after Burma's cyclone, generous Victorian and Tasmanian donors raised \$56,553.15 for victims of China's earthquake. Donations, channelled through NCCA, have helped rebuild homes and infrastructure destroyed by the earthquake.

Other Appeals

Lenten

The Lenten Appeal raised \$77,888.75 in 2009. That has contributed funding to Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism, Frontier Services High Country Patrol, Uniting Through Faith and UnitingCare Tasmania, Bridgewater & Gagebrook Mission.

Thank you for your donations!!!

Andy's Café dishes out food and hope to Mildura's homeless

Thirteen years ago Delta was strong and healthy, living in Melbourne, working full time loading and unloading trucks. Then he lost his job – he still doesn't know why – and couldn't get work. His savings exhausted, he couldn't pay the rent and was forced to live on the streets. For the first time in his adult life he was alone, helpless and felt there was no way out. "I had nowhere to live and nowhere to go," Delta says. "I'll tell you, it's a bad feeling." He was living rough, begging to buy food and was verbally, physically and mentally abused. His health deteriorated and he felt all he had worked for was lost.

"I had an old pair of shoes, an old pair of socks and trousers and I was cold, like an iceberg," he says. "I slept on park benches, under bridges, anywhere. "I finished up in a hostel in Griffith, New South Wales, where I was kicked, bashed and left on the side of the road to die.

"I've seen people being murdered, bashed, on drugs and everything else."

For almost 13 years, Delta hitched from city to city, moving around in an attempt to get his life back on track. Eventually he asked his family for help, and went to live in Mildura. Because of his poor health he is entitled to a disability support

pension, which contributes to rent and food.

But he is haunted by his past. Delta says he visits WeCare and Andy's Cafe at St Andrews Uniting Church, Mildura, for a decent feed, a cup of tea, a sympathetic ear and, sometimes, to meet others who have also been homeless.

Margaret Bennett, of Andy's Café, says as well as providing support, the café distributes food parcels donated



Mildura's St Andrews Uniting Church has run Andy's Café since 2004, and serves 35 to 50 meals a week. The SHARE Appeal supports the café and provides food vouchers through the CommunityCare program.



Photo by Stacey Merlin, Sunraysia Daily

by St Andrews Uniting Church and SHARE Appeal food vouchers. "It would not be possible to maintain Andy's Café without the support of the SHARE Appeal," Mrs Bennett says. "We're grateful for that help." Delta says he feels lucky to have found refuge with his family. Others are not so fortunate. He says he's met at least a dozen people living on the streets of Mildura as a result of family conflict, drug and alcohol dependence, poor mental health or losing a job. "I know what they are going through," he says.

This is an edited version of an article by Liz O'Brien that first appeared in the Sunraysia Daily, reprinted with permission.

Seeking asylum, finding shelter

From 1997, people seeking asylum in Australia had no right to work, no access to Medicare or benefits and were entirely dependent on charities for survival. *Finding Shelter* tells the story of Hotham Mission's Asylum Seeker Project, which provides practical support, while lobbying for fairer laws.

The Hotham Mission's Asylum Seeker Project provides housing, professional and volunteer support, monthly cash support and some assistance with bills. It was established in 1996 to work with asylum seekers waiting to find out if the Australian Government would accept their claim for refugee status. Thousands of asylum seekers were caught up in the introduction of Bridging Visa E, which effectively stripped them of any right to work while denying access to government support. These asylum seekers, condemned to extreme poverty, were entirely dependent on charities for their survival.

Finding Shelter, published in June 2009, powerfully documents the disempowerment as well as the severity of the emotional and psychological problems experienced by those on Bridging Visa E and makes the case for a fairer, more humane system.

One asylum seeker, Jamaal, writes: "I was granted a Bridging Visa class E which had no work permit. I lost my job because of that. If I don't have permit to work, how can I work? They started to narrow the thing around me.

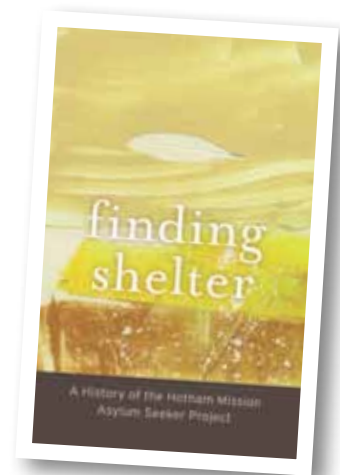
"The friend that I was sharing the house with, he could handle that for maybe one month and a few weeks but he needed someone to help pay the rent. And I couldn't do that. I lost the place where I lived.

"So I lost my work. I lost the place where I live. I can't feed myself. No income. Simple as that. I can't send anything to my family. Also sending that news to my family was a big challenge, I couldn't tell them. It would be something destroying for them."

Human Rights Disability



Discrimination Commissioner, Graeme Innes, who launched the book, writes in its foreword: "Over these years, the Asylum Seeker Project was one of the few organisations who recognised the extreme vulnerability of many asylum seekers in the community, those without work rights accommodation and healthcare, often reduced to poverty and destitution while awaiting the outcome of protection claims."



Finding Shelter costs \$20 plus postage. To order a copy, phone (03) 9326 8343. All proceeds help asylum seekers survive in the community. *Finding Shelter* is also sold at **ASP**, 2/579 Queensberry St, North Melbourne; **Unichurch Books**, 130 Little Collins St, Melbourne; and **Readings**, 309 Lygon St, Carlton.

Mr Innes also writes of the groundswell of community opposition to these policies and of the dedication and hard work of volunteers, community workers and concerned citizens who succeeded in convincing the Rudd Government to scrap Temporary Protection Visas.

The Asylum Seeker Project has received a \$10,000 SHARE grant in the 2009 funding round.

SHARE Community Appeal Grants 2009

| | | | |
|---|------------------|---|------------------|
| Youth Services | \$ 32,150 | Drought | \$10,400 |
| Hopetoun Secondary College | \$ 2,250 | Wimmera UnitingCare | \$10,400 |
| Open House Christian Involvement Centres | \$ 10,000 | | |
| UnitingCare Cutting Edge | \$ 5,000 | | |
| Wimmera UnitingCare | \$ 14,900 | | |
| | | Children and Family | \$55,550 |
| Meals Programs | \$107,000 | Bendigo Family & Financial Services Inc | \$ 9,800 |
| Bendigo UnitingCare Outreach | \$ 26,000 | Connections UnitingCare | \$11,500 |
| Christian Emergency Food Centre | \$ 8,000 | Wesley Centre for Life Enrichment | \$10,000 |
| Combined Churches Caring | \$ 5,000 | Wimmera UnitingCare | \$24,250 |
| Echuca Moama Uniting Church | \$ 2,500 | | |
| Prahran Mission UnitingCare | \$ 10,000 | Community Support | \$275,500 |
| St Andrews Uniting Church, Mildura | \$ 3,000 | Broadmeadows UnitingCare | \$ 12,000 |
| St Kilda UnitingCare | \$ 15,000 | Church of All Nations | \$ 10,000 |
| UnitingCare Community Options | \$ 7,000 | Creative Ministries Arts Fund | \$ 5,000 |
| UnitingCare Ballarat | \$ 22,000 | Kildonan UnitingCare | \$ 10,000 |
| Warrnambool Uniting Church | \$ 3,500 | Kilmany UnitingCare | \$ 5,000 |
| The Listening Post | \$ 5,000 | Lifeline Ballarat | \$ 13,500 |
| | | UnitingCare Bridgewater Centre | \$ 10,000 |
| Emergency Relief and Material Aid | \$126,720 | UnitingCare Cutting Edge | \$ 15,000 |
| Broadmeadows UnitingCare | \$ 12,000 | UnitingCare Geelong | \$ 30,000 |
| Healesville Interchurch Community Care Inc. | \$ 6,720 | UnitingCare Sunshine Mission | \$ 35,000 |
| Hotham Mission Asylum Seeker Project | \$ 10,000 | UnitingCare Tasmania | \$ 50,000 |
| LINC Church Services Network Inc | \$ 7,000 | UnitingCare Tasmania / Bridgewater & | \$ 50,000 |
| UnitingCare Ballarat Outreach | \$ 15,000 | Gagebrook Community Service | |
| UnitingCare Sunshine Mission | \$ 15,000 | Wesley Centre for Life Enrichment | \$ 15,000 |
| UnitingCare Wodonga | \$ 15,000 | Wimmera UnitingCare | \$ 15,000 |
| UnitingCare Burwood Centre | \$ 6,000 | | |
| UnitingCare Harrison | \$ 5,000 | | |
| Wesley Mission Melbourne | \$ 15,000 | | |
| Eastern Emergency Relief Program | \$ 20,000 | Total | \$607,320 |



Thanks to our generous donors we have been able to support these wonderful community programs

Making it home for African asylum seekers

Abdulkadir Muse, 29, is a tireless advocate for young people. He works in Melbourne's inner west with homeless and troubled young people, particularly refugee teenagers who have fled their homes in Africa seeking asylum in Australia. Abdulkadir was just nine when, with his mother and siblings, the civil war forced him to flee his home in Somalia clutching a couple of belongings in a plastic bag. By the time he arrived in Australia in 1995, he was 15, and his family was reunited with his father, located by the Red Cross, when he was 18. He completed his VCE in 2002, went on to finish a Bachelor of Arts in Community Development at Victoria University and is now studying a post graduate diploma in Applied Human Rights at RMIT University.

Abdulkadir won the \$4000 Connections UnitingCare



Anti-Poverty Award in 2008, sponsored in part by the SHARE Community Appeal, and presented by Premier John Brumby.

The Anti-Poverty Award has made it possible for him to pursue his post-graduate studies, which he fits in around his work as an African youth worker in the western region, his volunteer work in a diversionary program designed to support young people and his work chairing the Footscray Youth Housing Group. "I'm hoping to continue to work in advocacy, for human rights, especially for refugees, asylum seekers and Indigenous Australians," Abdulkadir says. "To work for changes to policies, to make the argument for fundamental human rights, particularly for disadvantaged young people. "We take so much for granted. It's very hard for young Africans here. They can feel very isolated, and it's hard for them to get access to education and employment."

Volunteers give Bridgewater vision momentum

UnitingCare Tasmania has an inspiring vision for its rundown Bridgewater Gagebrook centre. The centre, located in one of the most disadvantaged areas in the state, offers emergency relief and limited financial counselling. But UnitingCare Tasmania's CEO Lindy O'Neill wants to see this extended to offer crucial child and family support services. "We want to put together a very basic program to tackle issues as simple and as complex as literacy, budgeting, shopping and making your money go further in the supermarket, food preparation and

simple recipes," Ms O'Neill says. Emergency relief service coordinator Jo Kelly says the program, which is supported by the SHARE Community Appeal, is surviving on the dedication and enthusiasm of five volunteers and she'd welcome the energy and input of many, many more. "Without them, it couldn't be done," Mrs Kelly says. "They just step in where they are needed, they talk to our clients about budgets, and they give me incredible support." Many UnitingCare Bridgewater Gagebrook clients are surviving on Centrelink benefits, which barely

account for higher housing, food and other expenses. "If just one thing out of the ordinary happens, such as a car breaking down, they struggle to meet those costs," Mrs Kelly says. In the longer term, Ms O'Neill aims to improve the amenity of the centre to allow for a playgroup or some space where parents can get access to support and information, while they watch their children play. "The funding we get from SHARE is keeping our emergency relief going and we are hoping that with some of the extra funding we've been given that we will be able to offer these other programs," Ms O'Neill says.

The magical \$10,000 haircut



From Gandalf to Ghandi: Jim takes it all off for a good cause.

Jim Milne, who once bore a staggering resemblance to grand wizards Dumbledore, Merlin and Gandalf, has made the ultimate sacrifice to raise \$10,000 for the SHARE Community Appeal.

Jim, who manages budgets and shared services at the Victorian and Tasmanian Synod of the Uniting Church, pledged to reveal the man

colleagues and family members. The beard, a constant companion of almost 30 years, disappeared.

As reported in the Autumn edition of *SHARE Snapshots* Jim encouraged his family, friends and colleagues to sponsor Jim's Big Shave, raising \$10,000 for the SHARE Community Appeal.

June Milne says that she thinks

“It was the best mother’s day present I have ever received!” - June Milne

behind the beard to make his mother happy and to raise money for services that support disadvantaged Victorians and Tasmanians.

And, as a special gift, Jim gave his mother, June, the best Mothers' Day present she says she has ever received, by hosting Jim's Big Shave. That's right. Jim created his own magic on Wednesday, 6 May before an enthralled audience including

her son now looks like a movie star.

“It was the best Mother's Day present I have ever received!” she says.

The \$10,000 raised by Jim's Big Shave will be used by SHARE Community Appeal to support a variety of programs, to address urgent need and to enhance the quality of support offered to disadvantaged Victorians and Tasmanians.

SHARE Award for early childhood educators



UnitingCare Children's Service childcare and education staff can apply for awards of up to \$2000 to help them gain early childhood qualifications.

The SHARE Community Appeal developed the awards to create educational opportunities for UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania staff. The awards recognise the vital role our childcare and education staff play in the health, education and wellbeing of young children in Victoria and Tasmania.

For more information or to download an application form, please visit www.shareappeal.org.au/award

Support SHARE while you're shopping at Ritchies

Ritchies IGA Supermarkets has a program to donate a percentage of the money spent by its customers to a customer-nominated charity.

That makes it possible for those who shop at Ritchies IGA Supermarkets to support the SHARE Community Appeal by doing their supermarket shopping.

Encourage your friends and family to consider joining the Ritchies Community Benefit Program and nominating SHARE. The more SHARE supporters shop at Ritchies, the greater the size of the donation to SHARE each month.

Ritchies Community Benefit Card holders are also eligible for weekly specials (items with a Community Benefit logo) that can save shoppers between 5 cents and \$5 per item.

- Fill in an application form for Ritchies' Community Benefit Card Program. These forms are available at Ritchies IGA Supermarkets. You do not have to provide your name or address.
- Enter the SHARE Community Appeal as the recipient of a donation from Ritchies.
- Use your individually barcoded Ritchies' Community Benefit Card as soon as you get it. You can choose to take your card as a key tag or plastic card for your wallet.
- Each time you shop at Ritchie's, present the card or key tag to the cashier. Each time the barcode is scanned, 1% of the amount you spend will be allocated to SHARE.