



Keep in Touch

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Sisters of Charity Newsletter - Partners in Mission

Vol. 1 No. 1

October 2000

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first edition of "K.I.T.". Through this Newsletter we hope to "keep in touch" with all with whom we are in partnership. Our hope is that this will be a two-way communication touching on the fundamentals of what we share.

Since last year's "Gathering" I have come to a deeper realisation of the truth that each person has his or her own charism, and that this personal charism resonates with charisms of various groups in the Church and beyond.

At the 1998 National Symposium Towards Understanding of Charism in Catholic Schools charism was defined as "a gift of the Spirit to the Church for its life and mission." The two dimensions of "gift" and "purpose" are both significant.

The Charism of the Sisters of Charity is "to bring to each person the love, tenderness and concern of Christ for the poor, seeing Christ in everyone we serve." (Norm 25 of the Constitutions of the Sisters of Charity).

As this is a gift of the Spirit for those in greatest need it is not confined to those of us who are Sisters of Charity. It is a much-needed charism in our society and time. My own hope and faith have been strengthened so often in conversation with those I have met in our various ministries and in the wider society, people who are deeply committed to just this charism.



Since 1838 when the first five Sisters of Charity arrived in Australia we have been in partnership with others to fulfil the Mission of Jesus. Each of you is engaged with us in this mission and we are enormously grateful for your generosity of spirit and commitment which give us life and increase our confidence as we move forward in hope into a "future not our own".

May K.I.T. strengthen the faith and hope, and especially the love of each person in this circle of dialogue, and may each of us participate in the dialogue by reading, reflection and by contributions to K.I.T.

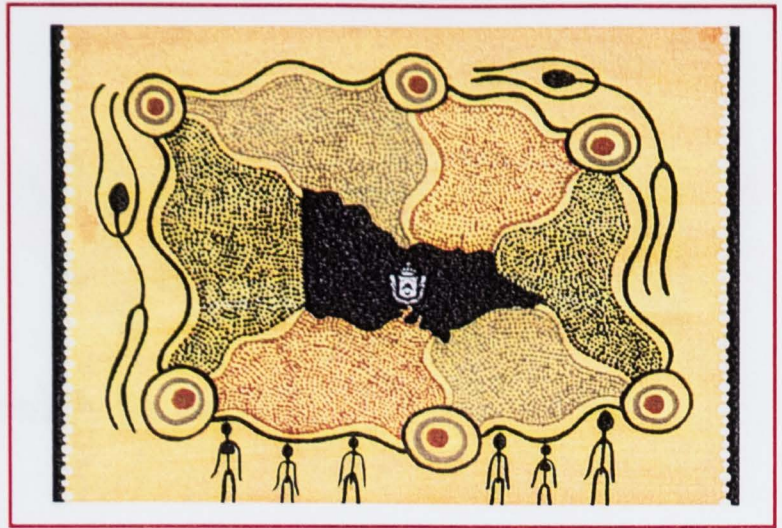
Annette Cunliffe

Sr Annette Cunliffe RSC
Congregational Leader

NAIDOC WEEK and RECONCILIATION CELEBRATIONS St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne

St Vincent's Hospital foyer echoed with the rhythms of traditional Aboriginal music as Aboriginal Elders, community members, staff from the Sisters of Charity Health Service (SCHS) were joined by Aboriginal children from Hutton Street Primary School and St Brigid's North Fitzroy for the celebrations.

The area was decorated with Aboriginal artefacts and a painting by Jacqui Stewart (Koori Liaison Officer) depicting the relationship between the SCHS and the Victorian Aboriginal communities. Also included was a framed print of the crucifix brought to Australia by the first Sisters of Charity in 1838. This crucifix had been commissioned with the knowledge that the Sisters would be ministering to the indigenous population as well as to settlers of European background.



A Celebration of Reconciliation

Senior elder James Wandin paid respect to the traditional owners and welcomed those gathered. Reg Blow provided a reflection on reconciliation and Ella Pitt introduced the group to music from the Torres Strait. The Elder of St Vincent's, Clive Wellington (Executive Director), responded on behalf of the SCHS and invited the children to come forward to receive tokens from the Elders. The soft toy kangaroos and emus represented the hope of moving forward together.

Following the Gathering of Sisters of Charity and some of our Partners in Mission in 1999 interest was expressed in continuing the conversation about living the Mission today.

A group of Sisters met in June to take up this challenge. It was decided to invite interested co-workers to join in the conversation.

As this second meeting was held at Liverpool, Sisters working in the area invited any interested co-workers to join in and explore the idea. The result of that meeting held on 15th July, was the meeting held on 1st August.

Partners in Mission

There were twelve present and after reflecting on some thoughts of Oscar Romero about the reign of God and the mission of Jesus, all shared their story highlighting what was life-giving for them.

This proved a humbling, moving experience and we came to realise that in our everyday activities we are indeed carrying on the mission of Jesus, and each person is, in numerous ways, bringing life and hope to so many different situations.

We felt energised by the sharing and agreed to meet in October and to invite other Partners in Mission to join with us.

Congratulations

*The Gold Coast's new \$48 million St Vincent's Hospital and Health Service Robina was officially opened by Queensland Health Minister Wendy Edmond on August 25th.
The hospital was blessed by Auxiliary Bishop Michael Putney.*

Mary Aikenhead and her Followers

On 10th September 1816 Mary Aikenhead and a companion began visiting the poor in their own homes. This was the first time nuns were seen outside their convents, actively engaged in the service of the sick and suffering. Her earlier dream was now a reality.

Sister M Maurus Tierney, an Australian Daughter of Mary Aikenhead shared her Foundress' love of and practical care for the poor.

Sister M Maurus served breakfast and dinner each day to between eighty and a hundred men in Tusculum Lane at Potts Point for over thirty years.



She operated from a kitchen at the end of the lane, which was originally part of the yard of No 80 Victoria Street, a premises owned by the Congregation till recently.

For the convenience of the men she petitioned the local Council in 1940 for permission to erect a shed in the lane. This permission was subsequently granted subject to certain conditions. Any women, who turned up, she brought into an adjacent room to be attended to.

Sister Maurus also visited Long Bay gaol every Friday and Sunday to instruct the men and women and to assist the Chaplain in preparation for the Mass and the administration of the Sacraments.

Sharing in the Mission of the Sisters of Charity

The Sisters of Charity Foundation Limited

In order to promote, in perpetuity, the mission of the Sisters of Charity, specifically in the service of the poor in ministries outside its hospitals and schools, the Congregational Leader and Council made the decision to set up the Sisters of Charity Foundation.

The Sisters of Charity Foundation is a public non-profit company. The broad aim and purpose of the Foundation is to:

** Assist in the creation and nurturing of ministries identified with the Sisters of Charity, particularly those that impact on poor and under-served in the community.*

** Make grants for charitable public purposes that promote the mission of the Sisters of Charity.*

** Make community investments with the overall object of maximising social good, and to provide access to capital for groups often bypassed by more traditional funding institutions.*

** Provide low-interest loans to non-profit organisations, and for projects of benefit to the community, which are unable to qualify for conventional financing.*

By making a donation to the Sisters of Charity Foundation you become a partner with them in responding to the Gospel message to alleviate poverty, loneliness, ignorance and oppression.

Donations over \$2 are Tax deductible.

Further information may be obtained from, or donations forwarded to:
Sisters of Charity Foundation Limited
P.O. Box 42, Paddington NSW 2021
Ph: (02) 9361 0499 Fax(02) 9361 3434

2000 JUBILEE FORMATION FOR SISTERS FOR CHARITY COLLEGE BOARD, DIRECTORS AND LEADERSHIP TEAMS

This was the seventh Seminar conducted by the Sisters of Charity Education Council (SCEC). The focus for all seven seminars has been the educational mission of the Sisters of Charity in their four Colleges: St Vincent's College, Potts Point, St Columba's College, Essendon, Mt St Michael's College, Ashgrove and Catholic Ladies College, Eltham. The Mount Carmel College, Sandy Bay Leadership Team has also been invited to participate in all but the first seminar.

This year's Seminar program was based on the theme: **Vision for Educational Leadership: Our Students and their Future.**

In the light of the evaluation of the 1999 Seminar the SCEC decided to focus the seminar around two keynote addresses. Sr Annette Cunliffe RSC, Congregational Leader, delivered the opening keynote address. Sr Annette suggested four questions that needed answering in developing authentic and alternative models for leadership in our colleges. These questions related to appropriate leadership models, prophetic leadership, a hopefilled future for our students and the values we are called to courageously promote. Sr Annette's address was pivotal in the overwhelming success of the Seminar.

The second keynote address was presented by Sr Helga Neidhart RSC, and was followed by four panel presentations by Ms Patricia Ryan, Ms Leonie Keaney, Mr Peter Hennessy and Sr Colleen Jackson RSC. The theme of the address and presentations paralleled that of Sr Annette's address.

St Columba's College led the Liturgies and hosted a tour of the College, including its extensive building re-development.

The 80 delegates at the Seminar confirmed in their evaluation that the 2000 Seminar more than met their expectations in terms of keynote addresses, liturgies, panel presentations, venue, organisation.

In 2001 the SCEC Seminar will be held in Sydney at St Vincent's College, Potts Point.

Long Service with a difference

Ms Narelle Mullins, Principal, Mt St Michaels College, Ashgrove is currently on Long Service Leave and is visiting Southside Education Centre twice a week doing whatever she can to assist. This is in response to a request she heard some months earlier while attending Mass at South Brisbane.

Recognised last year as a "school" Southside Education Centre operates in a house and has an enrolment of 55 girls with a daily attendance rate of 25.

The school is designed for secondary school girls who have been excluded from mainstream schools.

She says typically the girls

- ◆ live a nomadic life
- ◆ have a very short attention span
- ◆ know first hand the world of drugs and alcohol
- ◆ are expert shoplifters
- ◆ have very poor literacy and numeracy skills
- ◆ demonstrate a most colourful language of survival.

But

- ◆ deep down want to achieve
- ◆ recognise in their own way those who genuinely care for them.

For Narelle, Colleen who runs Southside personifies a modern day Mary Aikenhead and she is looking at ways that Mt St Michael's may be able to forge some kind of partnership, offering support.

We look forward to hearing more from Narelle about the partnership.

A FIRST FOR AUSTRALIA

St Vincent's Hospital, Toowoomba has entered into a partnership with Grand Central, the largest shopping centre in Toowoomba, to offer a 'Parenting Room'. It is staffed by specialist midwives from St Vincent's and is funded and promoted by Grand Central.

It is part of the mission and philosophy at St Vincent's to form partnerships or alliances that provide benefits to the community while progressing the reputation of St Vincent's as a hospital of excellence, strength and generosity

More about other such initiatives later.



Dr Dennis Campbell, CEO St Vincent's Hospital Toowoomba, Representative from Grand Central and three Midwives from St Vincent's at the opening of the Parent Room at Grand Central.

Jubilee 2000 Plaque Unveiled

A plaque depicting the themes of Jubilee 2000 was unveiled in a section of the Vincent's Hospital Launceston garden on their Foundation Day, 7th August 2000. Staff and volunteers at St Vincent's had worked together to raise funds to remodel the area which was dedicated in honour of Jubilee 2000.

Another initiative at SVHL is a weekly mission report to Service Managers and staff via their newsletter, 'The Voice'.

Project for Homelessness

At the *Sisters of Charity Gathering* last year a number of those present expressed an interest in commencing a Conversation on Homelessness. These Conversations commenced in Melbourne in October 1999 and the group has met regularly since that time. As a result of their discussions and in the light of the three fold purpose of the group: consciousness-raising, sharing interests, and enabling of participative processes in mutual mission and ministry with the homeless, they decided that funds be sought to appoint a Project Officer. Specifically they wanted to determine gaps in service provision to the Homeless in Melbourne and to make recommendations to the Group on the possibilities in addressing these gaps.

The Group has been successful in securing a grant for a Project Officer.

He/she will be appointed for approximately 60 hours over a six-week period to undertake research and analysis of:

- * *current service provision*
- * *information on gaps in services to the target group*
- * *possible funding sources*
- * *possible mission involvement*

We commend the Gathering Group on Homelessness on this initiative which is due for completion in late October or early November.

SISTERS OF CHARITY OUTREACH TASMANIA

Early this year Sr Colleen Jackson RSC was missioned to Outreach Tasmania. This is an initiative of the Sisters of Charity to help the people on North-West Coast of Tasmania. Colleen is a psychologist and is offering counselling and support to those who are experiencing grief, loss or trauma. She also provides education and training seminars to help in understanding the trauma and how to assist those who are affected.

A recent article in the North-West Coast daily newspaper, *The Advocate* speaks of Colleen's recent visit to schools in Oregon, Texas, Ohio and Colorado to see how they prepare for crisis and her belief that a similar service would benefit the North-West Coast. The article goes on to talk about her hope of setting up a crisis team to respond to crises in local schools and colleges and to establish teams of grief companions to assist the people in more remote rural areas.

INTERNATIONAL FOOD DAY Catholic Ladies College Eltham

Kevin Meese from the Catholic Missions Office arranged for Father Vincent of Uganda to visit Year 8 students at CLC. Father Vincent spoke to the girls about the reality of life for many Ugandans living in poverty.

As a follow up exercise the Year 8 Social Justice Group with the assistance of senior students and the Year and Fundraising Co-ordinator organised an *International Food Day*. Those taking part bought a *Mission Partner's badge* for \$2 plus an extra \$1 to cover the cost of the food. Each badge had a number on the back and as they entered the hall twenty-five numbers was called out randomly. These 25 students sat at the centre table and were served hotdogs, doughnuts and cans of drink.

The remaining students queued to receive a cup of water and a meagre bowl of rice, (the last were only served water) before sitting around the outside of the centre table. The girls soon became aware of the injustice that was being carried out and were invited to voice their discontent to the group.

Through this experience the students felt they had come closer to understanding the frustration, anger and suffering felt by their brothers and sisters living in poverty.

This part of the exercise was followed by a talk from Kevin Meese during which he showed the students pictures of the Philippines. He pointed out that many rice farmers are losing their entire livelihood due to exploitation by foreign (including Australian) mining companies.

MT CARMEL CELEBRATES

Monday, 17th July, was a day of celebration for Mount Carmel College, Sandy Bay, Tasmania. The celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in the Year of Jubilee, had a particular focus of encouraging all to respond to the call of Jubilee, in the spirit of our founders, the Sisters of Charity.

The day commenced with Mass, led by Archbishop Adrian Doyle and attended by all students from Kindergarten to Year 10. Following the Eucharist a statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was blessed and placed in a newly created garden at the College and a climbing rose bush planted.

The traditional annual entire school concert was followed by a barbecue lunch which was prepared by parents and friends and enjoyed by staff and students.



To mark Jubilee Week, Mount Carmel launched and raised its huge Jubilee Banner. This fine work of art had been co-ordinated by Tasmanian artist Melissa O'Rourke and completed with student help.

For your diary

Australian Museum Exhibition 2001

The Sisters of Charity Exhibition at the Australian Museum is scheduled for June/July 2001.

The Exhibition will cover the following topics:

- * *Historical aspects/challenges facing women in the 1800's*
- * *4-6 individuals to tell their stories*
- * *Incongruous situations faced by the Sisters of Charity*
- * *Future of Sisters of Charity*
- * *Working together with laity for one community*

LIVERPOOL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Two years ago a School Council was established in the All Saints Parish at Liverpool to ensure that a curriculum continuum of quality Catholic Education was offered to the 2,700 students attending the schools. Its membership was made up of representatives of the four schools in the parish namely St. Mary's Primary, St. Mary's Girls' High, Patrician Brothers Boys High schools and All Saints Catholic College, Casula, the Years 11 & 12 Co educational College.

After consultation with the appropriate bodies it was decided to change the names of the three Liverpool schools to All Saints Primary, All Saints Girls' College 7-10 and All Saints Boys' College 7-10. Uniforms were also changed so that the four schools were similar, making it less expensive for parents when the students moved schools for the next stage of their education.

The changes have been well received. The Liverpool community now has no doubt that the Parish and the four schools are one offering first class education permeated with Gospel values.

Contributors:

- ▶ *Sr Annette Cunliffe RSC, Congregational Leader*
- ▶ *Narelle Mullins, Mt St Michael's College*
- ▶ *Anita Ferguson, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne*
- ▶ *Michele Hugonnet, Chair, Sisters of Charity Education Council*
- ▶ *Sr Dorothy Maher RSC, Liverpool*
- ▶ *Sr Pauline Nicholson RSC, St Vincent's Hospital Toowoomba*
- ▶ *Maura Kerr, Mt Carmel College*
- ▶ *Dianne Kennedy, Sisters of Charity Education Council*
- ▶ *Naomi Dore, Catholic Ladies College*
- ▶ *Sr Maureen Walters RSC, Melbourne*
- ▶ *Rose Mary Luttrell, St Vincent's Hospital Launceston*

October 2000

From the Editor

*Thank you to all those who accepted Sr Linda Ferrington's invitation to gather information for this newsletter to Partners in Mission, **K.I.T. (Keep in Touch)** and who have sent in contributions to this first edition.*

I am also grateful to those people I approached and who have responded with articles. I would particularly like to thank Ms Guilaine Buckley from the Sisters of Charity Archives for her assistance in providing information on Sister Maurus and to Ms Melinda Gutierrez for the production of this periodical.

WANTED **Items of interest for the** **next edition of K.I.T.**

If you have any story that you would like to share with our partners, please send it to me. Similarly, if your facility has a special event or is celebrating a milestone or has some plans for the future I would love to hear about it. If you have photos to accompany your article all the better.

K.I.T. will be published four times a year with the next edition due out before Christmas.

I look forward to receiving lots of articles by the beginning of November.

Maria Wheeler RSC
Editor

Keep In Touch (K.I.T.)

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K.I.T.

Sisters of Charity Australia



*The love of Christ
urges us*



Sisters of Charity Advocacy Network

*The love of Christ
urges us*

Welcome to



Please visit our website:
www.rscan.org

*For further information, or to become a
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Ramsgate Beach NSW 2217
Phone/Fax: (02) 9583 9049
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Sisters of Charity Advocacy Network

The Sisters of Charity Advocacy Network (SCAN):

- addresses major social justice issues
- provides the opportunity for an immediate response to particular issues
- acts with and for the oppressed and marginalised
- has the numbers to make a difference

Rationale:

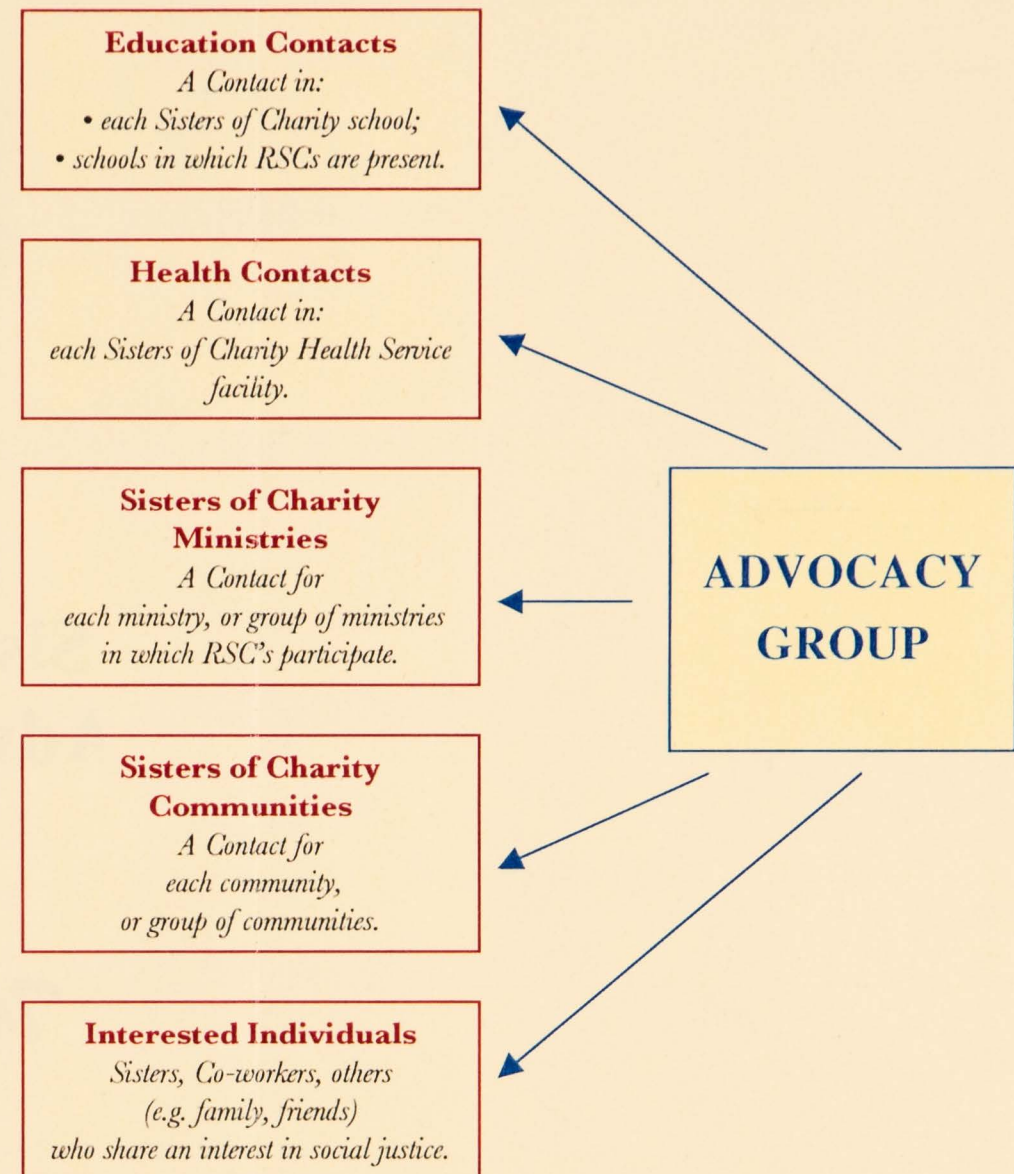
- much information on social justice issues is available, but sometimes people are overwhelmed and/or do not have time to read it
- social justice issues are always arising and are often ongoing, people need information and time to prioritise, but there can be too much information and not enough time to prioritise
- for advocacy to be effective, numbers are needed - SCAN provides these numbers

Strategy:

- bimonthly, members receive a Fact and Information Sheet and an Action Sheet for the current social justice issue
- alternate months, members receive an Update Sheet informing them of the results of action taken by the Sisters of Charity Network

Membership:

- Sisters of Charity
- a Contact in each Sisters of Charity school, and schools in which a Sister of Charity is present
- a Contact in each Sisters of Charity Health Service facility
- a Contact for each ministry in which Sisters of Charity participate
- any person who is committed to social justice and is interested in being a part of SCAN, as an individual or as a Contact for the organisation in which she or he works or is associated



SCAN