

## Issue 33 - Summer

Highlights in this issue include:

A tasty summer salad recipe.

Prince's positive rap.

More on our work with young people inside.



NEWSLETTER OF GOOD SHEPHERD YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICE

# Meeting the needs of pre-teens

## A new study suggests that pre-teens require more creative strategies in providing support services

"Pre-teens" have been targeted by advertising marketers for years. Canny promoters have long recognised that children aged from 8 to 12 are easily tempted by new fashions and trends because while they are just beginning to assert their own personalities, they still desire to be included in a larger group.

The unique impulses and needs of this age group – alongside the fact that they wield a great influence over their parents' spending habits – make them the perfect target for promoters and advertisers. Yet a new study suggests these specific needs also create a gap in appropriate support services.

"There are services that target factors which may impact on pre-teens, like family and child services," says researcher Jacinta Waugh from Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service's Social Policy and Research Unit. "But there's very little that specifically caters to this age group."

**The best way to support pre-teens through the various difficulties they encounter is to develop a collaborative approach between services**

Ms Waugh and her research colleague Rachel Close recently undertook a scoping study into the services available for pre-teens. A scoping study is a line of research which, rather than having pre-defined goals, deliberately has a loose methodology so researchers can "follow their nose" and see what the research uncovers.

These studies often throw up unexpected findings, which then leads to new directions for further research.

"Probably the most surprising thing we found was the tension between the different stages of development of pre-teens," says Ms Waugh. "They've got this desire for independence, but they still have a heavy reliance on their families and peers. They're not quite young children, and not quite young adults."

Ms Waugh believes the best way to support pre-teens through the various difficulties they encounter is to develop a collaborative approach between services, with more emphasis on the resources and knowledge contained in schools.

"Schools understand the needs of pre-teens really well, while community organisations like ours understand the needs of families, and how economic status can influence educational outcomes of these children," she says. "We need more cooperation between these agencies to meet the unique needs of this age group."

**To support important research just like this, please visit [www.goodshepvic.org.au/donate](http://www.goodshepvic.org.au/donate)**

## Letter from the CEO

Welcome to the summer Shepherd's Voice! This edition is full of stories about the work we do with young people to assist them to take control of their lives. Work we simply would not be able to do without the wonderful generosity of all our supporters.

Many of the young people you'll read about here have come from terribly difficult backgrounds and yet with support have shown great potential for the future. Prince Rukundo has embraced rapping as a means to set a positive example to his siblings and peers; young people from our St Albans programs trekked the 1000 steps walk in the Dandenongs; and Paul, who has experienced a number of foster carers, is now studying and saving money to move out of his last foster home.

And I'd like to make special mention of the young people at Brandsma House, Whitefriars College. I am very grateful to those boys who have supported our work with their fundraising activities. Just as I am to Thomas Schell, the incredibly generous and selfless man we feature on page 3.

To all our other supporters this summer, let me also say thank you.

Robyn Roberts - CEO

## Christmas cheer

In December our foster care team hosted their annual Christmas party for foster families and some of the birth parents of the children in our care. Entertainment included an appearance by Santa, a reptile show, face painting, and pony rides, which were especially enjoyed by some of the children with physical disabilities.

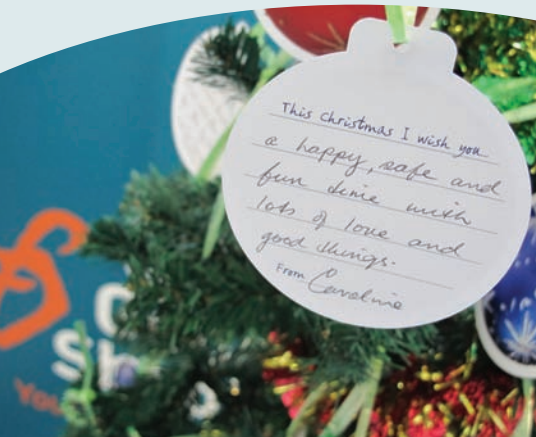
The party is extremely important to the foster children because seeing other children who are in care helps normalise their experience and reminds them they are not alone. And we were so pleased this Christmas to hear several children proudly telling the other children in their foster family that it was their "very own party", special to them!

This occasion also provides an opportunity for all the adults involved in foster children's lives to come together in an informal, relaxed setting to have fun and share their experiences.

We are only able to host the Christmas party and provide other support to our foster families and the children in their care through the wonderful generosity of numerous people and organisations.

Many supporters who kindly donated to our Christmas appeal also wrote a heartfelt message of support and Christmas wishes to the children in our care. We hung these messages, written on shiny baubles, on our Christmas tree for the children to read (pictured below).

We are grateful to a number of organisations for helping us create a Christmas to remember for the children in our care. These include: Dominion Private Clients, Melbourne Zoo, South East Water, NAB, Intec Industries and the Peter & Lyndy White Foundation.



## Rapping for a better future

When Prince Rukundo first heard about our RAP3021 program he was immediately interested. As the oldest of eight children – all looked after by his hard-working mother – he was conscious of his role as the 'father figure' in the family. So he was always on the lookout for new ways to set a positive example to his siblings.

"I felt getting involved in something like this could help me be a positive role model for my family, and also for the young community in St Albans," he says. "I could do something more useful than hanging out at the railway station causing trouble, and maybe help show the way for other young people too."

RAP3021 is a hip hop writing program Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service runs in St Albans in partnership with Migrant Resource Centre North West. The program started in early 2011 and has worked with 15 newly arrived young people from a range of countries including Burundi, Congo, Sudan, Ethiopia, Australia, Singapore and India.

### Young people being mentored

The program delivers hip hop workshops for young people from St Albans, with a focus on newly arrived young people aged 12-21 years. Participants are mentored by professional hip hop artists and learn to write, record and perform their own music.

Prince, born in Burundi in East Africa and living in Australia since 2004, has for years been struggling to stay aloof from the roaming gangs whose main recruitment methods rely on intimidation. He knows many young men face similar difficulties in trying to establish themselves in the western suburbs – including his younger brothers.

"I used to be interested in being a part of a gang, but I grew up and realised it wasn't for me," he says. "We just need alternatives to that kind of life, and that's what RAP3021 has helped give me."

In the past year, RAP3021 participants have performed at a number of cultural and community events. Prince's music can be accessed via his Facebook page [www.facebook.com/princefabricemusic](http://www.facebook.com/princefabricemusic)

Don't forget, you can support us via our guaranteed secure website.

Michele Curtis is a renowned chef and author of around 30 recipe books and other food-related publications. Her latest book "What's for Dinner", was released by Hardie Grant in June 2011. Michele has kindly donated the delicious salad recipe below to you as a supporter of Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service.



## Lamb, beetroot, rocket and yoghurt salad

### METHOD

Place the beetroots in a saucepan, cover with water and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat, cover with a lid and cook for 30 – 40 minutes, depending on their size, until tender.

Drain and allow to cool, then peel and cut into wedges.

While beetroots are cooking, mix yoghurt, lemon juice, garlic and tahini together until mixture achieves a smooth consistency. Refrigerate dressing until ready to serve.

Heat a heavy-based frying pan over medium-high heat. Add a splash of oil and cook the lamb for 4–5 minutes on each side, or until cooked to your liking. Set aside to cool.

Place the rocket in a bowl and add the beetroot wedges, onion and chickpeas. Thinly slice the lamb and add to the salad. Drizzle 3 – 4 tablespoons of the yoghurt dressing over salad to serve. Reserve remaining dressing for next time!



Serves 4 – 6.  
Prep time 15 minutes.  
Cook time 45 minutes.

### INGREDIENTS

3 beetroots, leaves trimmed and scrubbed  
180 g (3/4 cup) natural yoghurt  
2 tbsp lemon juice  
2 cloves garlic, crushed  
1 tbsp tahini (sesame paste)  
oil, for cooking  
2 lamb backstraps  
150 g (3 cups) rocket  
½ red onion, thinly sliced  
400 g (1½ cups) tinned chickpeas (garbanzos), rinsed and drained

## An instinct to help others

Despite living on a pension, Thomas Schell has been a regular donor to Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service for over a decade.

"My heart just goes out to those people who are struggling in life," he says. "When you're on a pension you have to make it go a long way, but I give what I can, when I can. I know every little bit helps."

Thomas knows what it is like to experience genuine hardship. After leaving home when he was just 17 years old he struggled to find work, and was forced to live under a bridge through a harsh Melbourne winter in the 1950s. But once he was given an opportunity to work for the Victorian Railways, he grasped it with both hands. Indeed, he held the job for over forty years.

Thomas has now been retired for many years. He still often finds himself talking with young people on the streets of his home suburb in Melbourne's inner south east who are facing issues including depression, homelessness and alcoholism. "I find that if you just listen and don't judge, they will talk to you and sometimes you can give them a helping hand," he says.

We are fortunate to have a number of people like Thomas Schell who are also on pensions or a low income who support our work. To all those wonderfully generous people we say thank you.



"I give what I can, when I can. I know every little bit helps."

Visit [www.goodshepvic.org.au/donate](http://www.goodshepvic.org.au/donate) to donate today.

Donate now



## A day out in the hills

Understandably, the young people we work with often get caught up in the day to day difficulties and dramas of their lives. It can be hard to remain positive and upbeat about your prospects when the rest of your family is stuck in a refugee camp overseas; or your little brother is in trouble with the police; or your parents are struggling to pay their bills. Yet sometimes an outing to somewhere new can lift spirits and lighten the load for a short time.

With this in mind, on a Saturday in October two of our youth team took some young people from our St Albans Youth Housing program to the 1000 steps Kokoda Bushwalk in the Dandenongs. The memorial track through temperate rainforest is a popular destination for both walkers and joggers, and even

though it was a misty, wet day, the group had a great day out.

“Even though these young people are experiencing hardship of various sorts, they are really striving to improve their lives with hard work and study during the week,” says Jill Mayfield, who was one of the workers on the walk. “The walk was quite challenging, but the forest just seemed to come to life in the rain, with those beautiful sounds and that fragrance of the bush.”

After a barbecue lunch, the group did another walk along another track nearby. Colourful birds sat freely on people’s heads and shoulders, prompting surprised laughs from the young people.

“They were all delighted to visit the Dandenongs,” says Jill. “They didn’t realise such a place existed here in Victoria.”

## Supporter profile: Brandsma House – supporting our work with young people

Brandsma House is one of the eight houses at Whitefriar’s Catholic College for Boys in Melbourne’s eastern suburbs. In 2008 the house chose Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service as the charity it would support through fundraising activities – in large part due to the work we do with young people.

“Our boys were particularly interested in helping out kids at school who are doing it tougher than they are,” says Brandsma House Head Peter Ciardulli. “They understand that some children and their families aren’t able to afford the basics like food, clothing and

transport, and they know that while the contributions they make to help them out might not seem like much to them, they are very significant for some others.”

Brandsma House raises money for our organisation through a major raffle, and through smaller – but no less important – individual donations from the children and their families. In 2011 Brandsma raised well over \$3000 for our organisation, and we are extremely grateful to the house and its students for their efforts.



## Brandsma

## Fostering hope and opportunity for young people

Paul can’t remember how many different foster carers have looked after him. Now 18, he has been moving around foster carers ever since he and his brother were removed from their parents as young children because of family violence.

“It was quite hard at times,” he says. “Some places worked out, others didn’t. But we never stayed anywhere for long.”

For the past five years however, Paul and his brother have lived a much more stable life in the care of Jean. Jean has been volunteering as a foster carer with Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service for almost a decade.

## Benefits of a stable, caring home

When Paul and his brother first arrived in Jean’s care they were extremely shy and quiet. “We were still quite young and had been moving around different places and hadn’t really learned to fully trust anyone,” says Paul.

“But Jean was really kind and she cared for us really well. She provided us with food and shelter, but she had rules as well, and we hadn’t really followed rules before. Learning to live that way was good – it made us what we are now.”

After going through our Driver Education program and gaining his probationary licence, Paul is now working part time and saving up for his own car. He is also studying marketing at RMIT, and planning to move out with a friend when he can afford it.

After five years of compassionate care, Paul feels his future is in his own hands.



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