

1981 Annual Report

44

WOLLAHRA/STANTON YOUTH SERVICE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING... 13.2.81...

PRESENT: Rex Matthews, Chris Durn, Laurie Matthews, Kerrie Billing, Gwen Matthews, Manfred Booth, Joyce Cooper, Gabrielle Carey, Judy Bokor, Sue Webb, Danny Richardson, Vanessa Regan, Martin Stockler, Michael Hohensee, Mary Lou Outridge, Peter Matthews, Margo Outridge.

APPOINTEES: Robert Meek, Sara Matthews, Colin Matthews, Lila Feed, Wendy Thomas.

MINUTES: The A.G.M. Minutes of March 1980, confirmed at the following general meeting, were reread.

THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: was read by Chairman Rex Matthews. Copies are to be made and circulated.

THE TREASURER'S REPORT:

1. Note: The Financial Statement for the year was tabled at the general meeting of 15.1.81
2. We are over-spending the grant at present, as it is \$36,000 p.a., and we are running a budget of \$48,000 p.a. As we only spent half of the first grant, we are using the surplus. Hoping the new grant shall include a 10% increase, but presently running smoothly due to surplus.
3. Forms for The Savings Investment Account are available, but have not been filled in pending election of office bearers at the A.G.M. With the \$11,017 in the current account, and \$9,000 due in March, we shall probably be able to place \$15,000 in the Investments Savings Account.

THE CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT:

1) LAURIE: A different year to previous years, as the biggest event was getting money to be able to employ people. During the long period of waiting for the approval of our submission, we were largely able to continue through the injection of funds from the V.C.C.

A step towards a proper staffing level was made when Danny joined Sara and Laurie in sharing responsibility and care.

The employment of additional full-time staff with the grant has changed the job quite a bit from providing accommodation to being much more aware, with collective staff, of resources available to kids... on being able to get money for kids (there is, however, little available for kids under 15 so that when the refuge gets kids in this age group we and the kids are stuck.

The change in the role of refuge and workers is evident. The earlier part of the year, and previous two and a half years prior to funding, the refuge was catering to people over 18, and under 16. This has changed considerably. In the last six months, there were far more between the age of 16 to 18 than any other age group. It is a harder group to work with as not the same statutory ruling as for the younger group, and not the "adult's" of the older group. The refuge is a more supportive service for kids who don't have options, those who have to take up the responsibility for their lives.

There has been considerable involvement with ethnic communities. Quite a bit has been learnt of the expectations of the Lebanese community, and staff are now more able through experience to handle inflammatory situations that could crop up.

Through involvement with the V.C.C. kids have been employed at the Bazaar, Healing and Growth Centre, the Office, and Drop-Inn.

Particular thanks to the regular volunteers-Kerrie, Mike, Judy, Martin, Vanessa, Robert. Regards volunteers, the refuge is at a point where volunteer operations need to change. A volunteer training programme is soon to be undertaken by Laurie.

2) SUE AND DANNY: Since the last meeting, the staff has changed from three full-time and two part-time workers to four full-time workers. It has its advantages and disadvantages. It has put extra strain on staff as not as many to share the load. The co-co-ordinators are considering the staff arrangement of shifts to double shifts utilizing voluntary help more, and cutting the extended shifts. The refuge is averaging about four to five kids a week, and finding that it's better with males and females.

An innovation has been "week-end workshops" for staff, the last was very successful and another is being planned.

A vote of thanks to Laurie as both Sue and Danny realize the involvement of co-ordination.

At this point, the basic aims of refuge staff include:-

- a) reconciliation of family if possible
- b) finding income - initially benefits, with hope of leading on to jobs.
- c) looking for accommodation - big problem as rents are not cheap, boarding-house accommodation is high in demand and cost.
- d) kids' health

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

CHAIRMAN - Rex Matthews (carried unanimously)
VICE CHAIRMAN - Michael Hohensee (carried unanimously)
SECRETARY - Judy Bokor (carried unanimously)
TREASURER - Martin Steckler (carried unanimously)
ASSISTANT TREASURER - Sara Matthews (carried unanimously)
AUDITORS - Bentley Wheeler & Cartledge
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - Kerrie Billing
Manfred Beuth
Chris Dunn
Laurie Matthews
Joyce Cooper
Robert Meek
Margo Outridge

REPRESENTATIVE TO V.C.C. - Sue Webb with Danny Richardson, or either.

N.B. A vote of thanks to outgoing officers, well wishes to Chris who has handed in his resignation to utilize time to further his education.

Meeting Closed: 9-50 p.m.

Rex Matthews
12/3/81

PADDINGTON/WOOLLAHRA YOUTH SERVICE

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO ANNUAL MEETING 13.2.81.

In the report to last year's annual meeting, I outlined the history of this organisation since its beginning in 1977, and I said that with government funding I was confident that a very special kind of residential emergency care would be provided over the next few years.

We have had a lot more experience since then. I believe that we have learned a great deal about the extent of the problems of youth in this society. It includes the painful awareness that providing accommodation only touches the fringe of the problem.

Nevertheless we have concentrated our efforts on doing the very best we can in the area of accommodation, and of adding to that all the efforts we can command, in building up the young people who pass through the "Caretaker's Cottage" in self-esteem and self-realisation, toward their being fully satisfied with their lives.

Of course, the necessarily brief encounters of a few days, weeks, (or months even, sometimes) doesn't go very far toward such an ultimate goal. What our staff and volunteers do have, is a lot of tedium and hard work, with the occasional burst of great understanding - the "meeting of heart and mind" that makes it a lot sweeter to be consumed in this kind of job.

Highlights of 1980 included the funding received in June, covering the period July 1979 to June 1980. That payment enabled our debts to be liquidated, our staff to be paid the arrears of wages for when they had worked hopefully, but without either pay or definite promise that they would be paid. We must express the warmest admiration for Laurie and Sara and Danny for their faithfulness at that time.

The grant from the Department of Youth and Community Services enabled your committee to employ three more youth workers, one full-time and two half-time. It was considered that the two half-time workers would increase the number of helpful contacts to which young people in the "Caretaker's Cottage" would be exposed. Later experience suggested that this value did not outweigh continuity of contact as the value rather to be pursued.

However, a full complement of staff has allowed the number in residence to rise to a frequent figure of nine or ten, with an average of seven. All staff have often expressed regret at not being able to pursue the developmental programs they would like. I think they have done well, and I sympathise with them in their dilemma. They have profited from training programs and their own week-end conferences. I believe that we, that is this organisation through its committee, can further encourage our youth workers in their aims in the coming year.

There has been a range of ethnic backgrounds among the teenagers who have come here in the past year. We have seen the problems of vastly different cultures, and have had a modest success in reconciling factions which had become very antagonistic to one another

Recently there have been more young people from nearby suburbs, those around here, if not from Paddington itself.

Our organised highlight of 1980 was the opening of the expanded "Caretaker's Cottage" on 4th July by the Hon. Rex Jackson, Minister for Youth and Community Services. It was a night to remember. The verbal encouragement given by the minister was greater than the \$1,000 cheque he gave for incidental needs of the house. (It was rapidly spent.)

Eighty-three people attended that event, including officers of YACS, representatives of other refuges and helping agencies, members of Eastside

Parish and VCC, and local citizens.

Not so well patronised was our recent third birthday celebration, when only about fifteen responded to the invitations. We were able to take satisfaction in the thought that things must be going smoothly, for there have been no complaints from those who watch over us.

I want to express our thanks to government ministers and parliament members who have supported and encouraged the "Caretaker's Cottage". The former Minister for Social Security, Dame Margaret Guilfoyle, responded helpfully to representatives on our behalf by Mr. Bob Ellicot, our local Federal MP. Mr. John Barraclough and Mr. Syd Einfeld were strong in their support at the State government level.

Officers of the Department of Youth and Community Services have been continually encouraging. District Officers have used our services, and have been willing consultants on many occasions.

I express the committee's thanks to the congregation of Eastside Parish for their interest, and to the officers of the Parish for time and energy put into business matters connected with the refuge premises.

Members of the Village Community Centre have personally been a great help to Caretaker's Cottage, as well as collectively making that life-saving series of cash advances which enabled the refuge to continue into 1980.

Your committee has relied heavily on volunteer workers to provide much needed back-up to our salaried youth workers. The volunteers come along week after week in the evenings, usually after a full days work in their regular occupations. Just by being around to play games, talk and make friends with the young people in the refuge, they add greatly to the home-like atmosphere of the place. We have room for more volunteers.

The fund-raising sub-committee has been most effective, under the leadership of Mike Hohensee. The bike raffle of last Christmas raised the very useful sum of \$

A major move in staffing has just occurred, with Laurie's resignation, to move to a new post of Community Development Officer with Eastside Parish/VCC. Laurie has been the principal force in bringing this organisation to its present level of activity, and I congratulate him. We all wish him well in his new work.

Our thanks must go to all the staff.- Laurie, Danny, Sue, Gabrielle, and Leila.

The opportunity has been taken to begin a three-month trial of sharing the co-ordinator role. This is now under way, with Danny and Sue jointly responsible.

Your committee has several developmental projects in prospect:-

1. We hope to be able to offer a wider service to young people through helping persons and groups find housing, and organising bond and rental schemes.
2. Knowing that unemployment is going to continue to be a serious problem for teenagers, the refuge will continue to promote learning applicable to work situations and to self-sufficient living. Outings will have this object in mind.

- 3 -

Gardening is being taken up, under the general supervision of Sue, with the double-edged purpose of helping fill the larder and teach self-sufficiency.

Training for volunteers is being organised by Laurie. We hope to make it easier and more enjoyable to be a volunteer helper.

I understand that as well as the frequent calls of social workers and others in the field of youth care, we may expect students in child care at Randwick Technical College to be coming this year for orientation in the refuge.

Our constitution was amended during the past year, by a duly called special meeting. The changes were to comply with Taxation Department suggestions.

I thank you for your attendance tonight, and your interest in the welfare of young people.

- Rex Matthews.