



Cana Communities
Dignity Hope Belonging

SEPTEMBER 2023 ♥ WWW.CANA.ORG.AU

Julie's desk

Here is our September Spring newsletter and how quickly the months flyby. I was reflecting on this time last year when we still felt the hangover of Covid and the disconnection that happened across the community. It is comforting to see that we are not restricted now in any way and we have been able to fulfil some of the dreams we had planned years ago.

St. Francis Shelter in Redfern is our newest addition. It is used in the evenings as a place of welcome and overnight stay for our rough sleepers and during the week it is open on Tuesday and Thursdays for our @OneTable hub project. This is an exciting 'drop in' space for everyone to enjoy with an invitation to share a meal together. This experience is soul nurturing as it allows us all to feel a part of something bigger and a place we can feel comfortable where our gift to each other in that space is acceptance.

RUOK Day is next week which is another reminder that we need to be conscious of how important listening is. We all struggle in those moments and when we act out we are often unaware of the impact our behaviour has. It is in those times the kindest response is not to criticise but to come from a place of empathy. Empathy is a real gift, as it helps regulate our own emotions, and increases the ability to be compassionate and to focus on hearing the experience of the 'other'.

Over the last few months our other focus has been supporting our community to embrace the wrap around supports we can provide. Many of our men and women are engaging with psychiatrists and therapists (for the first time) and with confidence and without fear.

For us this may not seem like a challenge but for our community members who have experienced significant trauma and have been fearful of those who they thought would protect them, it is a particularly vulnerable and sad space of exposure. The reason our community can take the risk of being vulnerable is because of the support and care Cana volunteers offer. It is the consistency of showing up and being with them that allows them to understand they are worthy of care and that gift is immeasurable.

It is so important to acknowledge that these are life changing moments as they are getting medication and/or support in a way that can allow them to be the best version of themselves and they can learn to understand the impact of their trauma. We are grateful that we can prioritise this level of mental

Run by volunteers ♥ Not-for-profit
♥ No government funding ♥ Tax
deductible donations ♥ Family style
relationship model

... For those with the least options ...

health care and this is because our donors have remained empathetic and supportive. Whatever role you play in our Cana family we value and appreciate your commitment.

I hope you enjoy reading our updates and please stay connected through our website and social media channels as we have a few exciting events coming up.

Art Exhibition, pop 2nd November in your diary as we would love everyone to come to our very special art exhibition. More on that later.

Sydney Running Festival 2023, our most important promotion this week is supporting **Jack Freeman** as he is running to raise money for Cana. We are hoping to make enough money to employ more men and women in our enterprise and to continue the mental health care our community so desperately need.

Please share with friends, staff, and family and as we know small amounts of

money add up and make a significant difference. Skip a coffee or a takeaway meal and sponsor Jack.

Take good care and I hope everyone has a moment each day to check in and make sure they are OK and if not reach out to someone you feel safe with as life is always better if we feel a connection.

Love Julie x



Cana joins the Sydney Running Festival 2023

Sponsor Jack Freeman to run for Cana in the Sydney Running Festival on **Sunday 17 September**.

www.givar.com



Skip a coffee or a takeaway meal and raise money to employ two more people at our Social Enterprise.

All monies raised make a difference – regardless of the amount – and not only create new opportunities within our social enterprise, also enables us to provide better mental health care for our community.



A reflection | Sunday night at our community house

Another wonderful night at Cana. We had the privilege of breaking bread with the men at the house. We had a lovely conversation with the guys – some of them new – how it's a place, a community of tenderness that allows them to find a sanctuary so that they can become the sanctuary they have sought.

Before dinner we lit a candle and said a prayer which was centred around the themes of gratitude and friendship. It was lovely to listen to the guys share their reflections. One shared with us that his grandmother had passed away at the weekend, so we prayed for her. We spoke about the importance of being a good friend to yourself and being able to journey to that place in your soul where there is great love, warmth, feeling and forgiveness as well as being blessed with the friendship with God. It was lovely to listen to one of the guys talk about Cana being a place for a "second chance" and how committed he is to transforming the pain/trauma from his past (instead of going to keep transmitting it) and imagining a new future for himself. It was a special night of kinship and connection, and after leaving last night I felt all the more forcibly what a privileged role we play in being that connective tissue.

Daniel Street



Volunteer opportunities

We would love to hear from anyone interested in finding out more about the opportunities below. Information and training provided.

St Francis Shelter – Redfern

Volunteer shifts include:

- **Tuesdays** from 10am–12 noon lunch gathering for Cana's community and volunteers.
6pm–9.15pm and overnight, overnight shelter for women only, dinner and overnight shifts available.
- **Thursdays** from 6pm–8pm dinner gathering for Cana's community and volunteers.
- **Fridays and Saturdays** from 6pm–9.15pm and overnight, overnight shelter for men and women, dinner, and overnight shifts available.

Contact us info@cana.org.au or visit cana.org.au/volunteer for further information about our new St Francis Shelter.

Laundry Roster to St Vincent's

We need a team of volunteers to add to our roster to drop the dirty sheets to St Vincent's and return the clean sheets to the shelter on a weekly basis, **Monday** or **Tuesday** before 1.30pm.

This is a simple but essential job which would take a couple of people approx. 30 minutes to complete.

Nagel House – Redfern

Companionship for women living in Nagel House. Building a relationship by having a cup of coffee and exploring where help is needed.

This may be with appointments, further education, exercise, any facet of everyday life.

Cana Farm – Orchard Hills

Open **Monday** to **Thursday**
9.30am–3.00pm

Work alongside our community assisting with market garden, packaging, cooking and gift wrapping.

As a social enterprise we sell our Cana products to the wider community. Leading up to Christmas we need many volunteers to come and help us wrap our products. This can be a one off or multiple day opportunity. Come as an individual or a group.

Volunteers, contact us!

If you are interested in finding out more, please email us at info@cana.org.au or visit cana.org.au/volunteer.

On the farm!

On a regular basis, Cana Farm hosts medical students who work at the farm as part of their training. The purpose is to expose the students to a variety of people and give them some insight to disadvantage and barriers to the effective application of medical care.

Joshua Salama is a medical student who attended the farm over several weeks. As part of his university assessment, he submitted the following observations of Cana community, this is an excerpt from a submitted essay.

“Testimonials of ex-addicts at Cana also concur that community engagement reduces addictive urges. Three men who each battled addiction for over 20 years disclosed that they frequently relapsed and were re-arrested before joining the Cana Community. After joining Cana, they ceased their addictions and have stayed out of prison for 8, 10 and 11 years, respectively.....one participant shared:

“it’s the community here ... everyone working toward a common goal ... people are really supportive”.

This testimony reveals that increasing an addict’s social capital via community engagement and peer support facilitates de-addiction and reintegration into society.

Social stigma and prison sentences do not stop addiction, but rather compound the addict’s experience of trauma. Rapport, thorough social histories and referrals to community groups are some of the ways in which doctors can provide wholistic healthcare to addicts. To beat addiction, we must connect trauma-survivors with healthy social circles, so that trauma-survivors can find comfort in human connection rather than addictive behaviours.”



Order your fresh veggie boxes today!

Deliveries to Sydney metro areas
Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursdays.

www.canafarm.com.au/our-shop



Pre-Christmas bulk corporate orders... plan now!

While we’ve only just leapt in to September, the festive season can sneak up very quickly.

Email shop@cana.org.au for information on gifts and hampers Cana Farm offer for your clients or staff. Catalogue available shortly.

News from WA

Maria – a tribute from Mel, a letter of gratitude.

This is for Maria. It's been three years since I met Maria here at Anstead. I remember sitting at the table being interviewed by Maria and Maureen to see if Anstead could accommodate me in any way. I was shy and got nervous trying to talk about my life but then I heard the words 'she's staying'.

I was taken back to hospital that day to wait for my discharge papers which took about three days. Finally, Maria picked me up with a walker in hand and a suitcase in the other, we jumped into her car, and I said, 'the walker's not mine'. Maria looked at me and said, 'you need one so let's go and if they need it, we'll return'. I think that was the first time in a long time I smiled.

Anyway, from there my life became worthy, things I thought I would never accomplish. Maria played a huge part in who I am now. There are no real words to describe this lovely caring lady, a lady who was there for me no matter what time of day or night it was. I could always depend on Maria.

So, thank you for being you. You made me come a long way. I now have my own house and car, a beautiful smile with my new teeth and my daughter

and my grandkids I see all the time and my cat, Marley.

So, thank you. It's great to see you.

WA's newest Recruit

Introducing Bruce! Very recently retired, Bruce has not had much time to put his feet up before he was snapped up by Connie to join our Food Truck team. Bruce is providing much needed driving and towing support and has also taken on toastie making. This is not something he has previous experience in but, by all accounts, he has found a calling! When he is not helping with the Food Truck, Bruce will be catching up on odd jobs at home and spending more time with his daughters.

Weekly / monthly activities in WA

Every week we offer free activities for people from all walks of life who want to make connections and build friendships.

Book our food truck!

We'd love to hear from any individuals or organisations with an upcoming community event needing a food truck. We can handle a maximum of 300 orders per event and we have a range of healthy food options as well as tea, coffee, chai and hot chocolate not to mention



our wonderful smoothies.

Like to know more?

Call Tor on 0411 570892 or Alice on 0418 804483.

Calling all gardeners!

If you have a green thumb, a passion for digging and doing or just enjoy spending time in a garden, we'd love to hear from you. We are very much in need



of some gardening assistance at our Mosman Park home, Anstead. If you can help or know someone who can, please contact Tor on 0411 570892 or email cana.wa@cana.org.au



Volunteer spot

Julie Cuneen - Nagle House

How did you first hear of Cana and what attracted you to volunteer?

"I heard of Cana through the church- St Patrick's in The Rocks. Like many people, I am concerned about the people who are sleeping rough and others who do not fit neatly into society's pigeonholes!!"

What do you do as a volunteer at Nagle House?

"As I am a senior working at night is not possible so cooking the occasional lunch with the residents of Nagle House is something I can do, and I enjoy doing."

What is a favourite memory or thoughts from your time at Nagle House?

"I am constantly moved and humbled by the courage I see in the residents. Life has not always been easy for them but their determination to change their lives in spite of difficulties is an inspiration to me.

The generosity and compassion of the leaders of Cana are qualities I admire greatly."

What have you learned through your time in the Cana community?

"Among many things, I have learnt from my time with Cana to be grateful for what I have been given."

St Francis Shelter

We were delighted to have students from St. Aloysius College (and their parents) join some wonderful Cana volunteers at a working bee at St. Francis Shelter at the end of August. They brought lots of energy and enthusiasm to help us clean cobwebs, weed the gardens, put in some new plants, lay down mulch and generally give the back and front yards a good clean up. We are so grateful for their efforts that have created such a welcoming street front and comfortable outdoor space for everyone who seeks community and connection at St. Francis House. We are looking forward to sharing some lovely al fresco meals in the warmer months.

been instrumental in bringing this dream to life.

Situated at the heart of Redfern, amidst a diverse and multifaceted community, our mission is to foster a shared understanding of belonging, connection, and support, enabling healing and promoting a just society. The One Table Hub provides community, friendship, and complimentary barista coffee and food for some of the



One Table Hub @ St Francis

Jwan Kada

The inception of **One Table Hub** sprouted from a profound desire to create a space where everyone is welcomed, accepted, and cherished. The One Table Hub is located at 96 Redfern Street, also known as the St. Francis shelter. It has become a sanctuary that promotes human dignity, community, and belonging.



The most invaluable outcome of establishing the One Table Hub has been the engagement of the community. It all began with a long-held dream of mine to foster a circle of compassion, which was further fuelled by our generous donor community who wholeheartedly believed in this endeavour. The collective efforts of the entire community, who came together to assemble the furniture, have

most vulnerable people in our city. Recognizing that justice is inherently intertwined with relationships, One Table Hub offers a relational model that walks alongside individuals, empowering them to live life to the fullest.

We extend a warm invitation to all to join us at One Table Hub, a place that epitomizes the vision and mission of Cana, where dignity, belonging, and community intertwine harmoniously.



Backpack Program

Cana Communities every year collects hundreds of personal toiletries and other essential items and put together backpacks which are given to men and women leaving jail. The effect that these backpacks have cannot be underestimated. We recently received a letter of thanks from LCM Liverpool Community Corrections which we partly reproduce here. If you as an individual or collectively through your local parish, school or corporate organisation wish to find out how you can help with this project please email Stephanie info@cana.org.au.

Cana's generous donation of providing back packs filled with essential items has had a profound impact on the lives of those people participating in the LCM program.



As background, LCM program is a collaborative effort by NSW Communities and Justice along with other government agencies aimed at helping people who have been incarcerated from reoffending and enhancing community safety. It provides high-risk offenders with tailored interventions and support, offering them a chance to rebuild their lives and break free from the cycle of despair, fostering hope for a brighter future.

In the face of adversity, the lives of these individuals can be shattered, leaving them trapped in a cycle

of despair. However, the kindness and support provided by the team at Cana Communities have provided a lifeline of care and compassion, restoring their dignity and self-worth. Your efforts have shown them that they are not alone on their journey to healing and recovery.

We are immensely grateful for your contribution to the LCM program. Your unwavering dedication to uplifting and empowering individuals aligns strongly to the aims of the LCM program. Your support has left a profound impact, and we extend our deepest gratitude for your generous partnership.

Volunteer training and education

Volunteer Check in Sessions

We have restarted our monthly volunteer check in sessions where existing volunteers can join a team's session and speak with Julie Sneddon and other leaders regarding their experience, ask questions, share stories and learn from each other.

Dates include:

- Monday **25 September** 6.15-6.45pm
- Monday **30 October** 6.15-6.45pm
- Monday **27 November** 6.15-6.45pm

Please register for this open forum via [Volunteers Check In Sessions](#)

Education Session | Module 1

All existing volunteers are required to attend our education series. These are aimed at giving you skills to navigate your relationships with members of our community, give you knowledge of what to do in an uncomfortable situation and prepare you for what's ahead.

Module 1 has been scheduled for:

- Wednesday **20 September** (Redfern) 6.00-7.30pm; or
- Tuesday **24 October** (Online) 6.00-7.30pm

Please register for this event through

[Volunteer Education Session | Module 1](#)

Women's Shelter Information and Training

Cana will hold an in-person information and specific training for our new women's shelter at the shelter in Redfern on:

- Thursday **21 September** 6.00pm for a 6.30pm start

via [Thursday Women's Only Education Session](#)

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