



# *Annual Report*

## *2013-2014*



## ***Chairperson's Report***

There have been a number of significant changes within MarionLIFE this year but it has still been “business as usual” as the staff and volunteers continue to offer many kinds of assistance, with compassion and caring, to those in need within our local community. A heartfelt thankyou to them all for all their hard work and dedication — they really do make a lasting difference to the lives of those they work with.



We sadly farewelled Joanna in June, after 5 years of innovative leadership, as she left to take up a new position in community engagement with Baptist Care—we miss her energy and passion for creating sustainable change within the local community, and we wish her well in her new role. The board is now fully operational with the appointment of two new board members—together we are looking at the strategic direction of MarionLIFE and the role of the Director for the future. In the interim, we have appointed Karen Ames as volunteer coordinator, who oversees the daily operations of MarionLIFE in conjunction with Sarah Combes, our Community Development/Project Officer.

As a board, we continue to look for new ways to help fund our various projects and operational costs, as grants are not always able to fully cover these expenses. We have been very thankful for the assistance of our board member, Sarah Addis, in completing grant applications, and look forward to continued support from our strategic partners. In August, we once again held MarionLIFE Fundraising month, which not only gave us financial assistance, but also additional volunteers to cover vital areas of our services. Whilst we continue to look for ways to increase our donor base, we acknowledge our indebtedness to all those who financially support us directly and through Marion Church of Christ,

It has been an exciting year, with many stories of positive and lasting impact on people's lives coming out of the various programmes run by MarionLIFE. This would not be possible without the support of our strategic partners, which enables our staff, volunteers and board members to empower people in our local community to not merely exist, but to thrive. We trust that you will continue to support us through your partnerships in the future.

I would thank again all our staff, volunteers and board members for your willingness to give unstintingly to the people you work with at MarionLIFE—your care and compassion for others is what makes a real difference, and impacts so greatly on their lives.

God bless you all,

*Janet Turner*

## ***Emergency Relief***

Throughout 2013, MarionLIFE has continued to support people in our community who are experiencing personal or financial crisis. The services people from the community can access include food, clothing and footwear vouchers, assistance with chemist scripts, personal and financial counselling, tax help, information about concessions and the ability to apply for no interest loans. MarionLIFE's dedicated volunteers continue to provide necessities and hope for those who walk through our doors.

In the 2013-2014 financial year::

- 1940 people were assisted and as people can access our service up to 4 times a year, 3754 appointments occurred. This number is slightly lower than the previous year.
- These people came from 13 different nationalities.
- 373 people accessed financial counselling.
- 99 people sought personal counselling.
- 111 No Interest Loans and Budget Counselling sessions occurred.
- 367 people got their tax completed free of charge
- 71 blankets were distributed.
- 232 Christmas hampers were distributed.



MarionLIFE is delighted to continue it's partnership with Oz Harvest. This partnership is one of the ways fresh food can be supplied to our community. We are also thankful to Bakers Delight at Castle Plaza, Beck Bakery and the Aberfoyle Bakery who supply us with bread which we can then pass onto those who access our service.

MarionLIFE's emergency relief relies on the skills and passion of volunteers for the service to function. To the individuals involved, we say a huge 'Thank you'.

## **Brekky for Blokes**



This past year has been one of challenge as we now have regular contact with those who are mentally ill who come from community share houses. As a group of volunteers, we have also been delighted and surprised by these blokes as they show their appreciation in amazing ways.

We will continue to serve the Blokes and be encouraged by the conversations that we have with them. We are so blessed to have the opportunity to connect with those who are lonely and isolated within our community and we pray that as we continue in this loaves and fishes ministry lives will be touched for Gods glory.

In His Service

James Gray (Coordinator B4B )

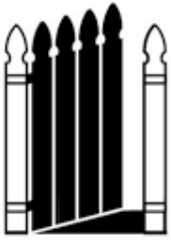
## **Community Meal**

Community Meal occurs on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month. It is attended by a wide range of community members. Some of whom are on low incomes (aged pensions, new start or disability allowances), young families, people experiencing financial difficulties, homelessness, isolation and loneliness attend the meals.

A delicious two course meal is supplied by Foodbank and the generous donation of hot roast chicken by Nando's Kurralta Park. We have an average of 40-50 people attend each meal; with 6 volunteers helping prepare the meal. Our volunteer team is quite multicultural. Venezuela, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Iran, Philippines are some of the cultural backgrounds of our helpers. With a banner hung from the front fence at the beginning of the meal week, we attract on average 4-5 new faces and 5 families each time. Through the hard work and dedication of our team led by our Coordinator Ruth Pares, we regularly receive the complimentary praise of those that attend the meal. Some have reported that our *Bread and Butter* pudding is the best they have ever tasted. Our meal is different to many other soup kitchens as the community participate in the set up of the meal and we create a family friendly restaurant atmosphere for all to enjoy.



## **Side Gate Cafe**



Well, another year has nearly finished for the Side Gate Cafe. It has been a very busy and rewarding year for us all. New young volunteers have come and gone. A number of these volunteers found employment. We are very pleased that we were able to provide an environment where they were able to gain confidence and learn new skills.

We are currently also running a mentoring program which enables our volunteers to reach a goal of their own in 10 weeks. It could be either a personal goal or a goal that they would like to reach to improve their skills. This also has been very rewarding in how they have changed in themselves.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the team leaders who do an amazing job, sometimes in very stressful situations. Also to all the side gate cafe volunteers thank you the cafe would not exist if it wasn't for you. Perhaps people should give all volunteers a bit more recognition as they all work extremely hard. We look forward to 2015.

## **Adult Community Education**

### **Money Matters**

This last financial year we successfully received our second round of funding to deliver non-accredited financial literacy courses. We offered two seven week courses with a wide cross-section of participants attending. Many were experiencing financial pressures in their lives and wanting to learn how to navigate through the myriad of decisions and challenges they are presented with on a daily basis. We also ran a ½ day session called: "Helping you help Others" at Edwardstown Community Church to equip volunteers working with the community in helping people access much needed services as well as helping people to budget. Our second half day session was conducted with Workskill Melrose Park. Dennis and Denise (our facilitators) delivered a session to job seekers living on a very tight Newstart allowance.



## **Adult Education**

### **Money Matters (cont)**

The following outcomes were reported by our Money Matters facilitators regarding the participants:

- Achieved short and long term saving goals.
- Expanded their support networks and began attending community programs.
- Attainment of life skills such as budgeting, assertiveness and goal setting.
- A greater sense of community has been fostered between participants, which positively impacts on their mental and emotional well being.
- Appointments were made for further budgeting support and pathway support.
- Gained greater knowledge in avoiding scams and accessing concessions.
- Habits such as smoking and excessive spending have significantly decreased.
- Participants have chosen to volunteer and commence accredited training, or have enrolled in other ACE accredited study.
- Debts have decreased as a result of the learning and mentoring gained through the course.

### **Wyatt Foundation Partnership with Disability Services**

MarionLIFE, through the generous funding of The Wyatt Foundation, partnered with Disability Services in Daw Park to deliver a Money Matters course to clients in our local community living with a disability. Care and support workers have reported that people with a disability are often very vulnerable in the community when confronted with door knocking salesman luring them into electricity contracts. This course was essential to assisting people with a disability learn the necessary budgeting and assertiveness skills to avoid financial pitfalls.



### **Side Gate Cafe Mentoring Program:**

Our Side Gate Cafe Mentoring Program is an accredited training program designed to assist cafe workers identify a work or life related goal and develop the skills necessary for everyday work or social life. 20 students were mentored over 10 weeks by our tutor Kaye Fallaize. Some goals included: learning how to make coffees, managing workplace stress and conflict, being punctual, building confidence and getting a job. Students who complete the training program achieve competency in a unit within the Certificate 1 in Education and Skills Development through TafeSA. Some students within this program have progressed onto paid work and other volunteer roles, others enrolled in TAFE certificates, and several were able to use the cash register for the first time, make coffees and move onto other employment preparation courses through Marion Council. Kaye Fallaize reports witnessing amazing transformations in many of the courses participants; especially in the areas of gaining confidence, finding purpose and building new skills for the future.

## **Adult Education**

### **Community Survey**

Our Community Survey is designed to listen to the voice of our community. Our surveys are available in the MarionLIFE waiting area. The survey provides real life data on the challenges facing our community. From here, we then ask what type of support may help people in their current situation. Our Community Survey volunteer then provides a phone call to people who request follow up. From here, referrals are made to a variety of supports, programs and services within MarionLIFE and our local area. This data has then been used to justify our need for programs like Money Matters to be able to respond to the financial challenges people are facing. In 2013-2014, 400 surveys were completed and 50% of those leaving contact details have been referred to much needed support services.



Community members responses to our question:

My big idea for my community is:

- “...for everyone to feel wanted and needed”
- “...we all help each other”
- “..to become a drug and alcohol youth counsellor and help the next generations avoid the path I went down”

### **Community Garden & Backyard Garden Project**

The Community Garden has had an exciting year of new beginnings. With the introduction of its new Backyard Garden Project and the appointment of a new volunteer admin worker Gini Gatgens. The team of 10 welcomes around 25 garden visitors each month. With many coming for a chat or grab some fresh produce and some gardening tips. Through the generous support of Marion Council’s Environmental Community Capacity Building Department and our best friend Kate Tidswell, we received a small grant to purchase a lawn mower, rotary hoe and line trimmer as well as some ‘seed money’ to get some delicious veggies growing in people’s backyards. The idea is that we work with the tenant to ascertain what herbs and veggies they like and then develop a plan to clear the land, soil or raised garden bed. Then we head off to Bunnings for a seedling shopping expedition. The participants are involved in the whole process while tending to the seedlings and applying the skills and learning they have gained from us. After a reflection on our work over the last year, we discovered we have supported 29 households in the last year, 16 have continual engagement with MarionLIFE and 16 report they are able to carry on gardening with the learning they have gained through this project. A BIG thank you to Brian Gardiner, Gini Gatgens and the team who are the hands and hearts behind this program.