

A LIFE-CHANGING PARTNERSHIP

Relaxed and happy in their tidy inner west flat, Glen and Jacqueline are a picture of domestic bliss. They enjoy cooking meals, singing along to the guitar, and hosting friends.

But it wasn't so long ago their lives were very different. After three years of couch surfing, living in boarding houses and sleeping rough, the pair were close to breaking point. Both were dangerously thin, drinking too much, and leading lives that only worsened their health and psychiatric problems.

It took hard work and commitment plus the support of two NNC case workers for the pair to eventually break free from that destructive cycle and to turn their lives around.

"Jacqueline was in RPA Hospital for three months and I was living under the hospital building, below the air conditioning ducts," recalls Glen 51, who has been in and out of institutions his whole life. "I heard about Newtown Neighbourhood Centre and I started going there every day. Finally, after a while of that they

gave me a case worker, Jay, and things started to change."

Jay, who works with NNC's Boarding House Outreach Service, began catching up with Glen on a regular basis, working with him to get the support he needed and to find safe, suitable accommodation. When Jacqueline, 52, was released from hospital, she and Glen initially crashed at a friend's house. When that came to an end, Jay helped them secure a place in an inner west boarding house. While it was better than sleeping rough, it was also a challenging environment thanks to the drug, alcohol and psychiatric problems of the other residents. "We only had space in our room for our bed, our things and a small chair," says Jacqueline. When the pair ran into trouble with their rent, Jay was able to source funds to bail them out and also signed them up to an automatic payment scheme.

In 2018, Jacqueline got her own case worker, Lara, through NNC's partner, the Community Restorative Centre (CRC). Lara ensured Jacqueline

received the physical and emotional support she needed, and also identified an opportunity to find the pair more permanent housing. Glen and Jacqueline recently moved into a transitional flat through St George Community Housing's Port Jackson Program and will be allowed to stay there until permanent community housing becomes available.

"It's been a long journey, but these guys have fought so hard," says Jay. "They have jumped over every obstacle and through every hoop to get here."

For their part, Glen and Jacqueline can't imagine where they would be without NNC's help. "I'd probably be back in jail, or worse," says Glen. "And I seriously would have lost it mentally," says Jacqueline.

Instead, the pair now have big plans. Jacqueline is keen to write a book about her experiences. Glen is hoping to find work as a chef or a truck driver, but also has his eye on another career. "I'd like to get back into studying and become a social worker," he says.



Once close to breaking point, Jacqueline and Glen are now relaxed and happy.

Photo: Roman Wolczak

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Newtown Neighbourhood Centre is focused on reducing homelessness and social isolation in Sydney's inner west. We are striving for a more connected community in which everyone has a safe place to live.

We have set ourselves the major challenge of ensuring that no individual has to sleep rough in Newtown.

We also want to ensure that everyone we interact with ends up on a pathway to appropriate housing.

But we can't do that alone. One organisation, one program or one worker is not enough. We need to bring together other services, and involve community members. We need to address the causes of homelessness.

Your generous support provides us with the best possible chance of achieving our goals.

The more money we raise, the more resources we have to provide direct services for people in crisis and to

advocate for changes that will address the causes of homelessness.

We need your support to do this.

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Photo: Diana Shypula

NEWTOWN
Neighbourhood Centre

GRATITUDE
REPORT 2018

A TRUE TEAM EFFORT

No single person could do the work that Newtown Neighbourhood Centre (NNC) does. We rely on a diverse team of individuals and partner organisations to help those doing it tough and to build a stronger local community.

And the same is true when it comes to funding our operations. Receiving financial support from a wide range of different organisations, individuals and groups – rather than just one source – is one of the strengths of NNC. It allows us to be flexible and to address many of the major social challenges facing the area, and also to reach out to people in crisis in a timely manner.

This report is aimed at recognising and thanking the diverse range of individuals, organisations and government agencies that lend their support to our work.

Like most local community organisations, NNC faces funding challenges. Changes in the way that resources are allocated for aged care and disability services mean that a smaller amount of government funding now comes our way. There is also increased competition for a limited charity dollar across our sector.

But we also see many opportunities. For example, changing demographics in Newtown mean there are now more people who are doing well financially in our community. This creates the potential for even greater support for our fundraising activities such as Newtown Festival, Newtopian Sleepout and Newtown Market. We also have a wealth of generous individuals in the local community who are willing to donate their time and energy to the Centre.

The funding that we receive helps us to meet different community needs and enables us to remain firmly planted in the heart of our community. Grants from both state and federal governments, for example, allow us to continue our work helping at-risk individuals via programs like the Boarding House Outreach Service. In many cases, the support we provide is the difference between a person having safer, more stable accommodation and sleeping on the streets. It can mean the difference between someone feeling completely alone when they are at their most vulnerable or instead feeling that they are supported and cared for.

Funds from sponsors, community groups and generous individuals

make a huge difference. They reflect the trust you have in us to spend those funds in an agile manner, addressing the systemic causes of homelessness and housing instability, while also providing practical frontline support for those who are in need. The support of all parts of the community is essential if we are going to end homelessness, domestic violence and social isolation and increase community connection in Newtown.

Sometimes, as in the case of the Newtopian Community Homeless Outreach Project, government, corporate and community funding can come together to help address a need. This invaluable work involving local community members volunteering to engage with rough sleepers is made possible with support from Inner West Council, Westpac, Uniting and individual donors.

So, to all those organisations and individuals who support us – or are contemplating supporting us – thank you. Rest assured that we value your contribution and that we strive to ensure that each and every cent contributes to building a stronger, safer, more inclusive local community.



HOMELESSNESS

Newtown Neighbourhood Centre was chosen by the NSW Government to operate the Boarding House Outreach Service in the inner west. The service is constantly evolving to ensure it creates the best outcomes for those at risk of homelessness.

76%

of clients improved their housing situation



79%

of clients had an increase in confidence



97%

of clients felt respected



"Excellence in Ending Homelessness - Adults" SHS Sector Good Practice Awards



"Leading Practitioner Award - Lara Samway" SHS Sector Good Practice Awards



Developed training for property managers working with tenants with mental illness or disability



Established Boarding House Good Practice Awards

NEWTOPIAN Outreachers

A heartfelt thank you to the 20 'Newtopian Outreachers' who work with us to tackle one of our community's biggest challenges: homelessness. After formal training, these dedicated community volunteers work in teams every week to offer assistance to people experiencing homelessness around Newtown.

From January to June 2018, they met with 55 people, some on multiple occasions, and were able to connect 11 individuals with case managers. One couple helped by the team has recently found housing and NNC arranged furniture for them.

"As members of the Newtopian team, we can help a homeless person by providing them a bit of support, encouragement and hope!"

-Liz Tang, Newtopian Outreachers

NEWTOPIAN Sleepout

The inaugural Newtopian Sleepout was held mid-winter 2017 to raise awareness of and funds for those at risk of homelessness. Thank you to the 60 brave individuals who experienced a night of rough sleeping and raised over \$60,000!



FAMILIES AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Newtown Neighbourhood Centre (NNC) knows that a safe community comes from safe women and children. In addition, a primary cause of homelessness among women and children is family and domestic violence. In response, NNC provides a safe space and a soft entry point into services that allow for early intervention. In some cases, the abuse has been so normalised or is carried out in such a subtle way that the women don't initially see a problem. We create a space where women can see that viable alternatives exist.



Newtown Early Intervention Service Hub (NEISH)



Yoga



Play group



Counselling



Kindy Club



Baby massage

"I can't believe I was able to get all the support I needed in one place. I was able to get assistance for housing, Centrelink and financial counselling."

-Nancy, single mother, 44

AGEING + SOCIAL ISOLATION



NNC supports over 300 people who are frail, aged or living with mental and/or physical disabilities by providing shopping services, social support, skills development and recreational activities.

"The group has made all the difference to me and I now see things in a more positive way. It has also allowed my husband to maintain his independence."

- Mersina, Multicultural Social Support participant

NEWTOWN VIBE

The Newtown Vibe Roundtable was established in 2015 in response to community concerns about safety and changing culture. Newtown Neighbourhood Centre is well placed to chair this meeting which brings together many different elements of the community on potentially contentious issues. Participants include local Member for Newtown Jenny Leong, local police, Inner West and City of Sydney Councils, Newtown Precinct Business Association, Liquor Accord, local venues, ACON and Reclaim the Streets. By bringing all the relevant parties to the same table, coordinated and appropriate action can be taken.

