



From The President!

It is hard to believe on the 1st May 2010 our registered charity "You Have A Friend" will be two years old. We consider a most generous donation of funds to purchase a second van, as our birthday gift. For this wonderful donation we are most grateful to Mrs Rosalba Gustin who on behalf of the Mamma Lena & Dino Gustin Foundation donated the finance. This will now

provide us the ability to continue the support so needed by the homeless and marginalised in the Tweed district. We will be much more mobile and effective in this support of our friends at our outreaches with meals, fresh fruit, vegetables and bread to the hundreds of people in need on the Tweed.

Our outreaches serve over 300 meals a week to many living on the streets, in cars, or couch surfing. The Tweed district has the state's second highest number of homeless behind Sydney. Over the last few months I have visited Federal, State and local council politician in the Tweed Heads district regarding the lack of housing, crisis accommodation or even just a drop-in centre in the area. All to no avail and I am left once more fighting to get recognition from the authorities that there is a major homeless crisis in the district. We are now supporting women sleeping in squats in Tweed Heads, many people with mental issues, domestic violence victims and many others living in cars, behind buildings or under bridges. These people are conveniently forgotten and abandoned by the authorities.

Our Coolangatta/Tweed outreach regularly supports 30 – 40 persons each outreach. Chinderah has regular attendance of 20 – 40 persons and Murwillumbah is currently supporting 30 – 50 persons each week. Sadly, more and more children between the ages of 1 to 14 are attending our outreaches. We are in contact with approximately 20 children a week and provide food, love and care to each. Our Court outreach has progressed in leaps and bounds over the last few months and for that we thank Lorraine who has been responsible for the "new look" at the court house in Tweed Heads. Our gold coin donations have noticeable improved and in some cases more than doubled with the new displays, professionalism and a new variety of sandwiches.

In the last few months, we have successfully begun our "Food-Drop" outreach. Woolworths at Tweed Centro has authorized our charity to distribute their day old fresh fruit, vegetables and bread to the friends we support. This we gladly accepted and on four days a week we provide fresh food to two caravan parks in Chinderah as well as a housing commission estate in Tweed Heads. Our goal is a seven day fresh food "Food Drop" service to other local areas as well.

Our Murwillumbah Thursday BBQ volunteer lunch team continues to provide an amazing service. We also thank Wendy and her community centre volunteers who support us each week with the location, utensils, gas and equipment. It is at this BBQ each week that we will provide our latest venture, "bingo". The object being to alleviate some of the boredom many of the unemployed, marginalised and homeless people in the district experience. Prizes will be food hampers.

As always, this wonderful charity would not be possible were it not for the efforts of our 55 volunteers and also the wonderful support that we receive from the St. Joseph's and St. James Primary colleges of Banora Point as well as Mt. St. Patrick's College in Murwillumbah and St. Anthony's Primary in Kingscliff who provide us such wonderful support by way of students who join us on the streets and also collecting food for the many hampers we provide each week. Also not to forgetting our many sponsors who ask for nothing except the chance to support our cause. Finally a special thanks to the Catholic Church in Tweed Heads who provide us facilities for storage of clothes, food, utensils and a kitchen to prepare meals in.

As always I reserve our greatest thanks for the caring love, respect and support our friends provide me and each and every one of our wonderful volunteers.

May God bless you all. John Lee ~ President

