

# CONGRATULATIONS

Helen well done on getting your painting into the final 50 of the "A" FRAME Exhibition and auction organised by Arts Access SA.

We were delighted to hear that Helen's painting also sold at the auction.

# FANTASTIC!

## recreation

### Are you interested in fishing?

We are trying to arrange some regular fishing trips with any keen anglers. If you are interested, call Merv on 8237 8786

### Do you have any stories, ideas or opinions you'd like to share with other readers?

Please call Jayne on 8237 8779 or mail your stories to **TAG Newsletter**, 213 Gouger St. Adelaide SA 5000

*a Brief History of the*

# UNITY

*Housing Company*

The Unity Housing Company was established on 1 July 2008 as a result of the merger of MACHA, Housing Spectrum Housing Association and Quantum Housing Association and following a takeover of Homelife Housing Association 9 months earlier.

Unity Housing is now the largest community housing provider in South Australia. It has approximately 800 properties and 160 boarding house beds with regional offices in the city, southern and northern suburbs.

The two associations were well established, respected and successful housing providers to low income and disadvantaged people in South Australia.

The amalgamation and formation of Unity Housing Company has provided an opportunity to further develop housing services to established target groups, whilst building the capacity to deliver a range of new responses through the development of a broader affordable housing program.

Unity's mission is to "contribute to the creation of a new affordable housing industry within South Australia and a mixed market that is responsive to the changing housing needs of our community".

## instant garden

A few months ago a few tenants at City Hall boarding house decided to clear the weeds and tree stumps from an area at the side of the building.

The intention was to reclaim this area and put it to a more practical use. So with a hand trowel, a piece of wood and a small axe they started.

Within three weeks they had removed all but one large tree stump. Some garden tools were supplied by Unity's Boarding House Outreach program and the job was finished in a few days.

It did not take long for vegetables and herbs to be planted producing a fantastic garden area. A BBQ was purchased with funds from Community Benefit and on the 17th of November invited guests enjoyed a relaxing BBQ lunch.

Looking forward to some of those vegetables being used at the next BBQ.

Well done guys, fantastic effort, and a big thankyou from all at Unity.



# UNITY TAG newsletter

1st Edition December 2008



**Left to Right:** Matthew Woodward, Chief Executive Officer; Julie Blake, General Manager Service Development; Sally Langton, General Manager Accommodation

## Seasons Greetings

to all our readers from the Senior Management Team at Unity.

## Message from Sally Langton

Hi, and welcome to all of our tenants and clients that are now part of Unity! My name is Sally Langton and I am the General Manager of Accommodation Services. I have worked in housing for many years now and it's one of those jobs that once its bitten you it is hard to let go and think about doing any other sort of work. I am passionate about getting great housing outcomes for people on low incomes and those who have disabilities or people who have been homeless.

Having a secure home is one of the most important things in people's lives and I am so pleased that in my job I can see every day the difference that a home can make to families and individuals across Adelaide.

I have three great teams working with me who help deliver our housing services, our City Team, Northern Team, our Southern Team and the Boarding House programme. I am so impressed by the leaders of these teams and their staff are just fantastic. It is great to work with other people, who like me, share a passion for people and great housing outcomes.

Our aim is to provide a highly relational tenancy and housing management service which works towards sustaining tenancies and keeping people housed.

We are delighted to have the Terrace ( the old Afton) opened some weeks ago, where we can house up to 95 people in the best boarding house accommodation imaginable. Again we have heard some great stories from people who have been housed in our boarding houses who have discovered what it means to have a safe and secure place to live.

I would love to invite people to contribute to our next TAG with their housing story. Please ring me on 82378777 if you would like to tell your story and have it put into print. We'd love to hear from you.

Cheers,  
*Sally*

## Day at the Park

Late October 43 tenants made the big move from Kent Town Lodge to the newly refurbished Terraces, formerly the Afton. It was a huge change for many clients as they relocated and adjusted to the new environment. For many tenants it was exciting and fun and for others it was a somewhat unsettling experience as they had to become accustomed to the new surroundings and learn about the new suburb and community they had become a part of.

The boarding house support team were aware of the anxiety experienced by some clients and acknowledged that they may take some time to settle in so 'A Day In the Park' was organized as a way to engage with tenants in a relaxed atmosphere.

On the day, Thursday the 6th of November, tenants joined the staff at the park across the road from The Terraces. Healthy food (except for the donuts which were popular!) cool drinks and a range of sporting gear was provided. Football appeared to be the most popular with 5 men having a kick of the footy whilst a few women played Bocce. Some tenants chose to walk through the Japanese Gardens which were close by.

The day was a success with 12 people attending throughout the afternoon. The laid back environment meant people were openly talking with one another and sharing a laugh. For some it was an opportunity to meet support staff they had not engaged with before and for others it was a chance to get to know other tenants.

Since the day, several clients have requested 'A Day in the Park' be repeated on a regular basis.

**Kate, Kathleen & Merv**

## Farewell Kent Town Lodge = Welcome to "The Terrace"

The day dawned at dawn, The big day had suddenly got bigger..... the packed boxes that were packed were packed and ready to go. Some helped with help. The Staff staffed, the Support Workers supported and the Removalist removed (with apologies to Dr.Suess).....

After 18 months at Kent Town Lodge we were finally moving back to South Terrace and into the brand new 95 room complex that blossomed as the fruit of so much planning and so much hard work for so long. The old Afton had certainly had a "Back Yard Blitz Makeover".

So made-over in fact that it is now called "The Terrace" Brand new it may have been but the brand new lift didn't lift like a lift should when you need it to lift!!!!!! And what a time for it to stop working - just as the furniture trucks entered the driveway, the workers happy and smiling in the knowledge that there is a lift to access the upper three levels in two buildings. Well, there was news for them, wasn't there!

As it transpired this was the only hitch on the day and what a hitch to have. We avoided hitting the panic button because, being a new building, no-one knew where it was.

Julian Aggiss, the Project Manager, was waiting backstage, I suspect in anticipation of just such an event, having built many projects and possessing inside knowledge that they don't always go as planned. The Removalist lads were saved from the stairs thanks to Julian.

A very special thanks to everybody for making the day so relaxed and stress free for each other and the tenants. My grateful thanks for the contribution from the Support Staff for providing transportation for some of the less able and helping create a calm approach to the entire day's activities. Thank you to Neil, Bill, Kate, Merv. Fantastic.

And thank you to my team of boarding house workers for your wonderful contributions not only on the day but during the weeks leading up to the move. Some of you contributed above and beyond the normal expectations. My sincere gratitude and appreciation.

A big job accomplished safely and with a minimum of fuss.

If the smiling faces of our tenants are the proof of the pudding then this is one magnificent pudding, I tell you. Tenant faces with smiles so wide they had to walk sideways through the doorways!!

**Allan Groves**

## NEW FACES AT

# UNITY

## Boarding House Outreach Support

### Kathleen Cooper

I was born in South Africa, living in New Zealand for 10 years before moving to Sydney in 1983 with my sister and parents. I've moved around Australia a bit, living in Brisbane, Melbourne and Alice Springs, before coming back to settle in Adelaide about 5 years ago. I finished a Bachelor of Indigenous Studies in 2006 and now I'm completing my last subject of Masters of Social Work. I started working for MACHA back in April 2006 with the HACC program part time, but left this year in March to finish a 4-month final placement with another organisation, and I am really happy to be back in the Unity Team.

My hobbies include gardening, seeing live bands, riding my bike and reading.

### Kate Cameron

I have recently joined the Boarding House Support Team on a full time basis.

I previously worked in Worker's Compensation, Family SAAP services, Supported Tenancy Program, and as a carer for people with Intellectual Disabilities and the Aged. I completed my degree in Disability Studies.

I really enjoy working in community services and more specifically in the Housing Sector.

My interests outside of work include Gardening, Fishing, Camping, Sewing, and being the proud (sometimes not so proud) parent of my 2 crazy cats. In the future I hope to explore other interests such as archery and rowing, I just need to find the time!

### Ian Elsegood, Unity Finance Manager

Unity welcomed Ian in August of this year to take on the challenging role of Finance Manager in our recently expanded, and expanding, organisation.

He holds an Economics degree from Adelaide University and is a Chartered Accountant. Over the years he has worked in variety of fields - accountant in number of accounting firms, finance manager for retirement village operator, business manager at low fee independent school for last 14 years

Ian was raised in Housing Trust property in inner metropolitan area of Adelaide and has lived in the western suburbs for the past 15 years

He is married with 3 teenage kids. In his spare time plays social (competitive) tennis and is involved in local church work at Port Adelaide.

### Jayne Wrigley, Manager, Support Services

I joined Unity in April of this year after 5 years managing a housing program with a large aged care organisation and 20 years in the Public Service, including as a social worker with Intellectual Disability Services. Prior to that I worked in a residential aged care facility as a domestic, cook and laundry manager.

I grew up in a Housing Trust property in the southern suburbs. Both my parents were born in Wales and migrated to Australia in 1962. My Dad liked uniforms - he worked as a Fireman, Customs Officer and served in the Navy, Army and Airforce - and my Mum picked grapes, amongst other jobs, in between raising 3 kids.

I am kept busy with 3 cats (and one husband) vying for my attention at home. I love animals of all kinds and support a number of animal charities. I also enjoy cooking, reading (biographies are my favourite) and walking.

## Health, Housing & Homelessness Expo

Members from all the Unity Support Teams pitched in to support the Expo on 11th November in the South Parklands. It was a hot day but the bands and plentiful food made the day a successful one, attracting a record number of service providers with information, freebies and free raffles to share with those who have experienced or are experiencing homelessness. The event was well coordinated and managed on the day - Margo Johnson from Shelter SA did an amazing job pulling it all together.

The Unity team put together a raffle prize consisting of a rucksack, small radio, diary, toiletries and some other goodies that would be useful to someone without a permanent place to call home. We look forward to being part of next year's Expo and hope that our readers will join us. Stay tuned for more information in next year's newsletters  
**Jayne**

## CHRISTMAS BARBECUES

- Food & Lucky Door Prizes provided  
Please note these dates in your diaries:

**Unity Central:** 12-2pm on Wednesday 17th December 2008  
Princess Elizabeth Playground, South Tce, Adelaide  
RSVP to Dave on **8237 8781**

**Unity North:** 12-2pm on Thursday 18th December 2008  
Fremont Park, Cnr Main North Rd and Yorketown Rd Elizabeth  
RSVP to Yvonne on **8283 0886**

