

AROUND THE HOUSE

AUTUMN 2019



Communities Connect for Neighbour Day 2019



To celebrate Neighbour Day this year, Unity Housing held a range of events across the region.

Neighbour Day is Australia's annual celebration of community, encouraging people to connect with those who live in their neighbourhood.

Responsibility for Australia's Neighbour Day belongs to every person, in every community.

Here at Unity Housing, we have a social responsibility to all our tenants in creating thriving communities.

This year, the official Neighbour Day date was Sunday, 31 March, with the theme of 'Loneliness – what neighbours can do to create connections'. We had a total of seven events to make it a real week of connection.

Unity Housing tenants and staff worked together to provide pathways for tenants to contribute and drive these events, making them truly community-owned.

We received more than \$3,700 in donations and even more in in-kind support.

See the highlights from our events, from Seaford Meadows to Davoren Park, above and continued on page 3.



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Welcome to the autumn 2019 edition of *Around the House*, which is a helpful guide for lonely people showing many ways to connect. Isolation can lead to health issues like depression, chronic health issues and lack of purpose.

Through the recent Neighbour Day events, Unity Housing has given various communities a very happy experience by organising barbecues, a quiz night, a community garden workshop, a planting event and morning teas. They helped people connect, left great memories and probably the desire to do it again.

There are also several stories from tenants who got out of their comfort zone like the inspiring achievers Lachlan Reid by helping homeless people, and Avinash Suvarna encouraging people with his words of wisdom.

Community housing tenant, Trevor Sparrow, is communicating in two ways: his talent of painting and being in exhibitions and participating in a course with Neami's art program in Port Adelaide.

Mandy Macleod – another painter – found the connection with the world by overcoming her shyness through exhibiting her paintings.

A great example of connection is tenant FQN's mural, done in 200 hours to collect feedback and after getting a lot of that, to be destroyed with waterbombs for fun, to show that fun is worth more than money.

Another event that brought people together was Unity's celebration of International Day of People with Disability with a morning tea for around 30 attendants.

The event presents the opportunity to challenge perception, educate others and help normalise disability in everyday life, which is made easier for quite a few tenants by living in Unity accommodation.

Not to forget the fabulous Big Issue soccer tournament with Unity tenants, in partnership with disability provider Cara, who won the tournament at their first meeting and made everybody proud.

Well, if you do not have an idea yet of how to get out of isolation and make contact, have a look at page 6 with some helpful suggestions.

You can also make connections by joining the Christmas card artwork competition and make suggestions for keeping *Around The House* interesting.

I am looking forward to receiving feedback on my new series on page 12 – 'Importance in Life'.

Thank you,
Giselle

Please send your contributions to editor@unityhousing.org.au

Unity celebrates International Day of People with Disability

Unity Housing celebrated International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD) in December 2018 by hosting a morning tea in the South Terrace parklands, with around 30 attendees including tenants.

Unity supports IDPWD in its aims to 'increase public awareness, understanding and acceptance of people living with disability and celebrate their achievements and contributions'.

Disability housing is a major element of Unity's operations and we are the largest non-government provider of housing for people living with disability in South Australia. Unity celebrates the achievements of individuals living with disability and acknowledges them, especially on International Day of People with Disability.

The 2018 event marked the 26th anniversary of International Day of People with Disability, and presents the Australian community with the opportunity to challenge perceptions, educate others and help normalise disability in everyday life.



Communities Connect for Neighbour Day 2019



New opportunities ahead for Sultan siblings

After working and living in Sydney for the past eight years, Kaine Sultan-Babij is thrilled to be permanently back in Adelaide and reunited with his sister, Unity Housing tenant, Soraya Sultan.

Although they have pursued vastly different careers – Kaine was a dancer with Indigenous Australian dance company, Bangarra, and Soraya has a background in emu egg carving, concreting and landscaping – their bond and fraternal relationship is evidently strong.

“Adelaide has always felt like a grounding place and home,” Kaine says. “Every time we came to Adelaide to perform, I always wanted to come home and stay with family here. Now that I am back, Adelaide is a base; I am looking for a place of my own and to establish myself. I want to get into producing work,

teaching classes and mentoring young indigenous dancers who are up and coming.”

Soraya is currently supported by the Partners in Recovery program, with plans to find employment and reconnect with the community. “They help people with depression to get out and meet new people,” she says. “I would love to get back out and into the work field. From high school I went straight to work doing emu egg carving, building shed fences, and I was on a yard gang doing up people’s backyards. I also did some secretarial and admin work, and concreting with my eldest brother.”

Since Kaine has been back, Soraya has enjoyed having him around to spend time and go on adventures with. “We are pretty close,” she says. “I am loving it.”





Unity Housing tenants Lachlan and Avinash receiving their awards.

Inspiring achievers awarded at Government House

On 19 February, two Unity Housing tenants – Lachlan Reid and Avinash Suvarna – received an Inspiring Achiever Award at Government House from His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le AC.

Both Lachlan and Avinash were nominated by Hutt St Centre for their awards. When asked about Lachlan's nomination, Pathways Officer Olivia Hill says: "He has shown outstanding commitment to creating opportunities for himself and applying himself to each opportunity. In the time that I have known him he has sought out Hutt St Centre services to assist him with tutoring support for his community services studies, actively engages with the Out of the Storm Program progress and planning, and has shown initiative in preparing himself for employment and interviews."

On volunteering with the Out of the Storm Program, Lachlan says: "We go around the streets and approach homeless people and give out summer kit packs that include amenities such as a drink bottle, hat, umbrella, SES cool towel and bag. I helped out between six and 12 hours a week."

Lachlan was also asked what it meant for him to get this award. "When I heard I was getting an award I was very surprised, but then felt really happy about it and overall humbled by it," he says. "It's not every day you get an award and a handshake from the Governor. Having my parents see me get this award also gave me a real sense of pride."

When Avinash was asked about the award, he said he was nominated for his positive attitude and the creative ideas he is always coming up with. Avinash said he would like to give this inspiring message and hopes that this message will inspire other people to continue with their hard work:

Every man is free to rise as far as he is able or willing. But the degree to which he thinks he is rising determines the degree to which he will rise.

Honey Bee visits two million flowers to collect 500mg of honey. Our workload is nothing compared to them. Keep working hard and smart to achieve your goal.

When MIND is weak the situation is a PROBLEM, when MIND is balanced the situation is CHALLENGE, when MIND is strong the situation becomes an OPPORTUNITY.

How to prepare your home for winter

As our lifestyles naturally change with the seasons, so should our homes. With autumn upon us and the cooler weather fast-approaching, it's time to bring out the winter woollies and start looking forward to cosy nights in. To make your home as warm and inviting as possible and ward off those winter blues, read the following smart ideas which are efficient, affordable and can be implemented on a whim.

Check your house for signs of mould

Wintry weather can contribute to problems with mould and rising damp. Look for mould in areas such as the bathroom windows and ceiling or walk-in wardrobe and places that are typically dark and damp.

Treat any small areas of mould in the early stages before it grows into a large area, making it a big job for you to clean. You may find the use of moisture absorbent beads placed in containers around your home will help you battle the onset of mould this winter. If you would like more information, ask your Housing Officer for a fact sheet on how to effectively treat mould.

Warm yourself first

It is easier to change your body temperature than room temperature, not to mention more eco-friendly. Instead of turning up the heat, put on extra layers of clothing and snuggle up in your favourite jumper, socks and ugg boots, and wear a hat or beanie even if you are inside.

Close off areas

This is perhaps the easiest temperature control method to action – simply shut doors. This works to trap and concentrate cool or warm air in a particular part of the home. If you are heating the home, close as many doors as possible to trap warm air in only the rooms you are occupying.

Is it time for a new heater?

Electric heaters are a cheap and portable option if they are not being used to heat large spaces or for long periods.

Cover up hard floors

If you have tiles, hardwood or concrete floors, rugs are an easy and effective way to cosy-up your home in winter.

Invest in a warm quilt

Wool and feather quilts are generally the best options for those seeking maximum warmth, where cotton or microfibre quilts provide lighter insulation. Bonus tip: do not put your bed against an exterior wall; you will be warmer if you leave a little space.

Block gaps

Similar to shutting doors and closing the curtains, you should block any noticeable gaps. The most common offender is gaps underneath doors, which create unpleasant draughts throughout the home. You can buy purpose-built draught stoppers or simply roll up an old towel and slide it under your door.

Source: www.homestolove.com.au



Ward off those winter blues

QUICK TIPS FOR REDUCING LONELINESS OR SOCIAL ISOLATION

Loneliness or social isolation is the lack of quality social relationships in someone's life. To reduce loneliness or social isolation we, as humans, need to have positive connection with other people as much as possible. If we do not connect with others, it can impact on our physical and mental health.

People who experience loneliness or social isolation may experience health issues such as depressive feelings, tiredness, chronic health issues and a lack of purpose in their lives.

Here are a few simple suggestions for how to reduce your loneliness or social isolation, and some tools for staying better connected. Please read and modify them as required.



1

Accept imperfection and uniqueness

Everyone has their own skills and knowledge that they can bring to any conversation or situation. Embrace yourself and share it with others.

2

Life happens

Life is a continuous fluid environment where change can happen frequently. This also happens in relationships; people grow and change, which can affect relationships in a positive (new experiences) or negative (relationships end) manner.

3

Awkwardness is okay

When we enter situations we are not familiar with, we can feel uncomfortable or out of place, but that is normal and may change over time.

4

Relationships are a two-way street

Everyone in a relationship has their own unique needs that need to be met, therefore we need to make sure we are listening to each other and ensure we embrace diversity within our relationships.

5

Find a common interest

If you sometimes struggle to start a conversation with someone else, find something that you both are interested in and explore that to start.

6

Make the conversation personal

Ask about the other person's life and explore who they are – who is important in their life? What do they do?

7

Limit online time and meet people in person

Social media can aid sometimes in meeting people's social needs. It is a tool that helps people to engage more frequently but cannot replace face-to-face contact.

8

Smile and say hello

It is okay to say g'day and smile at strangers as you pass them.

9

Give someone a hand or ask for one

We have so many untapped skills and knowledge in our community. Offering a hand may be a huge help for someone or even for yourself.

10

Volunteer

Get out there and give it a go. There are many opportunities and organisations that need volunteers; no matter how big or small, give it a try.

11

Reach out to say Hi

Now is always a good time to reconnect with someone from your past.

12

Self-care is essential

Taking care of yourself regularly is important. Go for a walk, read a book, watch your favourite show or enjoy a hot bath.

Your community in a click



Send us
YOUR pics

Unity Housing invites you to send in photos that capture and share the essence of your neighbourhood and community, for publication in *Around the House*.

Your photo could be a picturesque nature shot, show the great work that people do in your community, the issues your community faces or a story about the homes, streets or infrastructure in your area.

Think about photos showing everyday things that make an impact in your neighbourhood. You do not need an advanced camera; most mobile phones take good quality images.

Please include the location, your name so your photo can be credited, and a sentence or two that explains what your image captures.

If your photo contains anything that could identify people, you must make sure you have their permission before taking it.

Email your photo to editor@unityhousing.org.au (must be jpeg format and at least one megabyte in size) or call **8237 8750** for more details.

CLOSING DATE: Friday, 14 June



Kicking goals at The Big Issue soccer tournament

In January, Unity Housing tenants, in partnership with disability support provider Cara, competed in and won The Big Issue street soccer tournament at an indoor sports centre in Stepney.

There were seven teams playing in the tournament, including a team from Housing Choices, Lighthouse Disability, and Headspace.

The combined Unity and Cara team were lucky to go through to the knock out stages and play off against the tournament favourites, One Culture, in the grand final, which the Unity and Cara team won 4-3 in overtime thanks to three goals from The Terrace tenant Dion.

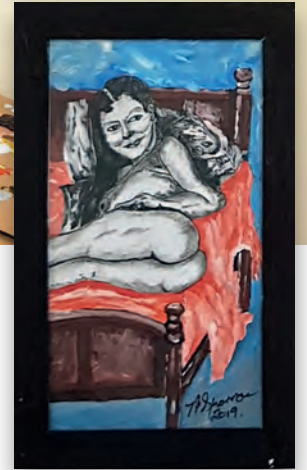
This was a fantastic win for the team considering it was the first time they had played together. It was satisfying to see the pride that the tenants took from being involved and winning this great community event.

"It was great to be part of a team, and the whole environment at the tournament was really good. Everyone was really friendly and it was awesome that we won."

Jason, participant

The Community Street Soccer Program promotes social inclusion and personal change for participants by providing support and promoting participation, inclusiveness, commitment and team spirit.





Trevor reconnects with his talent

From not painting for more than 30 years to having his artwork displayed in several exhibitions within a few months of each other, self-taught sketcher Trevor Sparrow is a passionate and creative artist who loves what he does.

"When I was younger, before I got married, I used to do a lot of painting and sold a piece – a Spanish galleon shipwrecked on the beach – in the art gallery (of South Australia)," Trevor says. "I always mucked around with art in school but never took it up seriously. I just picked up a pencil one day and knew I had something. I didn't touch it since I became homeless, then just started mucking around with pencils again one day when I was in a boarding house and got the urge to go back to it. It influenced me to get back into art. I have forgotten a lot but have got back into it slowly."

Trevor, a retired carpenter, has been a tenant with Unity Housing since July 2018 and has connected with Neami's Jump Art visual arts program at Fontanelle Gallery and Studio in Port Adelaide, where he attends an art group every week for two hours.

"Getting involved with Fontanelle did me a world of good," he says. "They suggested I put my artwork in and they organised exhibitions where I have had my work displayed."

I have been using acrylic since I started going there and want to get back to oil. They might ask you to try something or just do your own thing. I paint what's in my head; I just pick my visions and that's what I see. I might be influenced by something that's in the news. I like variety and I like to experiment with different things. We are all different and that's why I say there's no such thing as a bad painting."



If you are interested in viewing or purchasing Trevor's artwork, you can contact him on 0411 623 871.



Christmas card artwork

COMPETITION

Would you like to see your artwork featured on the front cover of the 2019 Unity Housing Christmas card?

We would like to honour our tenants by showcasing their creative and artistic talents on the cover of our 2019 Christmas card.

Submit your artwork and you could win up to \$250 in prize money.

1st prize = \$250

2nd prize = \$150

3rd prize = \$100

In addition to displaying your artwork on the cover of our Christmas card, award winners' names and artwork will be profiled in the first edition of *Around the House* in 2020, along with being displayed at the Tenant Spring Party in October this year for everyone to see.

How to enter:

- All tenants are welcome to enter
- Be as creative as you wish
- This competition is not limited to painting and drawing – feel free to let your imagination run wild to capture What the Festive Season means to you
- Dimensions from A5 (148mm x 210mm) up to A3 (297mm x 420mm)
- Visit your nearest Unity office to drop off your piece by no later than 5pm Friday, 6 September

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Entries will be judged by a selection panel comprising Unity staff and tenants. All artwork submitted will remain the property of Unity Housing. Christmas card production costs will be the responsibility of Unity Housing. For more information, please contact the Editor on 8237 8750.

Christmas card artwork

COMPETITION

I hereby authorise Unity Housing to use this original artwork for the purpose of the 2019 Christmas card, the cover of the first edition of *Around the House* in 2020 and any other editions, and for exhibition at the Tenant Spring Party. I agree that my artwork, along with my name, may be used and posted on the Unity Housing website, social media, printed materials and/or any marketing purposes or awareness materials for promoting Unity Housing, and that the artwork will remain the property of Unity Housing. I have read this release before signing below, and I fully understand the content, its meaning and impact of this release. I confirm that the artwork I submit is my original artwork and that no other parties have ownership rights.

Please print:

Name

Address

Contact Phone

Signature

Date

PLEASE CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE AND ATTACH FORM TO YOUR ARTWORK





Wallflower drawn into the limelight through artistic pursuits



Since childhood, Mandy Macleod has used art to express herself and to channel her shyness into a creative outlet.

"I have always dabbled in some form of art in my free time but did not exhibit my art until I was in my 30s," Mandy says. "I have always loved art, craft, and sculpture and drawing as a child – anything where I could use my hands to express myself, since I suffered quite badly with shyness."

When Mandy, a Unity Housing tenant in Millicent, first found the courage to exhibit her art, she entered into the Southern Ocean Art Prize in Robe and, fortunately, sold her very first painting, titled *Delight in Being Different*.

"Since then, I have exhibited in many galleries including Mount Gambier, Naracoorte, Robe and Millicent and sold more works," she says. "I not only sell paintings but also beading work and seashell sculptures using shells I've found exclusively along the Limestone coastal beaches. These can be seen at the Millicent Information Centre on sale, where they are a popular interest with tourists to our area."

The artwork of post-impressionist painter, Vincent van Gogh, resonates strongly with Mandy, who loves his "colour and passion".

"I am most interested in his life story, as I too suffer with depression," she says. "No matter how I'm feeling, I can still express it with paint, even if I cannot express it any other way. I enjoy painting what I see, like animals and nature, but prefer to paint what I feel. Many of my pieces reflect my deep inner feelings. I am definitely not an artist who usually paints bowls of fruit or pretty flowers. What you may see painted on the canvas most often has a different meaning entirely."

No matter how I'm feeling, I can still express it with paint, even if I cannot express it any other way.

1 HOUSE IS A HOME, 100 ARE A COMMUNITY AND 1,000 IS A DIFFERENCE

By Feral Q Nobody, tenant

Unity boarding house tenant, Feral Q Nobody (FQN), dedicated December and January to creating a temporary wall mandala mural for the enjoyment of everyone living at the boarding house. The mural design included a beautiful and eye catching fish bowl design that honoured the memory of people who have passed, and was surrounded by FQN's innovative housing model proposal that would see people building and owning their own homes within a safe, sustainable, peer-led community. To celebrate the mandala mural design, a barbecue was held and following that, staff and tenants got together and threw water bombs at the wall. Here are some words from the artist describing his project:



As I sit here writing this I can see the faded remains of the mural I created on the wall outside my room. Over 200 hours spent putting chalk on the wall only to have others throw water balloons at it and tag it with questions and comments, and I smile. Why, you ask, would I be happy? Simply because that was the plan. Many years ago, I was lucky to see a group of Buddhist monks create a sand mandala, dozens of them working for weeks, thousands of hours spent on their knees placing one grain of coloured sand at a time into one of the most beautiful things I had ever seen. Then after it was finished, they swept the sand into a pile and carried it outside to cast it to the wind. At that moment I heard the chorus of my favourite Kansas song "all we are is dust in the wind", and I understood.

One of the functions of art is to make the viewer question what they see, and I got a lot of questions from this. I am happy that others have added comments and questions to it; that's called feedback.

I have spent longer working on things just for a pay cheque so 200 hours is nothing, it was fun.

Homesmore is an idea, a dream of a self-built and governed community, to build a community to do more than provide a roof over our heads – something Unity does a great job of – but I keep thinking that if

we, the people they help so much, were able to help them, together we could do so much more to find answers to the increasing problem of homelessness. A way to do more than just get people off the streets. A way to get them into an affordable, sustainable community that will help them address their many problems. Firstly, by employing those to build not only their own home but a community with all the support services built into it. A village where people can take the first steps on the long journey back from the dark places they find themselves in.

All around the world governments, companies, charities, communities and individuals are facing the same problems. The problem is so big...at times it's overwhelming, but here's a trick I learnt as a fitter and turner: the most complex of problems is just a series of smaller problems.

Solve the first one, the easy one, then move on to the next and keep doing that until the machine works. Solve the problems that are the effects until only the cause remains then work on that. What do the Buddhists say – the journey of 1,000 miles begins with the first step.

My hope is that we can take that first step – all of us working together to build a better future.

Importance in Life

Having a Purpose

Series by Giselle Robin

Have you ever asked yourself the question,

'What is the meaning of life?'

or

'What is the purpose of living?'

There have been a large number of proposed answers to these questions from different cultures, ideological backgrounds and religions.

These questions are especially bothering people who are feeling low, bored or depressed. For all of us there have been positives in our lives. It is a good thing to write them down. Then write down what you would like to change in your life. Make the latter ones your goals. Really focus on them and you have a purpose. You will find that solutions come your way. Make sure, you only focus on the things you really want to do.

Some people choose to change their health, work, education, social contacts, get involved in sports or cultural events, become members of clubs, travel, just follow a hobby or do some work for the community.

Everybody wants something from life and it does not just come from hoping for it. It does not come easy. You have to work hard for it and enjoy it when you achieve it. Keep setting small, medium and big goals constantly in life and work towards achieving them.

Life is a gift.
Living is a purpose.

Get AROUND THE HOUSE straight to your inbox



Would you prefer to receive **Around the House** electronically rather than in the mail?

If so, please email **editor@unityhousing.org.au** with your full name and preferred email address and we will add you to our electronic mailing list.



Would you like to be involved? Get in touch!

Unity Housing would like to hear your ideas on how we can continue to provide interesting, informative and creative content in this newsletter. We are committed to increasing opportunities for tenants and encouraging participation, especially through *Around the House*.

If you have an idea, would like to be involved or just want to know more, then please get in touch by

phoning **8237 8750**,
emailing **editor@unityhousing.org.au**
or writing to

**The Editor – 81 Osmond Terrace,
Norwood SA 5067.**

Key dates for the next edition

The deadline for content submission for the next *Around the House* is

Friday, 14 June

Tell us your ideas and send us your articles or photos via the contact details above.