

AROUND THE HOUSE

WINTER 2017



Unity Housing tenant Barree Small, CEO Matthew Woodward, tenant Sheree Lockwood and Community Development Worker Mel Allsop at the AHI Awards night.

Unity wins Tenant Led Initiative Award

On the evening of Tuesday, May 23, the Australasian Housing Institute (AHI) held its bi-annual South Australian Awards for Excellence in Social Housing at The Tivoli Hotel in Adelaide's CBD.

It was a successful night for Unity; we won three of the eight award categories including the Tenant Led Initiative for our art exhibition that was planned and conducted as part of the South Australian Living Artists Festival by members of The Terrace Boarding House art group and community housing tenants.

The art group had minimal art experience and, through support and encouragement of each other and with guidance from Unity's Community Development Worker Mel Allsop, they succeeded in holding a successful exhibition, selling more than half of the 60 pieces on display and earning more than \$1,000 in art sales.

The group worked hard in the lead up to the event with one tenant, Sheree Lockwood (pictured above, second from right), taking a leadership role in the group, sharing her skills and offering advice about different techniques using different mediums. Sheree organised and facilitated sessions outside of the scheduled sessions to assist the group to get their pieces completed. As well as this, she curated the exhibition and gave a speech to the guests on the opening night.

Community housing tenants were invited to be involved in the exhibition. This was the first time the two tenant groups had prepared an event together, which has had positive individual, community and organisational impacts. The tenants created a professional exhibition and felt a great sense of pride when they saw all their work displayed, and especially when they witnessed how well the exhibition was received by the local community.

Neighbour Day movie night connects communities

The annual Neighbour Day movie night, held in the South Terrace parklands on March 24, received a positive attendance of more than 100 people. There were all the makings for a great night – a fabulous movie, perfect warm weather and the beautiful parklands location – and no one was disappointed.

The event is a free, open-air celebration for the local community held by the City of Adelaide, Unity Housing, UNO, Helping Young People Achieve, Hutt St Centre, the South East City Residents' Association, and St John's Anglican Church. It brings together the people next door, across the street or in your neighbourhood or city.

*Continued
page 5*





FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Warm winter welcomes to you all. I am Sheree, a fellow Unity Housing tenant since 2013 and this issue's Editor.

This edition of Around the House features snapshots of some of our tenants' previous housing experiences and their journey with Unity. As a 'Unitarian' I have had many positive experiences and opportunities, and was asked to share my story with you, which you can read on page 4. I hope my story shows how adversity can be overcome with perseverance, a good attitude, and keeping yourself surrounded with positive, genuine and supportive people.

I am a singer/songwriter and now, with secure and affordable housing, I can move forward; developing my craft, recording my debut EP, and making preparations to perform as a professional artist in the music festival circuits.

Speaking of artistry, through The Terrace Boarding House I am involved in the art and woodwork groups. The feedback, support and encouragement from other group members assisted in inspired ideas and a comfortable environment.

I have discovered that Unity gives tenants a variety of ways to be involved, and a capacity to provide diverse activities for tenants. They welcome suggestions and endeavour to do what they can. A perfect example of this is the idea of the tenant art exhibition, which became the tenants' debut 2016 South Australian Living Artists show.

If you want to try something or embrace challenges, trust in yourself that you will find the way. We never know what opportunities may eventuate just from getting involved.

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

Unity quiz night raises more than \$440 for art group

Unity's

second community quiz night took place at the Box Factory on Friday, May 26. Once again, we had a packed venue with the local community showing their continued support for our events. We had 60 people participate in the quiz altogether and it was great to see everyone getting into the spirit of the night. The quiz night has always been hosted as a free event and it was really encouraging when attendees expressed their gratitude for the night by purchasing raffle tickets to win a variety of art works made by the Hutt St Centre's art group. More than \$440 was raised in raffle ticket sales with every cent going back to the art group for materials. This is a significant amount of money for which we are very grateful. Congratulations to the winners on the night (one group pictured below).



THANK YOU

We would like to especially thank Unity staff member Trevor who did a fantastic job as the night's quiz master. There were many donated goods from The Hairdresser on Hutt and from Unity staff that made up the prize hampers for the winning tables and door prizes. Thank you also to Unity tenants and staff who helped before and on the night, and to Adelaide City Council for letting us use the Box Factory once again. Stay tuned for the next exciting community event.

UNITY SEEKS FUNDING FOR WOODWORKING ENTERPRISE



Unity's Community Connect Program has applied for State Government funding through Fund My Community to expand their woodworking program into a social enterprise.

Funding for the project, called 'Cut It Out' Social Enterprise, will provide woodwork classes and training; website sales; and a secure platform for selling woodwork items as well as support and mentoring for tenants seeking employment.

All Unity boarding and community housing tenants will be invited to partake in either making woodwork items for sale or helping to set up the online sales platform. Woodworking workshops will be run at the Glandore Community Centre where participants will be able to work on group or solo projects. They will then sell items they make on a created website, and the money received will be shared between the maker and the enterprise so that both will benefit and it will be sustainable.

Applications for funding through Fund My Community are now closed. If successful, Unity will receive \$45,000 for the project.

Unity's woodworking program has been hugely successful. Here is what course instructor, Manny, had to say:

"I would like to begin by saying what a pleasure it has been to have had the opportunity to work with Unity Housing and all the course participants."

"Over the last two years, we have had 26 different attendees. We try to encourage an environment where everybody looks after everybody else, from the first induction to the very last session."



"It has been very satisfying to watch the collective and the individual confidence grow over the course of the last two years. That's confidence in the woodworking sense as well as in the social interactions, and also more importantly in self-belief. A collective of individuals began the course but a team finished it."



Perseverance gets Sheree back on her feet

In 2012 Sheree Lockwood's life was turned upside down when she sustained a vehicle head injury, resulting in her being unable to work and, with rent prices steadily increasing, Sheree was unable to afford private rental on her own.

"I'd had years of different landlords and always rented privately," Sheree says. "In 2012 I had to find a new place to live and the affordability was ridiculous so I struggled to find rent I could afford by myself. Through the difficulty of it all, especially the medical issues I was going through, I couldn't decide what options to take. I had to move out, and I had no choice but to try house sharing and as I expected, it exacerbated my medical problems. The house sharing went pear shaped and I found my way to Catherine House through a crisis service then onto a sobering up clinic for sleeping purposes, which was my only option."

Following her time there, Sheree redirected her address with Centrelink to "no address" and that's when she was connected to outreach service Street to Home. "They were my link to Unity Housing," Sheree says. "I'd never heard of Unity or their boarding houses."

"I was given a lot of information then I was interviewed by Unity staff and offered a place at The Terrace Boarding House, which was just amazing."

Having not had a stable residence to live and rest caused significant worsening of Sheree's head and spine injuries. "It was great to move into The Terrace because I knew I could just rest," she says. "It was knowing that no one knocks on your door randomly and Unity staff were doing all the right things. It was quiet and I could tell the staff were aware of putting people with the right groups. It was a chance for recuperation."

With a safe and established environment to call her home, Sheree's back spasms and chronic conditions improved and she began to engage in group activities

at The Terrace, including a veggie garden, art class and woodworking group. "I'd always wanted to paint but never did so it was really cathartic and not too physically demanding," she says. "With the woodworking, I saw the class advertised in Around the House and thought I'd really love to do that. It took me some time to get ready and be able to go to that consistently but I was physically able to get to the classes and I absolutely loved it."

In November 2015, an opportunity arose for Sheree to move into private rental.

"Unity staff got the process for that going and I was offered something but it didn't feel quite right so I said no and kept living at The Terrace," she says. "Then I was offered to look in the city and the unit they showed me was awesome."

"I'm so glad I'm living here; it's central to all my specialists and I like that I'm nearby to The Terrace and can still be involved and see people there. Being here has really established my love for city living."

Sheree's experience of transitioning from the boarding house to her own unit was "positive and amazing". "I was definitely ready and it was perfect timing," she says. "Unity gave me a starter pack with things like pots, pans and utensils, and The Salvos offered a free bed. I also received essential furniture and white goods through the Wyatt Trust's Small Grants Program. I couldn't believe it; it was all so helpful. All the opportunities that have happened wouldn't have happened without Unity."

As Sheree looks around her living room and contemplates which art pieces she should place where, she can't stop smiling as she says, "Now this is the journey I decide, not the journey I'm thrown into. I have a sense of reassurance and security. I can come home to my sanctuary."



Neighbour Day movie night connects communities



"It was so fantastic to have the local community come out and support the event so enthusiastically," Community Development Worker Mel Allsop says.

"We counted about 120 attendees, around 15 per cent being The Terrace Boarding House tenants. The night went off without a hitch and the movie – Hunt for the Wilderpeople – got a great response from the crowd with people hooting laughter throughout.

"I would like to thank all of the staff who came along to support the event and helped in the lead up to and during the event, especially the Tenant Services Officers. The tenants at The Terrace also need a very special mention; their help with these events is absolutely priceless. They are so willing to do everything they can to help, notably the letterbox box drop of 1,000 flyers around the local neighbourhood. When I asked neighbours how they heard about the event, they all said they got a flyer in their mailbox."



Frank's soulful music resonates worldwide

Adelaide-based singer-songwriter Frank Yamma's ability to cross musical and cultural boundaries has earned him the reputation as one of Australia's most significant indigenous songwriters.

Born and raised in Alice Springs, Frank's love for music developed during his primary years, watching his widely renowned musician father, the late Isaac Yamma, sing western style songs in traditional language. "My father was in a band before I was born and my brothers were in a band too," Frank says. "My mother passed away when I was 12 and my father when I was in my late 20s. They had a rough life. Mum saw me perform when I was young. Dad taught me just by playing along, just by watching him. I was always watching his fingers as he played guitar and sang. I learn by my ears."

An initiated Pitjantjatjara man who speaks five languages, Frank sings in his native language and in English. His powerful songs, magical guitar playing and deeply evocative voice are all there in his compelling albums. Frank's songs are honest and expressive, as he writes about his country and his people. Frank's brutally honest tales of alcohol abuse, cultural degradation, respect for the old law and the importance of country highlight his ability to communicate profound matters with grace and conviction.

Frank's music has taken him to many parts of the world – Hong Kong, America, London, Ireland, Germany, Russia, Canada, and around Australia. Announced as the first Australian artist to be represented at a WOMEX showcase in five years, in October 2014 Frank joined the bill at WOMEX '14 in Santiago de Compostela in Spain, hand-picked from more than 850 applications to perform alongside just three dozen acts at the key global event in the world music scene. This was both an honour and an acknowledgement to Frank's unique story and music.

Although he's now living a quieter, less hectic life in the inner north of Adelaide in a Unity Housing home, Frank is in the process of recording more songs and is planning a few interstate trips during the rest of the year, including Tasmania to play some shows. "When I was younger I was full of energy to enjoy travelling but as you get older things change and it's a bit harder," he says. "I still really enjoy the atmosphere and the skill when I play and see the audience enjoying it."



Photo credit: Marie Cardinale.

Tenants and staff brave the shave (or colour!)

Some of our wonderful tenants and staff shaved or coloured their hair to help raise money for the Leukaemia Foundation World's Greatest Shave – one of Australia's biggest fundraising events. On March 17, The Terrace Boarding House tenants Kingsley, Frank and Darren, and Unity staff members Rhys, Martin and Lisa, shaved or coloured their hair to raise more than \$800 combined. Afterwards, a barbecue lunch was enjoyed by all. "It was a great effort," Frank says. "See you next year!"



SAVE THE DATE

2017 Tenant Party

When: Thursday, October 12
Where: Western Youth Centre
– 79 Marion Road, Cowandilla
Time: 11am – 2.30pm

Enjoy a **FREE** lunch, raffle prizes, face painting and much more!

Invitations will be sent out in coming weeks.

TAKE A WATER USAGE SURVEY

Is the PRICE OF WATER FAIR?

Have you had difficulty with water bills?

Uniting Communities advocates on behalf of low income and marginalised people. We are looking at how water is priced and the flow on effects for renters on low incomes.

If you are a tenant in a rental situation, you are invited to complete a short survey at <https://www.research.net/r/CostofWater>

 **UNITING COMMUNITIES**

A HOME TO CALL HER OWN

I see home as a sanctuary; everything positive, everything good is at home.



Losing her beloved grandparents and subsequently her unit was the beginning of Alicia Morphet-Edwards' fall into a downward spiral that, at its worst, saw her living on the streets and using drugs to "wipe away the emotions and shut down".

"Everything snowballed for me," she says. "After I lost my unit I started to couch surf and used up resources spending a couple of nights here and there. I was couch surfing at a friend's house for a few months then an incident happened there and I could no longer stay. That moved me onto the next level of hardship and I was on the streets. The term for that is 'street tour'. I was staying in places like public toilets, parks, and under trees. I would use drugs to keep myself up all night because it was too dangerous to close my eyes and fall asleep. When you're engaged in drug use you think to yourself you want to be a good person and do right but you're stuck in the same circle."

Detached from her family, Alicia's support network was limited and her unstable lifestyle was not improving. "I had a few people say, 'You're floating around and your head isn't in the right place'," she says. "They told me about a homeless service so I called them and they put me onto Hutt St Centre. I realised I had to make changes and Hutt St Centre gave me the opportunity of a lifetime."

Hutt St Centre facilitated Alicia's move into emergency accommodation at Catherine House then into a Unity boarding house in the CBD. Once settled, Alicia was determined to focus on getting a job, and set herself the goal of obtaining hospitality work. "When I got

into Unity in August I started putting my resume out and calling places," she says. "I wanted to progress and get my own unit so I ventured out on my own pursuit. I did as many hours as I could, I did cash in hand jobs and a few trial shifts and I kept ringing until I got opportunities, I always persisted. I got a job as a kitchen hand and once I had pay slips I was able to apply to rent my own place."

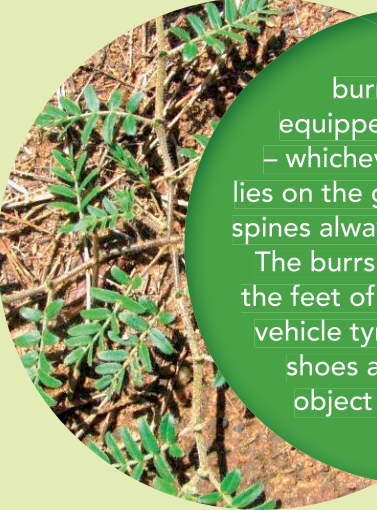
Alicia credits Hutt St Centre and Unity for their vital support that enabled her to change her situation and improve her life. "Hutt St Centre have been my main support," she says. "They helped me organise things I needed for work and they are very caring, and the Unity staff were great. There is a real routine at the boarding house that keeps you in time. Unity really did wonders for me and the experience was fantastic."

From using her clothes as a blanket to keep warm on the streets to having completed numerous hospitality certificates and earning her own income, Alicia is "more than proud" of herself and what she has achieved. "It's really good to share where I've come from, and I hope my story encourages people," she says. "Coming from where I was to having this unit, I see home as a sanctuary; everything positive, everything good is at home. As hard as it was, I am happy to do it on my own. There are people I really admire and who have inspired me. If it wasn't for my grandparents I wouldn't have learnt work ethic and taking care of yourself and growing up. Taking that in is why I strived to do my best. I know they would be proud of me. I know I lived the wrong life for a while but I've redeemed myself. I walk in my door now and I feel like a queen."

A pesky garden weed and how to remove it

Wetter conditions than normal have given weeds a good hold in lawns. One weed in particular that you might have come across recently is Caltrop.

Caltrop comes up and flowers with a yellow flower very early. Flowers are produced from spring to autumn, and are small, less than 1cm in diameter, and have five petals. Caltrop produces woody burrs with sharp rigid spines, which can cause injury in urban and recreational areas.



The burrs are well-equipped for dispersal – whichever way the fruit lies on the ground, one of the spines always points upwards. The burrs readily attach to the feet of animals, clothing, vehicle tyres, rubber-soled shoes and almost any object that is placed on it.

There is a wide range of herbicides available to control Caltrop including Broadleaf spray with MCPA and dicamba or glyphosate or a mixture of both. You only need to spray the weed, not the ground; it does not need to be running off and puddling. Spray weeds first thing in the morning. Preventing the spread of Caltrop is the best control method.

Hand-pulling with a towel can be effective in small infestations. Pull from the root crown in order to remove the long tap root. Pick them up very carefully with the seeds (caltrop seeds can remain dormant in the soil for up to five years) and put them in the rubbish bin.



Unity represents sector at disability seminar



Staff from Unity Housing volunteered their time to represent the community housing sector at the *Learning in the Disability Sector Exhibition and Seminar* in April. Pictured are Unity staff Rachel and Andrea. The purpose of the seminar was to inform the community of the learning and employment opportunities available in the disability sector.

Member for Light, Tony Piccolo MP, facilitated the event, which was held at the Adelaide North Special School in Munno Para in association with the Disability Workforce Hub. It was well attended by people living with disability including their carers and families, and teachers in special education, as well as a number of service providers and advocacy groups from both the not-for-profit and for-profit sectors, government agencies, disability service providers, employment services, and small business advisors.

Got what it takes to be editor? Get in touch!



Unity is committed to increasing opportunities for tenants and encouraging participation in many ways, especially through *Around the House*. If you would like to contribute your ideas and skills and make a difference as editor of *Around the House* we would love to hear from you.

Please email editor@unityhousing.org.au or phone Alexandra on **8237 8750** to discuss this role in further detail and find out how you can get on board. Whether it's just for one edition or on a regular basis, all tenants are welcome to contribute.

Key dates for the next edition

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

Friday, July 28.

Please email your ideas, articles and photos to editor@unityhousing.org.au or phone **8237 8750**.