

ST VERONICA WELFARE COMMITTEE

EMAIL NEWSLETTER NO 45 – AUGUST 2023

admin@stveronica.org.au

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Dear St Veronica Supporters, welcome to the Committee's first newsletter for 2023. My tardiness in contacting you, our valued supporters, reflects an exceptionally busy year for our volunteers and as well as for many of the Committee's overseas centres.

Following an extremely successful 2022, the Committee was challenged in several ways in 2023 including Telstra's sale of the West End internet and telephone network, illness and mishaps of volunteers or their family members, and, for me, a computer crash! I hope those who tried to phone the Committee during the transition from Telstra to Opticomm, the new service provider, have not been inconvenienced. With assistance from Telstra, St Veronica's is now back online and has retained its old phone number 07 3844 7423.

Despite the above, the Committee has been blessed with opportunities to provide much-needed funds both to educate sponsored students and respond to the needs of poor communities affected by tragedy.

Dear Supporters, St Veronica's needs additional volunteers. Most weeks several of our shop volunteers work a minimum of 3 and sometimes 4 days. Similarly, workers in the office put in long hours. These are huge commitments from retirees who may have envisaged a life of leisure complemented by an undemanding but meaningful volunteer commitment.

Please do seriously consider volunteering. It is a rewarding experience and has helped all of us to form new friendships and, especially in the shop, to have fun.

**More volunteers
urgently needed for
shop & office**

Thanks to kind-hearted donors and the hard work of volunteers the Committee completed its normal April disbursement and provided emergency financial assistance to refugees fleeing Manipur, India, because of the appalling ethnic violence. Funds were also forwarded to the Philippines for the education of disadvantaged girls, and a donation sent to Care Australia to support the victims of the Türkiye earthquake.



Some of the refugee children from Manipur, India.
181 people were murdered, homes burnt to the ground.
Approximately 54,500 people displaced.
With assistance from a kind-hearted donor, the Salesian Sisters in Shillong are resettling children and their families.

This year's **Annual General Meeting** at the end of April was a pleasant, well-attended event. At the meeting Mrs Fay Roberts' outstanding contribution to the Committee's work was acknowledged. At 91 years of age, Fay had reluctantly advised she was unable to continue in the position of shop coordinator -a role she has superbly filled for decades.



Some of the volunteers and attendees at the Annual General Meeting
(Fay is in the front row second from left)

Also resigning was Treasurer, Mrs Elizabeth Cole, who was planning to pursue other interests. However, unforeseen circumstances have prevented the new Treasurer, Mrs Jean Day, from fulfilling the role at present. The Committee and its beneficiaries are deeply indebted to Elizabeth who has continued in the role she so ably filled last year. Elizabeth, I cannot thank you sufficiently for your generous, magnanimous spirit. As you are aware, we could not manage without you.

The remaining Committee members as a result of the election are: Mrs Margaret Kerwin (President), Mrs Jan Drake (Vice President), Mr Michael Kerwin (Secretary), Ms Sue Fagg and Mrs Lee Duffy (Shop Coordinators).

During the year the Committee has raised funds for the Salesian Sisters in Mumbai to assist them provide educational programs for approximately 400 Varli tribal children from ten villages in the Indian Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli region. The Sisters' goal is to educate the children through exposure to a regular academic curriculum, combined with a program focusing on social awareness, personality development, self-esteem, manners, personal rights and responsibilities, health and hygiene.

Other appeals during 2023 have focused on the construction of toilets for the disadvantaged Gumuz people in Galyarogda, Ethiopia; the needed exercise and playground facilities for the Madonna Centre for 106 severely mentally challenged children in Thrissur District, Kerala, India; and funds to enable the Sisters of St Ann to run a health camp including medical and dental check-ups for 400 disadvantaged children in Melmidalam, Tamil Nadu, India.



Left: A poor Gumuz family in Galyarogda, Ethiopia.

Right: Madonna Centre exercise play-ground in need of maintenance

Below: Some of the Children requiring health Checkups, Nava Jeevan Illam, Melmidalam



An update from Father Augustine, Ethiopia, plus Christmas Appeal Details:

Email 24 August 2023:

Discussing the current situation in the various mission stations and on-going tension and unrest because of the recent Tigrayan Rebel uprising and consequent war, Father advises: ***'At Galyarogda in the Gumuz settlements so far there is no electricity. In the near future also, they will not get it.***

It is necessary for the children for their studies and the families to protect the domestic animals. Still we are in need.'

Father Augustine continues: ***'The schools are going to open by September. Could you please keep in mind the poor Gumuz school-going children (Gumuz are the most under-privileged group, considered low caste and live in pathetic situations). We need to provide school materials (note books, uniforms and stationery) .. Thank you for your sensitivity to the poor Gumz people'.***

'As part of the (compulsory) midday meal program in Goro, the school is providing eggs to the children for lunch. Chickens are needed to continue this program.'

In response to Father's email, St Veronica's is selling **Christmas card gifts** to assist in the purchase of **solar lamps and torches**.

It is also selling cards to provide **school essentials** for poor Gumuz students as well as cards for the purchase of chickens to provide the **midday meal** for the students attending primary school in Goro.

A Christmas card for a solar lamp is selling for Au \$20.00



**Above and Right:
A disadvantaged**

**Gumuz community embraces the wonder and convenience
of solar cells which provide students with
an opportunity to study at night**



A Committee Christmas card to supply a poor Gumuz student with school essentials is selling for Au \$15.00 per card.



Gumuz family dwelling

The provision of essential educational supplies enables a young child to study and can help a family rise out of poverty

A Christmas card for Au \$10.00 provides funds for the purchase of chickens for the Government requirement for schools in Goro to provide students' midday meals



Goro women peel eggs for students' lunches

Dear Supporters, if you are interested in purchasing one or more of the St Veronica Christmas cards, please follow the steps below:

Step 1. I am interested in purchasing (please tick and indicate number of cards)

- \$20 - a gift card for Solar System with lamp and torch
- \$15 - a gift card for purchase of educational essentials for a poor student
- \$10 - a gift card for purchase of chickens for student lunches

Step 2. Fill out your details:

Name:	
Street Address:	
	Total Amount:
Email Address:	

Step 3. Mail your order to St Veronica Welfare Committee, P.O. Box 5098 WEST END 4101 OR email your order to admin@stveronica.org.au OR telephone your order through to 07 3844 7423.

Payment methods available:

- a. Visa or Master card (please circle):

Card Number: _____

Cardholder's Name:

Signature: _____ Expiry Date: ____/____

INTERNET TRANSFER or DIRECT DEPOSIT (Please contact the office for further details)

**THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH
FOR SUPPORTING THE ST VERONICA
CHRISTMAS APPEAL**



Margaret Kerwin and the St Veronica Community

STUDENTS AVAILABLE FOR SPONSORSHIP



CHAUHAN VAISHNAVI SURESHBHAI

**Vaishnavi is in 9th Standard.
Her birthdate is: 14.05.2010**

**She attends St Francis Xavier Home in
Ahmedabad, India.**

**Vaishnavi's parents have divorced. She is
their only child.**

**Vaishnavi and her mother live with her
grandparents.**

**The mother, Chauhan Shilpa Sureshbhai,
works in a factory to support them. She
earns Rs 7000 (approximately Au \$120) per
month.**

**Vaishnavi studies well and enjoys dancing
and singing. She is supportive and cares for
her mother.**



LADVA BHUMI VINU

**Bhumi is also in 9th Standard.
Her birthdate is: 29.09.2009**

**She attends St Francis Xavier Home in
Ahmedabad, India.**

**Bhumi's father died on 26 July, 2021. She
has two brothers and two sisters. Her
mother works very hard working in the fields
to bring up Bhumi's family. They are very
poor.**

**Bhumi is a very good student, alive and
active. She also enjoys dancing and singing.**