

Southern Peninsula Community Support



Supporting marginalised individuals and families experiencing disadvantage within our community.

Newsletter No. 2

A compassionate community built on partnership and collaboration. Thank YOU for helping to change people's lives.

We asked and you responded... so very generously. We have been overwhelmed by the love, support and care people in the Southern Peninsula have shown for those in our community who are doing it tough.

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to create difficulties and challenges for so many people in our community. Many who struggled last year, have now found themselves with dramatically increased rental costs, unemployed, homeless, or struggling to make basic ends meet. Parents are having to decide whether to feed their children or pay the rent. This past Winter, older Australians were choosing whether to turn the heating on or go without warmth in their home.

Yet you, our wonderful community of supporters, came together to let those who are struggling know there are people who care about them and their families.

From children who saved up their pocket money, people who volunteered their time to help, families, couples and individuals who added extra items into their shopping, local businesses, community groups and service clubs who donated monies or items, the Mornington Peninsula Shire along with Trusts and Foundations who provided grants... this newsletter is dedicated to every one of you.

Each donation, whether financial, time or material, is helping people in our community who are struggling. We see you as partners to our cause, as collaborators in helping us provide vital services to those in need.

You have helped with all of our emergency relief and support programs, food, material aid, financial support, advice and referrals, to name just a few.

Without our supporters we would not be able to provide the level of care and support that we do. Read on and see the difference our wonderful community of supporters, that is YOU, have made. **We are forever grateful to you.**

Southern Peninsula Community Support is a free, confidential, impartial, independent and community-based support, information and referral service.

If someone you know in the Southern Peninsula is doing it tough, please encourage them to contact us on 03 5986 1285, email admin@spscic.org or [Facebook.com/SPCSIC](https://www.facebook.com/SPCSIC)

THANK YOU FOR HAVING OUR BACK.

These past few months have been very tough for many in our community. Sadly, the cost of housing is hitting people hard. When they turn to us for help their problems are greater and often much more complex. Right now, many find themselves unable to afford to pay essential bills such as food, mortgage or rent, and utilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic is creating deep hurt in our community, with people who've never needed our help before now coming to Southern Peninsula Community Support. They're families, elderly citizens, young adults who are worrying what will happen to them.

They are at a point where home may be their car, the streets or the foreshore. Escalating costs, particularly rental costs, are contributing to a growing crisis in the Southern Peninsula.

The first quarter of the year was busy with 1,039 visits through our main centre and 392 attendances in our walk-up Fresh Food program. Because of our community's generosity we were able to distribute across all of our programs \$143,941 worth of aid, including emergency relief such as food hampers or vouchers, and some form of financial support.

In addition, we had 853 presentations to our SPLaSh program with August being the biggest month ever with 302 presentations. **SPLaSh is unique, in that it not only provides showers, laundry, toiletries, NFA food packs and a meal, it provides a welcoming point of connection.**

The continuing lockdowns have put added pressures on our staff and volunteers. Yet through these challenging times, the team has adapted and continued to deliver outstanding support to those in need. We have continued to deliver all of our programs right the way through the

pandemic. At times we were the only agency to do so. I thank you all for your dedication and for always going above and beyond.

I am so proud of all of our staff and volunteers for the job they do, however without our wonderful community of supporters we just couldn't do the work. Thank you for having our back! **You are the reason we are able to provide the range of services and programs that help address the diverse and complex needs of each person who reaches out to us.**

Every person, business and organisation that supports us does so as a partner to our cause. It really feels like it is every member of the Southern Peninsula wrapping their arms around those who are hurting. As someone we have supported said, "we live in an awesome community". They are right. I am truly humbled by the outpouring of support we have and continue to receive. It is evident that our community – the Southern Peninsula community – truly cares for those in need.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeremy Maxwell".

Jeremy Maxwell
Chief Executive Officer

The continuing impact of COVID on our community

The COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing lockdowns are causing great hurt in the Southern Peninsula. Through it all, we have continued to remain open and accessible to our community during these unprecedented times. Here's an insight into the number of people who sought our help in the first three months of the financial year:

2,285 emergency relief visits for 11,113 services across all programs

143 case management clients for 723 case management sessions

392 presentations for 716 bags (valued at \$17,870) of fresh food in our Monday walk-up program

853 presentations for 18,188 material aid items (valued at \$36,236) in our SPLaSh program

We believe as the pandemic crisis continues, the situation for those at risk will worsen. Your support will be more critical than ever before. Please show your support for the people of the Southern Peninsula.

Donate by visiting support-your-community-appeal.raisely.com or call 03 5986 1285 to give today.

WHERE THERE'S A WILL, WE HAVE MANY WAYS...

Every person who reaches out to us is a person with real and pressing needs. When a person contacts us, sometimes their needs are as simple as providing food hampers or vouchers. Most times they require longer term support such as assisting them to identify and address those things they are struggling with in day-to-day life.

As demand for our services increases, so too is the range of complex needs people are presenting with to the centre. Rising living costs, escalating rental prices, and the ongoing effects of lockdowns is causing even greater financial hardship and mental stress on people who are already struggling to make ends meet.

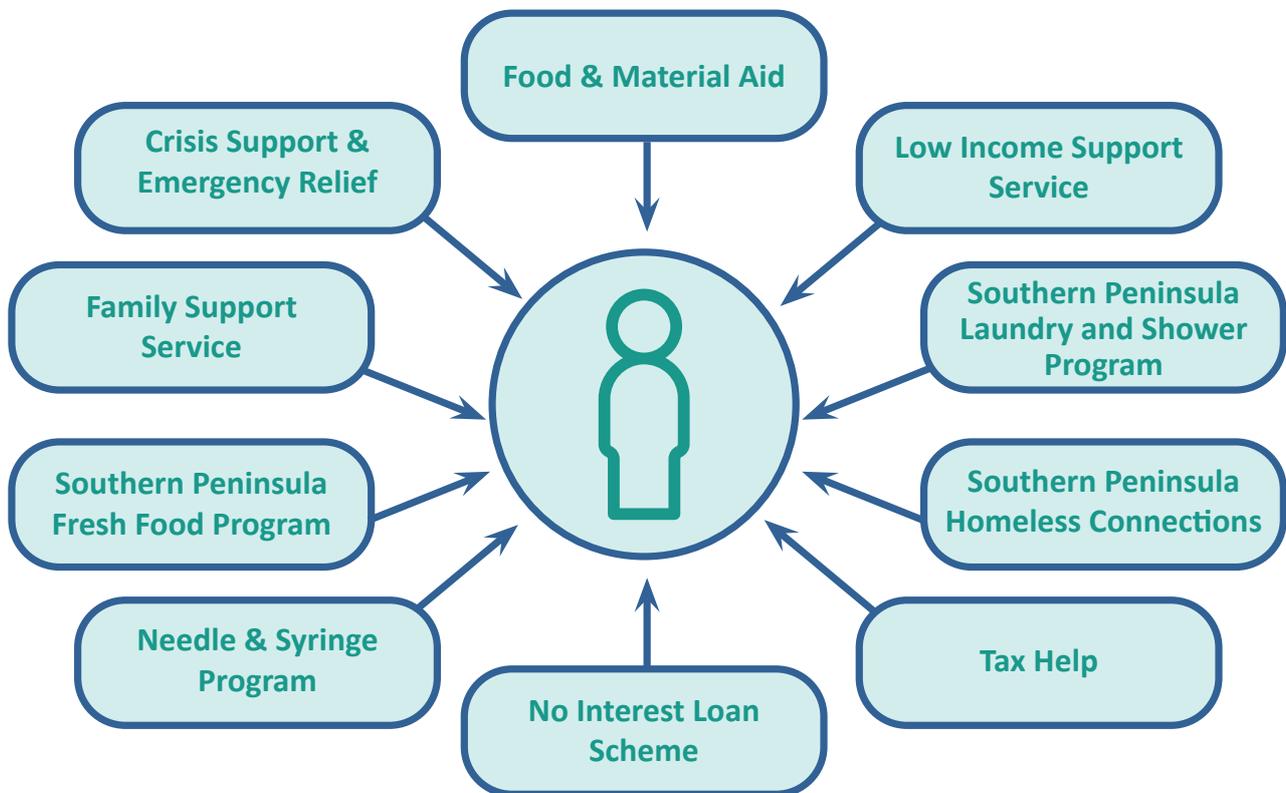
Sarah's story is representative of the hundreds of people in the Southern Peninsula:

"In times of experiencing absolute poverty, not being able to eat or support my children and going through severe times of loneliness and desperation, I've always been able to rely on this community centre... at the very least, I've always left there with food, advice, feeling genuinely cared for and more, without EVER feeling judged or less of a person for needing or having to ask for help."

Staff and volunteers are trained to understand the person's situation in a welcoming and non-judgemental way; to gently ask questions that give greater insight into their situation; to be a compassionate ear providing practical options and support; to link people into services appropriate to their needs; and to advocate on behalf of the person to utility companies and government departments to help alleviate their distress.

"By the end of the day it felt like sunshine had shone upon me just when it needed to. SPCS have been a lifeline. The way they set up my finances just over 12 months ago has got me through this last year and helped alleviate a huge amount of stress."

How we help... Southern Peninsula Community Support provides a range of inter-related programs and services to help meet the needs of the person and address their situation.



You can help people like Sarah who experience poverty in our community.

Donate today by visiting support-your-community-appeal.raisely.com or call 03 5986 1285.

A HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

We are deeply grateful for the generosity and support we receive from individuals, families, organisations, businesses and governments. You all give your time, knowledge, expertise, financial support and so much more. All of you are crucial to the ongoing delivery of our services and to ensuring support for the most vulnerable in our community. We thank you all. Below are some of the wonderful examples of how we are supported:

The members of **Zonta Mornington Peninsula** who donated their time and energy to collect and deliver socks and jocks, toiletries and the leaning tower of toilet paper! They even donated a box of chocolates for volunteers and staff.



Flinders District Lions Club who donated \$7,500 to our rough sleeper programs after hearing from us about the wide variety of challenges that people sleeping rough have - from food to shoes to showers and so much more. They got it and gave us this wonderful donation. They are just one of the many local service organisations who provide amazing support.

The **Wills family** were super busy during the Winter school holidays making and selling beautiful heat packs - and they just donated the proceeds to us! Kate, Sophie and Charlotte along with Pendles the dog brought two boxes packed with socks, shampoo, conditioner, razors and the most neatly packed recycled shopping bags you've ever seen, plus a donation of \$155 and 6 beautifully handmade heat packs! It felt a lot like Christmas.



Southern Peninsula Food For All are not only a fantastic local organisation dedicated to food equity in our area, they are also amazing supporters of our work, from the very start of the pandemic they gave us the pantry basics no questions asked.



The wonderful **Sorrento Boomerang Bags** who generously support our programs including their recent donation of \$2,000, with toiletries and beanies to the SPLaSh program along with crafting their famous Sorrento Boomerang Bags!



Sue Giles, Ladies President, and the Rosebud Country Club members for organising a most successful Golden Putter Day raising \$5,747 for our work. The Club and its members have been wonderful supporters of our Emergency Relief programs and we are extremely grateful for their hard work and generosity in supporting the vital work we do.



There are so many more people and organisations we wish to thank. You all help ensure we can continue to help those in the community who need our support today and tomorrow. Thank you.

AN ABSOLUTE TOP BLOKE - VALE GARY VARLEY

In April, our wonderful volunteer Gary Varley died suddenly. For more than 18 years, Gary volunteered at Southern Peninsula Community Support, becoming a deeply loved member of the team. Gary will be remembered for many things that he brought to our centre, none more so than his compassion and kindness for those doing it tough. This is Gary's story.

Gary started with Southern Peninsula Community Support in February 2003. He volunteered over several days a week and quickly became a fixture at the centre. Then manager Sharon remembers him being across every single thing in the centre, always being courteous, respectful and kind to everyone who presented.

Even during times of great loss, Gary continued to volunteer with the centre, as the staff and volunteers had become Gary's own family and supported him through those great challenges.

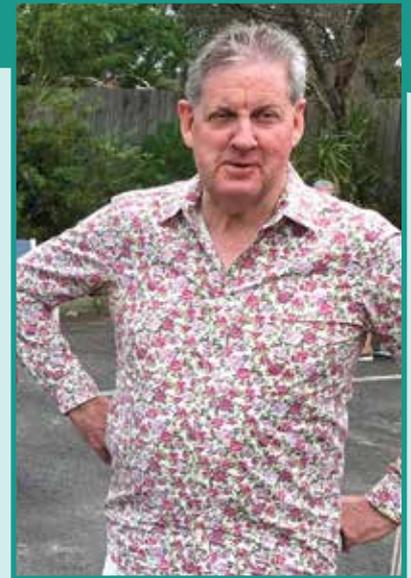
In more recent years, Gary settled into Thursdays on Reception and worked alongside Bev for 12 solid years. He had lovely and thoughtful rituals. This included getting Bev a drink and setting her up with lolly bananas and jubes. He would get the case record book ready and had everything in place for Bev's arrival in the morning. She used to love getting him to laugh and recalled how easily he would produce tears of laughter, mopping his eyes with mirth.

Bev remembers Gary as a devoted son, taking his dad out every day for lunch, supporting him through a long battle with dementia. When his father got some respite care Gary would come down to the centre and help out for a couple of hours.

Gary was always very well dressed, a legacy from his early years when the family owned a very successful clothing manufacturing business, H.R. Varley and Sons Pty Ltd. His ensembles of shirts, jumpers and trousers never failed to be beautifully coordinated.

Gary could talk to anyone, from any background; there was never a shred of pretentiousness about him, he was just Gary, always. His genuine manner and care for everyone he met meant people responded in kind. They knew him and loved him as we all did at the centre.

Vale Gary – you are greatly missed.



THE LIFEBLOOD OF OUR WORK AND OUR COMMUNITY – OUR VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of Southern Peninsula Community Support. They are people from the local area who have great compassion and understanding of their community. They are willing to contribute their time and skills to the day-to-day operation and management of our programs.

Without our dedicated team of volunteers, we would not be able to deliver the majority of our services.

Our volunteers help with: interviewing clients, providing support to those in crisis, comprehensive information and referral, completion of forms, Tax Help, Fresh Food program, Pantry Program, SPLaSh, No Interest Loan Scheme, general maintenance and gardening at the centre, administrative and data entry, statistical information collection, practical action, advocacy and negotiation, governance and management and so much more! **Thank you for giving your time, compassion and care to those who are doing it tough.**

If you would like to learn more about volunteering with us visit www.spcsic.org/volunteering or call us on (03) 5986 1285. We look forward to hearing from you.



“Volunteers are our lifeblood. Every day they give of themselves often in challenging circumstances, their commitment is a constant source of inspiration for all of us.” Jeremy, CEO

SPOTLIGHT ON... SPLaSh

As lockdowns and restrictions continue to cause great stress and hardship, some of the greatest challenges have come from the removal of rental protections. We are seeing rents skyrocket and long-term tenants evicted.

We are seeing a large exodus of people from Melbourne who are taking up any available housing, either by renting or by buying. House prices have gone up massively and for those that rent their rents have gone up dramatically. People who have never had to worry about being able to pay their mortgage or rent are now at serious risk of losing the roof over their head.

Housing uncertainty and a constant struggle to make ends meet places people under enormous stress. It becomes essential to provide services and programs that can help reduce the risk of homelessness.

Programs such as SPLaSh provide people living rough with access to shower and laundry facilities, food, along with items such as bedding or sleeping bag. The number of people participating in our outreach programs have seen record numbers. In November 2018 we saw 32 attendances, in August 2021 it hit a record of 302 attendances. Last year SPLaSh on its own distributed 24,603 items of food and 10,959 material aid items.

SPLaSh gives people who are living rough a sense of dignity, worthiness and being part of a welcoming and non-judgemental community. Yet it doesn't stop there. The SPLaSh team help connect those living rough with other organisations that can help them or refer them to our Southern Peninsula Homeless Connections Program designed to assist people who are sleeping rough to find suitable housing.



SPLaSh exists because of our generous community of supporters

Our SPLaSh program is funded by kind-hearted individuals and organisations. This includes Mornington Peninsula Shire, Mornington Peninsula Foundation, Southern Peninsula Community Fund (Rye Op Shop) and community bank branches (Bendigo Bank) who have supported the program for the past four years. Along with them, in recent times we have been supported by StreetSmart Australia, Flinders District Lions Club, Flinders Art Show, JackanAndy's Op Shop. The wonderful volunteers of Seawinds Community Hub make fresh, healthy and nutritious sandwiches to ensure that those who attend SPLaSh have something to eat.

As one of Seawinds Community Hub volunteers recently said, *"Community is much more than belonging to something; is about doing something that makes belonging matter."* **It is our wonderful community of supporters that helps make people living rough feel like they are part of the community. We can't thank you all enough.**

If you would like to support our SPLaSh or Southern Peninsula Homeless Connections program please contact us on 03 5986 1285 or email jeremy@spsic.org



A SPECIAL SHOUTOUT

Southern Peninsula Community Support acknowledges with the deepest gratitude our longest continuing donor, Southern Peninsula Community Fund (SPCF) and their social enterprise arm, Rye Op Shop. Since the early 1980s SPCF have donated every six months contributing gifts that run into the tens of thousands, with their most recent gift \$12,500.

OUT OF THE BOX AND INTO A MOUNTAIN OF TOILETRIES...



We have had an amazing response to our request for toilet paper and shampoo and thought we would share a donation that arrived today from a Facebook follower who prefers to remain anonymous. Delivered directly from an online order was a mountain of toiletries! Thank you so very much! Not many people are in a position to give like this - we get lots of smaller donations and they are often what get us through. We are so very grateful for every single thing our wonderful community donates - thank you all, you are our stars.

ABLE TO STORE FRESH FOOD LONGER

We understand how important fresh food is especially for people who are going without. Fresh food includes fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy products and other perishable items. They not only contain essential vitamins and minerals, they're also nutritious and yum! After weeks of disruption due to lockdowns, we finally opened our new cool room in September. This means we can keep fresh food fresher for much longer.

SPCS acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.

Yes, I'm here to help those in my community who are struggling and doing it tough! I want them to know I care.

Name _____
Title First Name Surname

Address _____

Suburb _____

State _____ Postcode _____

Mobile _____

Email _____

Please accept my tax-deductible donation of:

\$15 \$20 \$35 \$50 My choice _____

I would like to donate \$ _____ monthly.

I authorise Southern Peninsula Community Support to make automatic monthly deductions from my credit card (details as below) until further notice.

Payment details

My cheque / money order is enclosed (payable to Southern Peninsula Community Support)

OR please debit my: VISA MasterCard AMEX

Card number _____

Name on card _____

Expiry date ____ / ____

Donations \$2 and over are tax deductible.

**You can post your donation to:
PO Box 91, Rosebud 3939**

**Donate online at:
support-your-community-appeal.raisely.com**

I would like to find out more about:

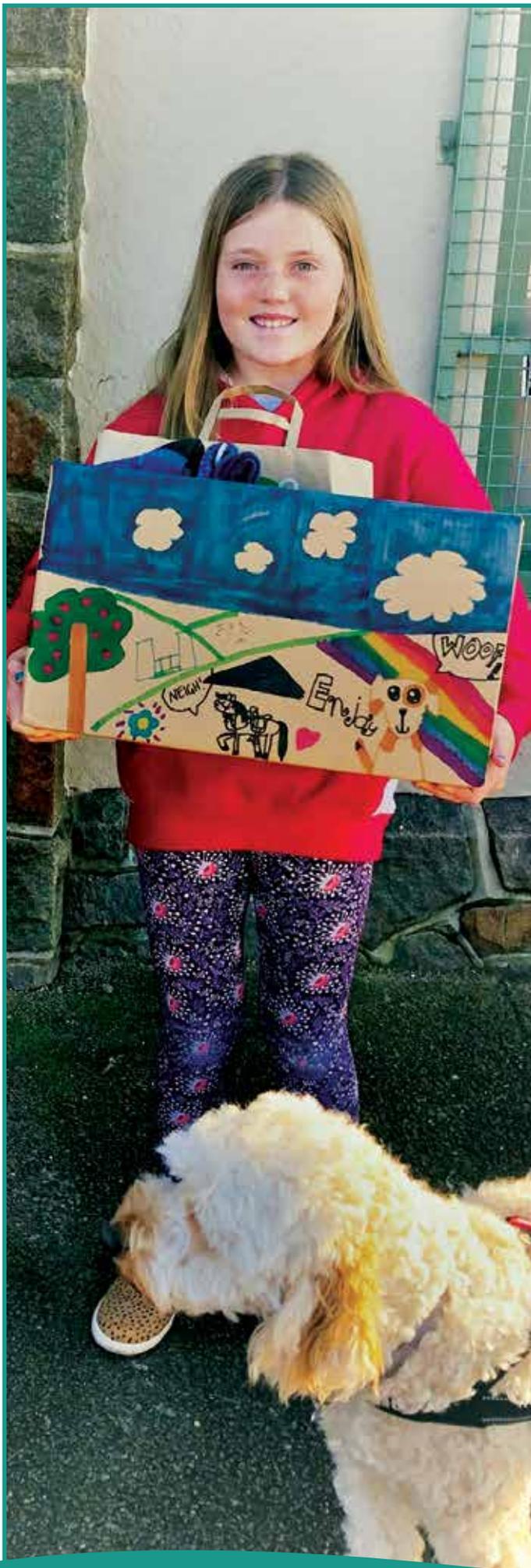
Leaving a gift in my Will to the Southern Peninsula Community Support **OR**

I have already included the Southern Peninsula Community Support in my Will



Southern Peninsula Community Support
878 Point Nepean Road Rosebud VIC 3939
P: 03 5986 1285 | E: admin@spscic.org

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PEOPLE ACROSS THE SOUTHERN PENINSULA ARE HURTING.

NEIGHBOURS, FRIENDS AND FAMILIES ARE STRUGGLING TO MAKE ENDS MEET.

YOU CAN GIVE THEM THE SUPPORT THEY NEED.

You can help provide:

- Fresh food or a pantry basics pack so vulnerable people can eat nutritious food
- Material aid such as personal hygiene kits, linen, tents, pet food, baby bundles
- Complex case management that provides intensive support to stabilise people's circumstances.
- Our SPLaSh program with the financial resources to run all year
- Our Homeless Connections program with brokerage to cover start over costs when housing people who are homeless.

Visit spcsic.org/donate to support our work or call us on 03 5986 1285.

“Keep up the good work – you’re the best and I’ll never forget what you did for me – can’t thank you enough.”

