

Scarves for seafarers

St Paul's School Year 6 students recently gifted personally decorated calico bags filled with toiletries and 80 handknitted scarves and beanies to Mission To Seafarers clients in collaboration with St John's Anglican Cathedral.

Over the years, St Paul's students have knitted scores of scarves and collected toiletries for Cathedral Honorary Deacon The Rev'd Dr Ann Solari to distribute to the people she serves in her ministry and work as a general practitioner, including international Mission To Seafarers visitors.

Year 6 St Paul's School students said that they found knitting the scarves both enjoyable and challenging, and were motivated to knit the scarves conscious that they were going to people in need. "The cause behind our knitting project really helped to raise our awareness of other people in our community and the work they do to support people who are less fortunate," Ben said. "Knowing that the scarves were going to someone in need helped me to persevere when the knitting got tricky. It's harder than you think!" Annabel said.

"It was really fun to make the scarves. It felt good to know that we were helping people in need," Amaya said. "Doing something special for a good cause felt like I was able to give back to my community and others less fortunate," Georgia said. "Knitting was actually really fun and we hope that the scarves go to people in need," Isaac said. One of the student's grandparents worked with her friends to knit 80 beanies for the St Paul's student-driven initiative.

Year 6 student Liam said that knitting alongside grandparents was the highlight of the project for him. "Knitting with grandparents and friends across generations was surprisingly interesting – there was so much storytelling," Liam said. This inspiring student-led project is a reflection of St Paul's School's mission to be "a student-centred Anglican community with a purpose of preparing resilient global citizens who are innovative thinkers with a heart for servant leadership."

PARTNERSHIPS

In a parish setting, a partnership is where a church collaborates with one or several other organisations to:

- provide a service
- organise/lobby around an issue
- run a key event (e.g. a Q&A panel)
- implement other activities.



The Rev'd Dr Ann Solari said that the students decided to decorate calico bags and put toiletries inside reusable zip lock bags after she encouraged the school to consider improving the environmental sustainability of the project. "When I went to talk to the students recently, I was amazed when I was presented with 80 handknitted scarves not in cellophane wrapping but in calico bags, which had been printed with a message and a picture that each individual student had designed," Dr Solari said. "Inside each bag was a scarf knitted by students and a beanie which one child's grandmother and her friends had made when they heard what the children were doing. Each bag also contained a zip lock bag with toiletries inside."

The Cathedral, a Resource Church, is well known for its commitment to social and environmental justice and working alongside like-minded organisations and community groups, shaping its ministry around all of The Five Marks Of Mission.

Soon after Dr Solari's visit to St Paul's School, MTS Chaplain The Rev'd Stephen Briggs collected the calico bags and the gifts at the Cathedral for distribution to international seafarers who visit the MTS Port of Brisbane centre daily. The Rev'd Stephen Briggs said that the seafarers value the practical benefit of the knitted apparel receive, as well as receive a morale boost. "Seafarers are most appreciative of the thought and effort that go into making beanies and scarves for them," The Rev'd Briggs said. "To know that someone cares enough about them to make something that keeps them warm on cold days and nights at sea warms them not only physically, but emotionally as well."

The Rev'd Briggs said that it is important for different parts of our Diocesan community to collaborate on projects with international reach. "Our ministry should not only be to those close to us, but also the wider world community," he said. "Initiatives such as making items of clothing for seafarers demonstrates our Christian witness globally as the seafarers whose lives we touch, through small acts of friendship and hospitality, communicate that with other seafarers and their families across the world."

Mission to Seafarers is a registered charity and worldwide missionary society of the Anglican Church, operating in over 230 ports internationally and in 28 ports around the Australian coastline. MTS Brisbane supports seafarers and their families back home by providing emergency assistance, hospitality and communications facilities in its Port Of Brisbane centre, transport, ship and hospital visiting and spiritual support.



This practical and pastoral care is critical to the wellbeing of seafarers, many of who come from majority (developing) world countries, spending long periods away from their families in order to send money home. In her visits to St Paul's School over the years, Dr Solari has introduced the work of MTS to the students, as well as shared about other areas of justice that are core to the Anglican Church's mission. "The children in our schools are not only being taught about God and how to worship God, but about principles of social and eco justice," she said. "We are teaching them and others about love and what love in action really looks like. We are building a community here, where all are welcome, where all can find a home, where all can worship and pray together."

Types of organisations willing to partner with parishes

- Organisations/groups/committees in our Diocese (e.g. MTS, Anglicare, Mothers Union, St Francis College, RAP Working Group, Community of The Way, Angligreen, Anglican schools, St John's College UQ, other parishes, Franciscans, etc)
- Places of worship (e.g. local mosques, temples, churches of other denominations, etc).
- Faith-based associations (e.g. Queensland Council of Imams).
- Inter-faith or ecumenical alliances/groups (e.g. Queensland Faith Communities Council, The Order of Saint John of Jerusalem).
- Secular or religious charities (e.g. Anglicare, Anglican Board of Mission, Share The Dignity, Cancer Council, Romero Centre, Stable One: Winter Shelter, Lifeline).
- Professional associations (e.g. Australian Association of Social Workers).
- Unions and union peak bodies (e.g. Queensland Council of Unions).
- Social enterprises (e.g. Mu'ooz restaurant).
- Food rescue organisations (e.g. OzHarvest, Second Bite).
- Networks, alliances, collective impact initiatives (e.g. BRASS Network, Queensland Community Alliance*, Logan Together).
- Agencies (e.g. Multicultural Australia).
- Foundations (e.g. Rotary, Lions Club).
- 'Ethnic' associations (e.g. via Queensland Community Alliance).
- Advocacy/activist organisations (e.g. Amnesty, Stop The Traffik, Love Makes A Way).
- First Nation organisations (e.g. From The Heart, First Nation corporations, Supply Nation, etc).
- Schools.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What sort of partnerships does your current parish or previous parish have with local schools?
- What opportunities exist for your parish to further develop school partnerships?

MORE INFORMATION

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