



Annual Report 2007/8



*"Right now three things
remain: faith, hope, and love.
But the greatest of these
is love."*

1 Corinthians 13:13

Dear Members and Friends

Thank you to everyone who has supported Lifehouse Project this year, we are making an impact in our community and supporting hundreds of young people to feel connected and valued.

Our purpose is to meet needs in a practical way and we love to help young people place value on their lives and future. One way we are doing this is by running Princess Parties. Here are a few lines from an email I received from a teenager who attended our Princess Party. It read, "*It was the most inspirational thing I have ever been to. You really made me feel like a princess. It was soooooo amazing. Thank you!*" This, and other comments we've received make me so excited about the impact of the Amira Project! It is just one way we can increase young women's self-esteem and value they place on their lives.

Thanks to Kelly Shambrook for all her hard work running the Young Parents Mentoring Program. Her dedication, along with the support provided by the volunteer mentors, made a huge difference in the lives of many young families. The 'Mums With A Purpose' was a great success and although the program has now closed we hope to find more funding soon to run more programs.

The vision of Lifehouse Project continues to be about providing accommodation to homeless young parents. Homelessness has a huge long-term impact on families that are struggling with poverty and disadvantage. We are passionate about providing more housing options and can only do this in 2008/9 with the support from like-minded organisations, funders, businesses and individuals who can help us make our efforts effective and sustainable.

Please enjoy reading about Lifehouse Project's work and contact us if you would like to get involved.

Ruth Knight

Chairperson

P.S. Don't forget to view the website for updated news and reports throughout the year.
www.lifehouse.org.au

Management Committee 2007/8

Ruth Knight	Chairperson	Veanne Frape	Secretary
Janie McNeill	Vice-Chair	Zeke Knight	Treasurer
Frances Colahan	Member	Naomi Leyshon	Member
Kelly Shambrook	Member		

Asher Grove Report

Due to the lack of supported accommodation for young parents on the Gold Coast, Lifehouse Project has always had an aim to provide accommodation to young parents who face financial difficulties and housing instability whilst being pregnant and/or parenting. We know from research and experience that without support, young mothers find parenting difficult and stressful, they experience higher than average rates of postnatal depression and are susceptible to a cycle of low self-esteem, poverty and unemployment.

During 2007/8 we were planning our third Asher Grove project, which commenced in August 2008. This is a vital project for a young mother needing supported accommodation. A huge thank you to Naomi Leyshon who is managing the project and has opened her heart and home to make it a reality.

Voices & Choices Report

The Voices & Choices Peer Education program began because Lifehouse Project saw the need to educate young people about the importance of making wise and healthy choices about relationships and sexual health.

In 2007/8 the Voices & Choices presentation has been provided to over 1000 young people in schools all over the Gold Coast. We have had very encouraging and positive feedback and it is obvious that young people appreciate the open and frank discussion with them about this topic.

A huge thank you to our peer educators including Naomi Leyshon and Shelly May who are always so willing to talk about their experiences and ideas.

Young Parents Mentoring Program Report

“Mums with a Purpose” (MWAP) was a 10 week life skills course that was developed and implemented in early 2007. The participants of the program were young mums being supported and mentored by the Young Parents Mentoring Program.

MWAP was implemented to achieve the following objectives:

1. To create a consistent meeting time between the mentor and mentee and help them maintain regular contact with each other.
2. To focus on relevant topics that will build the confidence and purpose of the mentees by teaching them life skills and parenting skills.
3. For relationships to be built between the mentors so as to have a stronger volunteer base.
4. For the mentees to set goals for their future and get excited about their purpose in life.
5. To create a friendly and safe environment where young parents can meet with their peers.

The program was facilitated by Kelly Shambrook, the Young Parents Mentoring Program Coordinator. Seven young mothers and seven volunteer mentors participated. The program was held at Coolibah Downs in Nerang every Monday morning from 10am – 12pm. The young mums brought ten children in total, who were minded by a qualified childcare worker.

An evaluation of the program was conducted by asking the mums to complete an individual evaluation form and then attend an interview with the Program Coordinator and her mentor. The results that were collected from the evaluation process suggest that the objectives of the program were achieved and that the program was very successful. Here are some of the comments from the young mums:

- *“I am a better mum and have more confidence. I am communicating better with my daughter. I liked getting to know the other mums.”*
- *“The group has helped me grow into a woman and have more confidence. I have more knowledge of the boundaries I need in my life and a better understanding of life. I know who I am now and I’m proud of who I am. I have improved mentally, spiritually, emotionally and financially. My relationships and communication with other people in my life has improved. I am achieving my goals.”*
- *“I loved the mum’s program and I am really grateful to be in it! The group helped me realise how far I have come and how grateful I am for what I have. I have been in a lot of programs before but I really liked how this program looked at inner stuff and had good content.”*

Thanks to Kelly Shambrook and all the wonderful mentors that supported the program. Despite the Young Parents Mentoring Program having to end in December 2007 due to lack of funding, we continue to look for further funding so we can provide this vital support to young mothers in our community.

Girls With A Purpose Report

During 2007/8 Lifehouse Project concentrated on marketing and selling the Girls With A Purpose Program. We have sold copies now to every state in Australia and we have even sold copies to New Zealand and the UK! We have received some great feedback from organisations using the program, which is encouraging and inspiring; the program is making a difference to girls all over the world!

This is what some girls have said about the program:

- *'This program meant to me a place where I could learn things that I would take into my life and where I would have lots and lots of fun.'*
- *'This is an unreal program because it teaches girls how to appreciate themselves. It meant a lot to me.'*
- *'This program gave me self confidence to know that I can do anything if I put my mind to it.'*
- *'It made me think outside the box, think carefully and responsibly, my attitude has changed toward my friends and family. I have more self respect and I even quit smoking!'*

Cosima DeVito, Australian singer/songwriter and former Australian Idol contestant has agreed to be the ambassador of the program and she is promoting the program wherever she goes. She said, *"My teenage years were the best years of my life, carefree and without a worry. I can say that now, but at the time I was also plagued with insecurities. If a program like this existed when I was young I would have definitely enrolled. The ten week course helps to develop self worth, build friendships and purpose in young women. It's time to enjoy the best years of your life!"*

Youth workers all over the country are utilising the program in schools and we have received some fantastic feedback from them. This includes a quote from Kim Scott, Youth Support Coordinator in Biloela. She said, *"Facilitating 'Girls with a Purpose Program' has been a great and rewarding experience. I believe this program should be offered to all girls from 12 – 16 years. Believing that your dreams can come true if you pursue them and that we all have a purpose and destiny in life is very empowering. I thoroughly recommend this program."*

Lifehouse Project aims to run more programs on the Gold Coast in 2009 and continue marketing the program to schools, youth groups and churches worldwide.

The Amira Project Report

A Priceless Princess Party

In October 2007 the Amira Project held the fourth Princess Party. It was held at Legends Hotel in Surfers Paradise and 180 girls attended. The Princess Party is a drug and alcohol free initiative that promotes healthy living and encourages young women to have high self-esteem and personal value. The participants come from local high schools, organisations and churches.

The event was aptly named "Priceless" and intended to convey to the girls how priceless they were. The girls who attended ascended the grand staircase and prepared for an afternoon of fun, friendship and learning. This year we introduced afternoon workshops which included the Rock and Water program, Laughter Therapy, Evolve Make-up lessons, YHES House relationships program, the Shine program and Princess Diaries. Every princess had the opportunity to attend two of the inspiring workshops run by talented and inspiring facilitators.

After the workshops, the room was buzzing with excitement and girlish giggles as each princess had the option of having an Evolve Makeover and her hair styled by professional hairdressers. As the princesses entered the ballroom they were greeted by a young man who presented each girl with a rose. The evening agenda was accompanied by tiaras, dresses, candles, music and lots of special guests. Channel Nine presenter Alison Fletcher was the delightful MC, we were treated to a fashion show from Princess Polly clothing, and the highlight for many girls was the surprise appearance from Australian Idol contestant 'Mutto'.

The girls provided some comments at the end of their night about their experience. They included:

- *"It was great! It made me feel special, I loved it!!"*
- *"It really boosted my self confidence and self esteem"*
- *"I've been feeling really down on myself because of the things I say and act and the way my friends treat me. Tonight I felt worthy again."*
- *"I learnt that I need to be treated with respect and love"*
- *"I learnt that no matter what I am a beautiful person inside and out"*

We would like to thank all of the incredible sponsors and volunteers who contributed to this amazing event. Your support is vital and much appreciated.

Treasurers Report 2007/8

In summary, this financial year we received \$13,722 in DGR donations. We also received other miscellaneous income of \$16,112

Our expenses of \$43,867 paid for costs such as insurance, grants, running programs and the princess party, \$13,004 of which was the Young Parents Mentoring Program salary expenses.

Please find a copy of the full Annual Audited Accounts for the year ending 30th June 2008 on our website.

Thanks to our financial funders and supporters! They include:

Alida Langford

Allen Day

Centerlink

Colahan Family Trust

Darani Cumming

Dianne Reilly MP

Ian and Alison Boniface

Jacqueline Chapman

Jan Stirling

Jerry Savelle Ministries International

John and Christine Spence

Judy and Terry King

Jules and Glen Pellow

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Ruth and Zeke Knight

Shane and Robyn Bell

Suzanne Knowler

Tammy Whitehead

Wendy James