

ORDER OF MALTA MEDICAL CLINIC IN DILI:

OUR BIGGEST PROJECT TO DATE

As reported in our July 2016 newsletter, the Embassy of the Order of Malta in Timor Leste is about to open a medical clinic in Dili. In a country where 1 in 6 children do not reach their 1st birthday due to treatable illnesses and malnutrition, the clinic will provide an opportunity to fulfil the Order's mission to help our Lords the poor and the sick.

The Order's clinic will be a best-practice outpatient primary health care facility offering free medical care to impoverished Timorese families. It will have an emphasis on the provision of care to women and children. The clinic comprises examination rooms and a procedure room, and is anticipated to treat 200 patients a day.

The premises have been generously provided rent free by the developer and the first stage of the fit out has been financed by the Order's Global Fund for Forgotten People. However, there are still building related expenses as well as the purchasing of medical equipment and the financing of the ongoing operational costs.

Regional Associations and delegations of the Order in the Asia Pacific Region and beyond, have been approached to 'sponsor' various elements of the project. The Australian Association has been asked to finance the pharmaceuticals cost for the first year of operation. This has been calculated at AUD\$60,000.



Even small donations can help save lives:

- * \$100.00 would pay for 15 courses of penicillin
- * \$250.00 would pay for 20 doses of polio vaccine
- * \$500.00 would purchase 12 tins of nutritional supplements

Timor-Leste: one of the world's least developed countries

- * More than 40% of the population lives below the poverty line of USD 88 cents a day.
- * One of the highest rates of women dying from pregnancy and childbirth in Asia.
- * More than 45% of children are underweight for their age
- * Limited access to clean water and basic sanitation contributes to the spread of infectious diseases such as diarrhoea, which can be fatal.
- * Malaria is highly endemic in all districts with the highest morbidity and mortality rates reported in children.
- * Tuberculosis (TB) is a major public health problem with an estimated 8,000 active TB cases nationally.
- * Infectious disease, low utilisation of skilled assistance for antenatal and poor reproductive health are the most common causes of infant mortality.

Please consider a donation to this project. Visit page 5 to make a donation.



GORMAN HOUSE THE NEXT CHAPTER

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The service will be delivered in conjunction with an outpatient ambulatory withdrawal and relapse prevention service. To ensure improved health outcomes for patients the Unit will work closely with partners including Non-Government Organisations and the Local Health Districts to promote seamless withdrawal and post-withdrawal care.

The Order of Malta's NSW Branch has committed to continuing its financial and volunteer support of the Unit and the Drug, Alcohol and Homeless outreach support services, including the NSW Branch Community Care Van

The volunteer BBQ's, that were moved to Tierney House (a residential unit assisting the inner city homeless population to access health care) during the closure, will resume at Gorman House. However the success of the BBQs at Tierney House has meant that residents and staff there wish to see them continue also.

If you would like to volunteer at the Gorman House and Tierney House BBQs, please email info@smom.org.au. Donations to support the Outreach Services at Gorman House can be made on page 5.



The Order of Malta is a Public Benevolent institution and is endorsed by the Australian Tax Office as a Deductible Gift Recipient. ABN 37 142 209 121. Licence: SA - CCP1722, WA - 21310.

Save the date

Lourdes Day Mass – Adelaide
Date: Saturday, 11 February
Time: 10am
Location: St Francis Xavier's Cathedral

Annual Pilgrimage to Lourdes
Arrive: Friday 5 May
Depart: Tuesday 9 May

Coats for the Homeless Breakfast
Date: Thursday 30 March
Time: 7.30am
Location: The Brisbane Club
Guest Speaker: Mr Damien Frawley, Chief Executive, Queensland Investment Corporation
Further information: contact the Qld Branch Chair, Hon Justice Martin Daubney, at martin.daubney@outlook.com

Lourdes Healing Mass – QLD
Date: Saturday 6 May
Time: 10am
Location: St Paschal's Church, Wavell Heights

Members Biennial General Assembly
Arrive: Friday 23 Jun
Depart: Sunday 25 Jun
Hotel details and itinerary will be sent to Members directly



We have been serving the sick and the poor for over 900 years.

Help us continue our work by leaving a bequest to the Order of Malta.

By leaving us a legacy, no matter what size, you allow us to plan for the future. With guaranteed funds in place, we can look to expand and develop our humanitarian activities with confidence.

If you would like to receive a copy of our bequest brochure, please complete and return the form on page 5.

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NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE - PROJECT UPDATES / UPCOMING EVENTS / INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES



Gorman House is part of St Vincent's Hospital Alcohol and Drug Clinic and shelter to some of Sydney's most marginalised and problematic population suffering from severe alcohol and drug problems. It consistently operates at full capacity and admits more than 1,500 residents each year. Demand continues to outstrip supply – for every person admitted, another is turned away due to lack of beds.

Since 2006, the NSW Branch of the Order has financially supported the unit, which has provided a social

non-medically supervised model of withdrawal management. In addition, Branch Members and volunteers have further supported the unit in the form of thrice weekly BBQs to socialise with residents over this difficult period.

Patient and community needs have changed dramatically over the years and a proposal for a redesign of the unit and its services was submitted to NSW Health, and approved. Consequently, in June 2016 Gorman House closed to undergo building modifications that would support a new

specialised medical unit.

In February 2017, the new Gorman Unit will reopen and provide specialised medical care for people requiring withdrawal management. It will have 20 beds and experienced and dedicated medical, nursing and allied health staff. The unit will focus on providing holistic care including withdrawal management, stabilisation, ongoing treatment planning and post discharge follow up for patients that are often marginalised.

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If you would like to volunteer at the Gorman House and Tierney House BBQs, please email info@smom.org.au. Donations to support our Outreach Services can be made on page 5.



Erin Longbottom, Nurse Unit Manager for the Homeless Outreach Team (center) with volunteers Paul Beffar and Dunstan De Souza

INTERVIEW WITH THE COMMUNITY CARE VAN NURSE

In June 2015, an initiative by the NSW Branch commenced operation – the Order of Malta Community Care Van. The van is staffed by volunteer drivers who visit 'hotspots' around Sydney to distribute seasonal items to help protect those sleeping on the streets and a Nurse from St Vincent's Hospital travels with them to offer healthcare.

In summer the volunteers distribute water, sunscreen and sun hats and in winter they distribute the Order's Coats for the Homeless. These items are invaluable to the homeless Community in preventing illnesses that can be directly related to a life of sleeping on the streets.

In 2017 the Van is expected to expand its operations to Parramatta. We spoke with Erin Longbottom, Nurse Unit Manager for the Homeless Outreach Team to understand the value of this service for the homeless Community:

Q: What is the most common health issues you see amongst the homeless on your Community Care Van runs?

A: The Sydney homeless community experience a wide range of complex health issues that often includes mental

health issues, drug & alcohol issues and physical health issues. Myself and the volunteers consistently see ALL of these issues during our Community Care Van weekly outreach.

Due to the fact that we are giving out oral hygiene products we are able to often engage people around their oral health. This can be an opening to have a more in depth conversation about someone's health. This happened recently when I was down in Woolloomooloo, I met a young man in Tom Uren Square who I referred to our Homeless Health Oral Health Educator. We made him an appointment which he came up to the hospital to attend. From there he has also engaged around seeking support with his mental health and gambling dependence.

Q: What is the most common reason for hospital admissions amongst the homeless?

A: People experiencing homelessness often struggle to navigate the very complex health care systems that exist in our society. For many of our clients often they struggle go to a GP for health issues that should be ordinary

simple to treat – for example they may have a wound on their leg that requires wound care, they are unable to go to GP and this in turn ends up escalating into a severe infection that requires intravenous antibiotics and a hospital admission. As a homeless health service we attempt to see people in the community and treat things like this early or to encourage people to see a GP and avoid having to go to hospital.

The question here may be 'why do people not just go to the GP?' Consider concern for your safety, stigma (people getting up and walking to sit somewhere else in the waiting room when you enter), extreme fatigue, keeping other appointments (e.g. Centrelink, housing) or obtaining the basic necessities of life such as food and a shower. Often your health is a lesser priority than all these other needs.

Q: Is there a particular homeless demographic that you see as growing?

A: Homelessness is increasing at the moment in Sydney as evidenced by the City of Sydney Bi-Annual Street Count. Anecdotally we are currently

seeing an increase in young people and women fleeing domestic violence.

Q: Is the Community Care Van and its service well known amongst the homeless community?

A: The Community Care Van Volunteers are certainly becoming more recognised and people are learning to spot the red tabard's when the volunteers are approaching. Rough sleepers often just love having a chat and this can often be the most valuable thing that happens on outreach – the human interaction and connection that occurs. I can also vouch for the fact that people appreciate the amazing big black jackets in winter – these are great! More recently the rough sleepers have expressed an appreciation for the hand sanitiser that has been added to the hygiene packs.

Q: How does the Van assist in addressing longer-term solutions for the homeless?

A: The Van not only provides health support to rough sleepers – when we go out we often assist with getting someone a blanket for the night or transport to accommodation (Missionbeat 1800 306 461). We sometimes also assist with getting someone a bed for the night (Link2Home 1800 152 152). Link2Home not only helps people to find accommodation for that night, it can also start the housing process for someone and is often an excellent way start the ball rolling for someone to access long term accommodation and support.

If you would like to become a volunteer driver for the Community Care Van, please email info@smom.org.au.

If you would like to make a donation to support this project, you can do so on page 5.



IN PICTURES: LOURDES DAY MASS CELEBRATIONS

On Saturday 3 December 2016, Lourdes Day Mass celebrations were held in Melbourne and Sydney.

The Lourdes Day mass is an important event for the Order of Malta with Branches organising annual celebrations each year. The celebrations are open to all but those who are sick or facing health challenges and wanting good health are particularly encouraged to attend. They are assisted by a large number

of volunteers, as well as Knights and Dames of the Order of Malta.

A blessing of good health takes place during the celebration of the Liturgy with water brought from the Shrine at Lourdes.

Photo credits:

* Melbourne Celebration: Archdiocese of Melbourne

* Sydney Celebration: Catholic Communications, Archdiocese of Sydney

To view more pictures from the Celebrations or to see a video from the Melbourne Mass, please visit www.orderofmalta.org.au

OVER 3,500 BABIES BORN IN THE ORDER'S BETHLEHEM HOSPITAL IN 2016

2016 closes with a positive result for the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, run by the Order of Malta in Palestine since 1990.

During the year over 3,500 babies were born in this ancient stone convent, built by the Sisters of Charity at the end of the 19th century. The hospital has a staff of 140 doctors, nurses and support personnel and is the only health facility in the region with an neonatal intensive care unit which dealt with 400 premature babies this year.

"I felt safe during my latest delivery," says the mother of Anna, born a few days ago in the hospital. "The doctors and nurses took good care of me and made me feel protected. No other hospital in Bethlehem treats its patients in this way," Anna's mother continues. She also gave birth to her first child in this hospital two years ago.

For 26 years the Holy Family Hospital has been providing a very high quality medical service to pregnant women, offering healthcare during all the stages before and after birth and neonatal assistance. To date, almost 73 thousand babies have been born in this hospital, located less than a kilometre from the Church of the Nativity.

The hospital also has a mobile clinic – with a gynaecologist, obstetrician and paediatrician – that regularly visits villages in the West Bank desert to provide medical services for the women in the region.

Besides having a diabetes outpatients clinic specialised in treating gestational diabetes the hospital works in close contact with the local institutions in assisting patients from disadvantaged social environments. Over the years, thanks to funds received from the European Union, the US Congress and the Belgian government, the hospital has been able to build new delivery rooms and extend its operating theatres.

The hospital has recently signed a cooperation agreement for medical training with the Bambino Gesù hospital in Rome.



I WANT TO HELP

You can make a donation by completing this form and returning it in the reply paid envelope provided.

I am happy for the Order to allocate my donation to where the need is greatest; **or**

Please accept a gift towards the:

- Order of Malta Medical Clinic in Dili, Timor-Leste
- NSW Community Care Van and Outreach
- Coats for the Homeless

REMEMBER, GIFTS OF \$2 AND OVER ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

- Send me information about leaving the Order a bequest
- Please remove me from your mailing list.

Name

Address

State Postcode Telephone

Please find enclosed a Cheque/ Money Order

(payable to 'The Order of Malta') for \$ or;

Please debit my credit card the amount of \$

Frequency Once only Monthly Card Type Visa MasterCard

Credit Card Number

Expiry Date Cardholder name

Signature