



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works



“VAN TALES”

**SOUP VANS NEWSLETTER
October 2012**



Day at the MCG

The Collingwood Van has had an attachment to Footy for several years – fond memories of keen competition, twisted ankles, beatings at the hands of the Collingwood Knights, wildly over-estimating attendances (leading to us selling snags on the pathways to the MCG) etc. We have moved on, but we still love our Footy.

This year one of our volunteers talked her firm into providing us with a box at the MCG for the Melbourne vs Gold Coast game. Several people from the street and the flats said they would come, but eventually we had two who made it to the game and were well looked after by our volunteers, Rebecca, Nicola and Peter.

As well as the food and the great view of the game, we were visited by two of the injured Demon heroes, Mitchell Clark and Jack Watts, who posed for pictures. Everyone had a memorable day.

Look out next year. Now that we know it works so well we will go all out to get a dozen or more to come, especially those who have little experience of the excitement of a day at the Footy.





Energy Australia, (formerly Tru Energy) has generously given the soup vans a grant of \$150,000 with which to purchase 2 soup vans – one will be going to Moe to replace their existing van and the other to Fitzroy to replace the boarding house van.

Latrobe City Council

We have been successful in our application to Latrobe City Council for a grant of \$2500 for Moe Soup Van to replace their stove and light fittings in their kitchen.



Christmas Cakes

Once again we will receive decorated Christmas cakes from the Cake Decorators Association of Victoria. Last year we had over 100 beautifully decorated Christmas cakes given to us by the Association and they were distributed to needy families to make Christmas for them more special. Thank you to the Cake Decorators Association of Victoria



300 Blankets

Keep our community warm

“300 Blankets” have donated another 500 blankets to the Soup Vans which will be stored at the Vinnies warehouse and distributed as needed in the future. Thank you to all at “300 blankets” for your tremendous efforts in getting the blankets to us to assist those in need. Below we have included a story written by 300 Blankets of their volunteering on the soup vans.

Volunteering with the Vinnies soup vans

On the 20th of June the 300 Blankets team were invited on a special St Vincent de Paul soup van run. On the night, Vinnies organised a special van to drive our team on their nightly soup run. Before we set off, the President of the St Vincent de Paul Victoria Soup Vans, Br. Doug, presented us with a certificate of appreciation. In return, I presented St Vincent de Paul with the first of the blankets raised from our fundraising efforts. This was the start of what turned out to be a very emotional night for the entire team.

Since the beginning of our volunteer initiative, the team and everyone involved knew what we were doing – to raise money and play our part in keeping the homeless community warm. We knew from our countless conversations with people working for the homeless that blankets is crucial in winter and there is never enough. But the night we volunteered with Vinnies completely changed the perception of our work and the purpose of our efforts.

On this particular night, we followed the Fitzroy soup vans, making seven stops across the Melbourne CBD. The main aim for the night was to learn more and see first hand the amazing work Vinnies do every night. We were given the opportunity to also meet the people living rough and personally present the blankets to the people who need it the most. With 72 blankets in the van, we thought we would be comfortable in handing them out on the night.

At the first stop, we met people living in parklands. I met and spoke to many people and admittedly to my shock, many people I could personally relate to. People who had similar journeys to Australia as my parents. It was hard to not be emotional.

The night continued and at each stop, stories about individual lives and how people got to situations where they are now flooded in. Everyone was so eager to have an opportunity to share their personal stories. And this was our biggest learning of the night – there is more to being homeless than the loss of physical possessions. Being homeless is not just about not having a permanent place to stay. It’s not even just about having a roof above one’s head. It’s the loss of the support and care of family and friends that affect people the most.

We personally handed out 56 blankets on the night, but what we gained most was being trusted and having people open their hearts to us. One of the most memorable parts of the night was when Amanda spoke to a lady at one of the stops. After an emotional conversation, Amanda hugged the lady which brought both to tears. One of the leading Vinnies volunteers told us that, that hug was worth more than any blanket, any material item we could have given her. We gave her the warmth of genuine care and compassion.

Our learnings from the night has sparked a greater motivation for all of us at 300 Blankets – to work harder and strive to make a bigger difference in our community.

300 Blankets Let’s keep our community warm!