

### PHILOSOPHY

The Fitzroy Homework Centre is for disadvantaged students from the inner city area. It aims to contribute to improving students' personal, economic, and social circumstances by sharing educational and information services and by being their friend and supporter.

- The Centre provides - skilled tutoring in Maths and English  
- a "warm" space in which homework can be done  
- some educational resources

### TARGET GROUP

The Centre is open to any disadvantaged student within the City of Yarra  
"Disadvantaged" applies to broken schooling, lack of family support, lack of appropriate social networks for help with homework, language difficulties and lack of appropriate space in which homework could be done.

### HOURS OF OPERATION

During term time the Centre operates from 124 Napier Street, Fitzroy on Mondays, ~~Tue~~ <sup>Tuesdays</sup> and Thursdays ~~from~~ <sup>7 Friday</sup> 4 to 6 p.m. In school holidays a program is negotiated with students according to their needs.

### PROGRAM

The 11 hours per week are divided into 4x2 hours of tutoring and 3 hours for preparation and administration.

In the 2 hour sessions, students may receive assistance from both tutors, if desired. Students indicate that they require assistance by writing their names on the board provided. This may be done at the beginning, or during the session, depending on the time the student arrives at the Centre, or realizes that he/she requires help. The tutors assist the students and work their way down the list of names, spending approximately 10 -20 min with every student. The amount of time spent with an individual student depends on the type of assistance that the student requires, on the student's year level and on the amount of assistance they have received in the previous sessions. In other words, tutors make an attempt to give equal assistance to all students.

As mentioned earlier, the assistance may be requested by the student, but it may also be initiated by the tutor, in order to encourage the student to seek help or in order to develop specific skills, such as reading, oral communication or comprehension.

Social interaction is encouraged, so as to provide the opportunity for the students to improve their communication skills, as well as to increase their level of confidence.

A positive consequence of having students from different year levels in the program, is that cross-age tutoring can take place and the students feel confident enough to offer their assistance to the other students.

The 3 hours for preparation/administration may involve a number of tasks. Preparation may be correcting students' work, compiling exercises for extension work, making posters, (reinforcing what is being taught and making the learning environment more attractive), setting up materials, (cassette player and recordings of stories), borrowing and returning books from the libraries, and buying office supplies or food. Administration may be promoting or informing schools about the Centre, making telephone calls to organizations and meetings.

The tutors' meetings have involved discussions of general goals for the program, its daily running and allocation of duties, specific goals of students and their attitudes and progress. The tasks are discussed and allocated according to the tutor's area of specialization, availability of time, and knowledge of the Centre. Meetings with the co-ordinator are also held regularly so that business of the Centre can be discussed.

The Homework Centre also runs a holiday program during the first week of the term holidays. This may be composed of workshops, social excursions or homework assistance.

The decision as to what will take place in the holiday program is made in a group conscience meeting, where students and tutors have an opportunity to communicate their preferences and organise the week's timetable.

The social excursions offer a number of opportunities for learning and interaction. Students become more familiar with their city, by way of public transport, learn to communicate and interact with other members of the group, thereby, improving group cohesion.

#### BREAKDOWN OF CLIENTS

	Term 1 '91	Term 2 '91	Term 3 '91
Total no. of students on roll	35	55	24
Females	17	24	12
Males	18	25	12
Average no.	10	7	5
Maximum no.	15	12	9
Minimum no.	2	3	2
Waiting list	5	0	0

Looking at the figures in the above table, it can be concluded that the average no. of students and max. no. of students attending has steadily decreased, even though there was a large increase of students on the roll in Term 2. The lack of students on the waiting list in Terms 2 & 3 confirms the above conclusion.

It can also be concluded that the distribution between females and males remains fairly equal.

Most of the students who attend the Centre, live at the Atherton Estate and attend the following schools :

- St. Joseph's
- \* Northcote Secondary College
- \* Fitzroy Secondary College
- \* Collingwood Secondary College
- Collingwood Language Centre
- University High

\* where most students come from

Their ages range from 11 - 20 years and most have been living in Australia for less than 3 years. That is, the Centre's clients are mostly disadvantaged Indo-Chinese students.

#### RESOURCES

- Typewriter (1 electric, 1 manual given to us by Accounts Dept. of Brotherhood).
- Computer (Olivetti), recently acquired
- Games (Leggo), borrowed from Collingwood College
- Books (with recordings, fiction & non-fiction), borrowed
- Teachers Reference Books - borrowed or tutors' own
- Whyteboard
- Photocopier - access to

#### HUMAN RESOURCES AND LINKS WITH ORGANISATIONS

The Homework program is linked with the organisations below:

- 1) Brotherhood of St. Laurence. Family Services - Sue Culligan
- 2) Schools: Collingwood Sec. College:- from which we have borrowed Teachers Reference Books and some fiction books.  
Contact person:- ESL co-ordinator - Nora  
Librarian - Ann  
Teacher - Judy  
Fitzroy Sec. College:- informed them of the homework program  
Contact person:- Maggie Woods - Student Welfare Co-ordinator
- 3) Fitzroy Library:- from which we borrow fiction, non-fiction and recordings of books and plays etc.  
Contact person:- Bronwyn Hall
- 4) Fitzroy Community Health Centre:- Liaison person has informed families and adults about centre.  
Contact person:- Teresa Ha
- 5) Fitzroy Learning Network - Contact person:- Rita Sidlauskas
- 6) Women's Refuge :- was contacted twice

#### PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY

The Centre has had no "official" opening due to changes within the Brotherhood structure, and uncertainty early in the year as to whether the program would gain further funding.

- Promotion has been mainly through three sources - Tutors visiting schools
- Teresa Ha
  - By word of mouth

### CHANGES DURING THE YEAR

The past year has seen several changes. The restructuring in the Brotherhood meant the disappearance of the original steering group, part of whose function was a support group, and to act as a liaising body between the program and outside organizations.

A change of supervisors also ensued - John Wise followed by Sue Culligan from July '91.

In term 2, Effie Angelopolous temporarily replaced Mary Damousi who withdrew to take up a full-time position. Zoe Kaparidis was employed as the English tutor from term 3.

The past year has also seen the Centre move from the "Blue Room", to its "own" space at 124 Napier Street. This has greatly benefited the program. It has enabled - resources to be displayed

- multi-use of area: reading, silent and work areas
- access to own storage cupboard and filing cabinet
- students to develop a sense of their own space
- generally a much more comfortable area

*A detailed evaluation was also undertaken in Term 3.*

### PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

#### Number of students attending

Access to the Centre by more students is clearly an aim but just what increase in numbers is appropriate is difficult to gauge, given the demand of each individual student.

If numbers were to increase greatly as happened in Term 1, a possible solution would be to look at volunteer tutors. Sue Culligan has a contact for this.

#### Outreach work and time available

Given the limited time restraints due to the budget, and the many changes that have taken place, it is often not possible to deal with all the preparation/administration work within the allocated two hours per tutor per week. The main area which has consequently suffered is the 'outreach' work - liaising with schools and local organizations, and promotion and publicity of the Centre.

Possible solutions would be - to redefine job descriptions allowing for a Liaison person and a more realistic time allocation.

- to employ a (Vietnamese ?) community worker

#### Target Group

Although the Centre is open to any disadvantaged student, it has attracted mainly Indo-Chinese youth. Targeting the Anglo group could also be the responsibility of a Liaison person. An increase in Anglo numbers would probably demand different learning strategies within the Homework Centre.

#### Day - to - day responsibilities (A personal opinion - Judy Lee)

Since the restructuring of the Centre late last year and because of the many changes, the main day-to-day responsibility for running the Centre has fallen on the tutor who has been there since the inception of the program. This responsibility would seem to be out of proportion to the ~~very~~ limited nature of the job.

Possible solutions - redefining job descriptions  
- more equal sharing between the tutors of administrative tasks, responsibility and initiative. This could be done through 'inservicing' of the newer tutor. Once again time has been the main factor here, not the

unwillingness or capabilities of tutors  
- increase one lot of hours for a daily co-ordinator

Judy Lee

*Judy Lee*

Zoe Kaparidis

*Zoe Kaparidis*

OCTOBER 21st. 1991