



THEBA YOUNG WOMENS' SERVICE

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Thank you for your interest in THEBA Young Women's Service

We enclose for your information and consideration, excerpts from our most recent Annual Report to the Community, our current report on our activities and most importantly words from Women who have been directly affected by the work and culture that is – THEBA.

On this International Women's Day we are proud to promote the benefits that Young Woman may find from taking the step inside our doors, into a space that is set to deliver an abundance of ideas, supports and resources for Young Woman to soak up and spring board onto pathways that may lead them to obtaining safe, secure, stable and sassy lives.

THEBA is seeking your support to invest in us, to invest in the well-being of Young Women and to invest in their continuing journeys to be independent, capable, self reliant and proud Young Women in our communities. We are seeking your sponsorship for our projects and activities and you may be able to contribute financially, materially or offer your skills, wisdom and experience in some way.

We currently need the following monies to address Women's specific needs.
Up to \$2,000 for dental work for a Young Woman who has not been to the dentist in 12 years; up to \$1000 for text books for a student in her second year of her Bachelor of Teaching; up to \$500 for education costs, including tutoring, for a Young Woman who is re-entering studies, leaving school at 14 and now has a career plan as a Veterinary nurse; up to \$1,500 to assist a Young woman who is working part-time and studying full time to pay for equipment for her pattern making course; up to \$1000 to provide bedding for a Young mum with 2 young children and \$1000 to buy mattresses to offer Young Women their first real bed.

We are also seeking sponsorship for THEBA to continue her unique and exceptional work with Young Women. We seek your consideration to be involved in Young Women's Lives – to make a real difference and offer opportunities and choices for Young Women, so that they may continue to make their positive changes in their lives and support THEBA in her worthy work. We welcome your interest and invite you to contact us.

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Manager

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Introducing THEBA Young Women's Service

The THEBA model of service is designed to provide resources to increase young women's skills to make informed decisions and live independently.

THEBA is a holistic and dynamic service for young women. Our service focuses on the provision of professional case management and delivers the Independent Living Skills Program. The Program is delivered with safe, affordable and appropriate transitional housing for women 18-25 under the CAP housing program and through partnership with housing companies for women 18-30 via the outreach transition to independent living program.

We provide a range of support and resources to women who access the service to address the various needs of our clients to obtain independence by attaining valuable life skills.

Funding for the projects is made available through the State and Commonwealth Governments via the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). Administration of these funds to THEBA is by the Department of Community Services (DOCS).

Our housing stock consists of four dwellings in the Inner West region and is provided by the Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP) through the Office of Community Housing (DOH). In partnership with South West Inner Sydney Housing we have four exit units for THEBA clients to utilise after leaving this service. In partnership with Women's Housing Company we have three properties which are used to support women to the final stage of support into independent living.

Our aims and objectives

1. To resource young Women in need of supported accommodation and to provide information, referral and support
2. To provide a wide range of supported activities/interactions to achieve greater independent living skills and self-esteem, using the premise that basic living skills are intrinsic to the development of self-esteem.
3. To promote and support initiatives and actions for change that will improve the status of young Women in our society
4. To provide information, education programs, group activities and resources designed to promote the physical, emotional and psychological well-being of young Women and enable young Women to take more control over their own self care
5. To promote the operation of a free, feminist, community oriented supported housing and information service run by and for Women, in a supportive, non-judgmental environment.
6. To pursue this aim within the context and with an understanding of the life experiences and realities of young Women living in the inner suburbs of Sydney.
7. To manage and operate the service in a professional manner with a focus on facilitating the independence and achievement of personnel goals for client
8. To identify, investigate and promote an understanding of young Women's needs and the social, economic & cultural factors affecting young Women.
9. To inform and impact existing housing and welfare services so as to make them more responsive to the needs of young Women.
10. To set priorities in the service and program provision based on the identified needs of our target group, with attention being given to Aboriginal, migrant, differently-abled, economically and socially disadvantaged young Women
11. To employ Women with a broad range of relevant life experiences, skills and cultural backgrounds to staff the service. Such staff to work as a team, promoting skills and information sharing amongst its members
12. To do anything incidental to, and conducive to, the furtherance of these objectives.

Why this service is important to our community?

The needs of the young women accessing THEBA are complex and diverse. A significant number of our service users have experienced severe childhood trauma neglect and abuse. They are amazing and inspirational young women

Some of the fundamental issues that the young women require support with include social isolation, economic, employment and educational disadvantage.

Amongst the issues that young women have experienced, whilst in Skills for Life Program they address their health problems including eating disorders, mental health, alcohol and other drug use and self-harming behaviours.

Women address self-care and recovery from abuse their safety, self esteem, creating and believing in healthy relationships and sexuality issues.

It is recognised that the support that THEBA offers in terms of the the Skills for Life Program is quite different from the food, clothing, and shelter models.

THEBA recognises the impact of deprivation on young women. We prioritise young women's needs as vitally important and provide services that are regarding, encouraging, life enriching, useful, practical and joy FULL.

We have found that the provision of our services to young women and the manner in which it is provided is invaluable and irreplaceable to the growth, development and recovery by our clients.

Our service addresses the cycle of homelessness and develops protocols, procedures, programs and activities to assist young women to maintain the skills gained in this program after they leave the program.

THEBA - Does it work?

The support that THEBA offers throughout our various programs is unique. Whilst being in the community services sector THEBA can't be defined sharply. We offer vastly more than provision of food, clothing, and shelter.

We offer the opportunity for real relationship with women accessing our service.

The demands upon young Women are immense. 'Get a job, any job', 'just say no to drugs', 'don't make excuses' 'leave that violent partner', 'get over the past – forget about it' 'it could be worse' 'let go forgive' are but few of the messages they receive. They are often told to be productive and valued members of society. What does this mean to you?

We have found that these messages do not take into consideration the contributing factors that hurtle women to seek the type of support THEBA offers. Whilst THEBA promotes accountability and individual responsibility these messages neither address the cause of the issues nor respond to them.

THEBA offers a range of services for young women to develop skills that will enable them to live independently and to make informed choices about their lives.

Women are unique individuals and THEBA is interested in the issues that Women are experiencing. THEBA develops creative and inclusive projects, programs and activities that encourage Women to be all that they can be.

There is no doubt that the services of THEBA are required in our community. The presenting problems of the young Women accessing THEBA are diverse.

Histories (past and current) of neglect, abuse, physical assault, dependence upon other people where the cost is high - physically, sexually and emotionally. Histories of being abandoned, misused, dismissed, taken advantage of and humiliated.

THEBA continues to commit money from the core project funding received from the Department of Community Services towards advancement for women. The Brokerage Program offered opportunities for women accessing our service to approach professional, appropriate, ethical therapists, which has provided them with emotional coping skills they did not know they could possess. THEBA has often been the stepping-stone into seeking counselling, therapy or psychiatric treatment and has created better health outcomes for women.

The brokerage program enabled women to access financial, emotional and material aid. We find that many women experience financial stress and have most times endured financial abuse in their relationships. The brokerage program has offered equality.

- Women have commenced 12 step programs for alcohol and drug unmanageability.
- Women have accessed therapists they are willing to be in relationship with in order to heal core issues affecting their lives.

EXCERPT FROM
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ANNUAL REPORT 2006

- Women have self- trained and are now teachers.
- Women are completing apprenticeships with major retail stores in Australia.
- Women are able to work part time work whilst studying.
- Women are working towards publishing their novels.
- Women are enjoying healthy relationships
- Women are accessing medical and dental health practitioners and addressing health issues.
- Women are in the process of developing grand submissions to produce plays, dance and theatre
- Women are in process of commencing small business, designing their own jewelry and design labels.
- Women are considering and planning for what it is they can call success and they own their healing, recovery and the changes and choices they have experienced.

THEBA works no doubt.

One woman can change the world. At THEBA, I see it every day, where the worlds we change are our own.

My journey with THEBA for 2007 took off with a dynamic incorporation of creativity, consistency and majestic process as the principles and values of THEBA herself permeated between not only the lives of our clients but of myself, and through all of the THEBA team. Challenged and inspired, enriched and occasionally exhausted, the



resource worker role offered continued opportunity for both my personal and professional development. With increased conflict resolution and mediation skills, even better safety and risk management practices, and my well supported, ever increasing self awareness and boundary development, I have ended the year ready to work with the increasing complexity of our clients needs and changing service industry.

The THEBA women of 2007 brought with them a wealth of experience and opportunity as they worked to enlighten and enliven their own developing identities, addressing practical matters of stability, self care, safety, family care and relationships, employment, education, nutrition, spirituality, creativity, balance and general well-being, resulting in many of our clients moving on this year enthused, motivated and confident about their journey ahead - an experience which THEBA shared as she made her own relocation, leading us into the heart of her new home in Enmore.

Settled in our new place, THEBA exploded, in what seemed for me to be a cascade of her mother earth love and warmth, offering a caring safe haven for those brave enough to bask in her glow. The fantastic flurry of activity which followed included a variety of groups of activities. 'Cheap Eats for the Soul' explored a variety of affordable and nutritious cook ups in the kitchen, 'Yarns and Yarns' offered women a 'new school' approach to 'old school' activity as they learned to knit – and pearl! – in a preferred social setting.

During a Healthy Lifestyles group, women increased their juggling skills as they practiced more balance and well being in their lives, and some ventured to broaden perspectives through the love of reading in our book club called 'Chattertales'. As if that hadn't been enough, to top it all off THEBA dipped into the cultural and culinary delights of the arts during a trip to the NSW Art Gallery which included our own personal tour of The Arts of Islam exhibition.

The Skills for Your Life Program proudly led the 2007 THEBA women into possibility, promise and passion. Heavily resourced with access to other agencies, spending plans, shopping skills, self care and well being tools and methods, the THEBA women continue to set and achieve their life goals.

The path we create is not often one which follows a straight line, and can take many an unexpected turn, however, the living journey we create and share with THEBA continues to be an inspirational awakening to the dynamic work possible whenever women come together to revel in their experienced, creative and integrated team work.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to encourage you to support THEBA Young Women's Service and the many projects they run. I am a 23 year old white dyke who has been utilising THEBA's services for 5 years now.

I started in THEBA's housing project as a resident. THEBA put a roof over my head when I could no longer live at home. Not only could I not afford private housing but I was lacking some of the skills necessary to live independently. Suzy, the manager, took me shopping for household goods and taught me things as simple as buying pots with thick bases so the food cooks better and is less likely to burn. I learnt meal planning, nutrition and budgeting skills that I still use every week. I also learnt job skills and health information that still serves me well.

While I was a resident I formed friendships with the other residents. In this way THEBA provided me with a network of young women I could turn to for support. Workers, who are older women, were often there with advice and encouragement. Having inspirational women of all ages around me was one of the best experiences of my life.

THEBA have enabled me to succeed at university by buying my textbooks and supplying me with a computer. My computer and my books are essential tools and I could not pass my subjects and work towards my degree without them.

When times get tough and my savings run out and the unexpected expenses just keep piling up I can not get a loan or a credit card like everyone else. THEBA are always there when I am stuck, not with a hand out but with an interest free loan that enables me to get back on my feet.

Lots of people have families they can turn to in times of financial hardship or emotional stress. My family can not fill these gaps due to poverty and dysfunction. Knowing that THEBA is always there and will always give me a leg up when all my saving, planning and emotional strength are not enough makes my life liveable. It means I can really go somewhere and not just keep struggling to survive.

THEBA Young Women's Service is a valuable community resource staffed by fabulous, competent and talented women. I hope you will support this wonderful service.

Warm Regards,

Kat Lamb-McCabe
7th March 2008

When I first came to be in contact with Theba it would seem that on the outside I was doing all right. I had a managerial job and was sociable. Inside me, things were chaotic and I knew I needed help. I reached out and Theba have been there (in different capacities) for me ever since. Theba have supported me in so many ways that through writing this they become clearer to me.

Some are more obvious like

- A safe and affordable place to live, to heal, to grow.
- Working with me to achieve my goals. Both with financial and mentoring assistance
- Paying for me to go to a sensitive and caring dentist (first time in 13years- I was a bit scared!)
- Facilitating the purchase of a computer, to help realise my goal of becoming a writer and to finish my university studies. I finished them and have written a 1st draft of a novel!!
- Paying for my tuition fees for a Playwriting class.
- By holding workshops that are for all young women, to learn about nutrition, budgeting, to have some fun together as well.
- When I was in between jobs, paying for therapy sessions so I could keep accessing the help I needed.
- Teaching me to drive. Assisting with the costs of Private lessons.

And then there are the benefits that are not as easily seen.

- Knowing I always have choices
- A stronger belief in myself
- A greater degree of self-care and love.
- A more holistic approach to my independence.
- Replacing harmful beliefs and thoughts for ones that are beneficial for the way I choose to live my life
- Feeling truly supported in my choices and goals
- Choosing my best at that time
- Letting go of perfection through increased self-worth and self-esteem
- Better relationships with others. Coming from a strong caring inside to the outside.
- Celebrating my achievements and those of others with pride and joy.
- Truly being in control and an active participant in all areas of my life

For example-

With the dentist I had always gone through the public system. Which meant waiting and getting whatever dentist is on for the day. After Theba cared enough to pay for me, I now pay for myself to go to the dentist of my choosing. Which feels so wonderfully empowering for me.

Theba is an amazing organisation that facilitates beneficial growth for all young women. For me, I had never, in my life, received such continual support of my goals and dreams and of myself. This gift will always be in my heart. It goes with me into the community and all benefit.

Thank you

GEM

7th March 2008