

## Bendigo Korus Connect Chaplaincy Support Group

Edition #1

2020

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The Bendigo Korus Connect Chaplaincy Support Group is very grateful for your support, be it practical, prayerful or financial. We look forward to it continuing.

Our Committee supports chaplains who are appointed to schools by Korus Connect. Currently, there are five schools which are financially supported by our Committee and this support amounts to around \$65,500 this year. To achieve this we rely on the generosity of individuals, churches and church groups and community groups. We also usually conduct fundraising activities throughout the year.

**Normally** a chaplain's work would vary according to the special needs of the school in which they work. It would most likely include support of individual students who have issues that concern them, organising and running groups at lunch-time, assisting with breakfast programs, visiting hurting and dysfunctional families, supporting grieving students and their families and providing referrals to other agencies that are better able to assist the student. Chaplains are a Christian voice within the school environment.

**However**, as we all know, there is nothing 'normal' about 2020!

You may have wondered what chaplains are doing throughout this time whilst their schools are closed. Be assured, they are all still employed, and are as busy, and as valued as ever. Upon speaking by phone with each chaplain it has been found that they are very much engaged as the 'go-between', supporting staff, principals, parents and students. The main difference is that most of their involvement is online or via phone. Some chaplains have been involved in brief face-to-face encounters. On the following pages you can read the reports submitted by a secondary college chaplain and a primary school chaplain.

Currently, because of the Covid-19 epidemic, fundraising has become difficult. We are no longer able to conduct our usual fundraising events and so our income has suffered. Our expenses still remain the same thus we are calling on our individual supporters and church and church group plus community groups to help boost our income.

***We would very much appreciate it if you would make a donation to support our work supporting chaplains in Bendigo schools. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible and receipts will be promptly issued.***

Again we thank you for any previous support you have given and we look forward to your on-going involvement as we continue to provide for the nine chaplains that are working within Bendigo schools.

Ray Harvey, Treasurer



An Australian Government Initiative

All schools, except Weeroona College, have been partially funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations under the National School Chaplaincy Program. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Isolation has only increased the complexity of trying to reach in and support the student and family.

The days have now become full of emails and phone calls.

There is a new constant pressure on chaplains as although the students' and families' struggles are out of sight at the moment, they are definitely not out of our minds. Isolation has only increased the complexity of trying to reach in and support the students and family.

Our support for the students can't just drop off because we can't be face to face at the moment. A student whose parent recently died doesn't go on hold waiting till isolation is over. A student who spent last night on the street, which was freezing, windy and drizzly, their life and challenges can't just go on hold, just as my support can't go on hold for him.

My days, and the other chaplains' days, are spent trying to reach into their lives which at the moment is mainly just via the phone and messages. Which is another added, somewhat draining challenge, to a profession that majors on face to face contact.

Another change is that the students are no longer my main contacts, the parents are now who I mainly speak with. Phone calls home can be like licorice all-sorts! A stressed parent, maybe an angry and frustrated parent, their child saying they are going to drop out of school, they don't know how to motivate them to do any work, another voice message left as you can't get in contact with a family but the school keeps asking that we somehow make connection, and the all-sorts go on.

That's about what we chaplains are up to at the moment. Thank you for your support, prayer and care at this unique time.

**Leigh Pryse, Eaglehawk Secondary College**

We acknowledge the support of the City of Greater Bendigo in granting the funds through their Community Grants program to purchase the laptop on which this newsletter was prepared.

This newsletter was photocopied at Creek Street Christian College at no cost to the Committee. We are most appreciative of this contribution.



Chaplains are providing wellbeing support in schools either remotely, onsite or a mixture of both. Pictured at right we see Chaplain, Megan Haddon, at **Lockwood South primary school** talking to students via WEBex during circle time. She says that students have enjoyed giving classmates a virtual tour of their garden and pets including sheep, dogs, cats, bunnies and even a snake!



Our student leaders came up with a novel twist to the annual Mothers' Day stall. Students listed in order of preference gifts with each person receiving a 'surprise' gift. The presents were collected from their weekly tubs already wrapped so the whole family could experience the 'surprise' element.

**At Big Hill primary school** the SRC and captains have been focusing on 'caring for individuals' using the free Grip leaders resource which lists a range of ideas of how they can show leadership. A grade 2 student is excited about making a special painting for her grandma. Other options include sending a care package, helping teach someone a skill, being a study buddy, writing a letter offering to bake or help in the neighbor's garden. Students send Megan photos of themselves caring for someone in these ways.

Chaplains have seen a large increase in their phone and email correspondence with families and staff to support remote learning and wellbeing by collaboratively forming action plans, referrals to services, learning and behaviour plan support, as well as assisting families access learning materials and resources which may involve home visits to drop off supplies and say a quick hello!

Schools still have students on site if their parents work in emergency or essential services so Chaplains have been checking in with students and the staff supervising them.

The Kids' Hope mentors at Big Hill are now 'pen pals' with their students supporting them in this way to adjust to the changes. This is also entertaining for the mentors!

**Megan Haddon, Lockwood South PS and Big Hill PS**

As a committee, we would normally have held our major fundraising event, the Trivia Night, in March, and by now we would have had two Bunnings BBQs. Alas, all have been cancelled.

You may wonder what the committee has been up to. Well, we can't meet face-to-face. The treasurer has still had to keep the books, and we can all pray.

I spent an afternoon catching up with each of the chaplains by phone. I was impressed by their ever-present passion for the students, families and staff they support.

Here are just a few comments they made:

- Still busy, more needed than ever
- Need will be even greater when school finally resumes
- Many problems exacerbated by isolation
- Vulnerable children of particular concern
- Stress building up in homes
- Parents struggling with technology, discipline

Some chaplains have been involved in delivering learning packs and organizing food hampers.

All chaplains expressed frustration in not being face-to-face with students, and look forward to the day when they can be.

We can all be praying for the chaplains, their work, and for the struggles being faced by school communities.

And by the way, some of the chaplains are working from home whilst supervising their own children's learning!

**Rosalie Harvey, Secretary**

**Make sure you  
test positive for  
*Faith*. Keep  
distance from  
*Doubt*, and  
isolate from  
*Fear*. Trust *God*  
through it all.**

Chaplain:	at these schools
<b>Rose Amy</b>	Spring Gully PS Kangaroo Flat PS
<b>Carl Rusbridge</b>	Weeroona College Bendigo
<b>Kelli Bailey</b>	Golden Square PS
<b>Leigh Pryse</b>	Eaglehawk Secondary College
<b>Megan Haddon</b>	Lockwood South PS Big Hill PS
<b>Merilyn Tatt</b>	Maiden Gully PS
<b>Ricky Cawley</b>	White Hills PS Axedale PS
<b>Mike Peautagitama</b>	Crusoe College
<b>Wendy Kofoed</b>	Eaglehawk North PS

Our current committee	
<b>Craig Clifton</b>	Chairman
<b>Ray Harvey</b>	Treasurer
<b>Rosalie Harvey</b>	Secretary/Newsletter
<b>Jenny Rainsford</b>	Member
<b>Mary Preston</b>	Member
<b>Laurie Preston</b>	Member
<b>Dawn Moncrief</b>	Member