



Charity Youth Programs

An Initiative of the Property Industry Foundation



Open Family Australia, *Cabramatta* est.1978

Established for 30 years, Open Family Australia has been working with some of Australia's most marginalised youth, many are homeless and drug addicted. Their mission is to improve the well-being and self-worth of alienated and excluded street children through unconditional support, with the view to reconnecting them with the community. Open Family have operations throughout Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, as well as the Bellarine Peninsula and North East Victoria.

How do they help youth homelessness and young people at risk?

Open Family's team of twenty-five Youth Outreach Specialists work closely with disadvantaged young people who suffer homelessness, poor health, disenfranchisement from education, unemployment, physical or sexual abuse and drug and alcohol abuse. Professional Program Co-ordinators' provide them with unconditional support and link them to services such as housing, drug and alcohol programs, education, employment, health agencies, legal assistance and counselling. Program initiatives undertaken by this charity include, "Blood Oath", which aimed to create awareness about the prevalence of Hepatitis C in homeless youths through seminars advocating preventative measures young people can take to avoid contracting the disease.

Many of the young people under their care are born into their dire circumstances such as coming from low socio-economic backgrounds and broken-down families, or they are often the third and fourth generation unemployed in their family.

What is PIF helping to fund?

The Property Industry Foundation is continuing to sponsor an Outreach Worker who manages an intensive youth program for marginalised young people living on the streets. This vital assistance is provided through a mobile bus in NSW (as with their Youth Outreach bus used in Victoria). The vehicle provides services such as; counselling, referrals to crisis response services such as their Blood Oath program, as well as the provision of health and harm reduction material. The bus is equipped with basic supplies such as food or food vouchers, and toiletries and clothing.

Their Outreach Worker also counsels young people regarding legal issues, education services and recreational activities resulting in developing self esteem and maintaining a positive peer support network.

Total cost of this program?

\$230, 000

How much did the PIF Board approve for this program?

1st Year: \$50, 000

2nd Year: \$60, 000

3rd Year: \$60, 000

4th Year: \$60, 000

Why did PIF believe that the program needed funding assistance?

The Open Family Youth Outreach Bus has been successfully operational in Victoria since 2002. Their Outreach Workers continually provide essential services that respond to the front line of youth homelessness giving refuge to "at risk" young people from the dangers of street life. PIF is providing funding based on Open Family's reputation as a well established charity in helping street youth through their progressive mobile service program for twenty years.