

From Marcus Godinho, CEO,  
with assistance from One Umbrella volunteer scribe Pia Di Mattina

## Woohoo! We're gettin there....

Summer holidays? What summer holidays?? We've been scurrying around since Christmas; planning, designing, scoping out and transforming our new digs in Abbotsford. The freezer has already been started up and put to good use, and we hope the new kitchen, tailor-made for our needs, will be up and running in May.

It is energising to be in such a growth phase – but we couldn't surge forward with so much success without the crucial help from our wonderful philanthropics, individuals and companies who understand that avoiding waste and channelling practical measures of goodwill towards those in need is the bedrock of a sustainable, healthy community. And that today, in Melbourne, no one should be going hungry.

We'd like to heartily hail those who've provided such critical assistance over the past 6 months. They include:

**The Jack and Ethel Goldin Foundation** – for a donation so substantial it enabled us to buy the Abbotsford building

**The Eldon & Anne Foote Trust** (via Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund) – for a significant general contribution that allows us to spread our wings, and get closer to the One Million Meals mark

**The Jack Brockhoff Foundation** – for a hefty donation that helped us buy our second van (the first van, still in use, is an older brother of this new one, having been provided by the same donor some years ago)

**Andrew Kroger** – who also has provided a weighty sum towards the new van's purchase

**The Besen Foundation, The Helen Macpherson Smith Trust and International Power** – who have all help us very generously to expand our delivery reach to agencies working with people in the Dandenong and Frankston regions

**Donkey Wheel Fund and Charitable Trust** – who have helped us lock in new supporters, especially some corporates and others who've helped us with the fit out of the new kitchen

We also acknowledge again the important valuable support we've received in the past from the **RE Ross Trust, The Campbell Edwards Trust** and the **Pratt Foundation**, all of whom have provided critical help at important times.

Without the support of all these people, we could never have grown with such gusto and strength. And it is with the assistance of all these people and others that we hope to keep expanding our reach, and meeting the daily challenges as the future unfolds. The times may seem prosperous to many, but there are always those who need a helping hand – and our society should be judged on the way we treat those of our members most in need.

The people we help are many and varied; an increasing number of working poor, people seeking asylum in Australia facing significant settlement issues, and homeless people in Victoria who face real and daily food insecurity issues. Agencies with whom we deal say they could easily distribute twice as many meals as we are providing.

Increasing quantities of salvaged food have recently allowed us to give more food to recipient agencies, especially the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre, St. Mary's House of Welcome, Sunshine Mission, Sacred Heart Mission and Collingwood Community Centre.

We continue to stretch our resources far, but the day to day running of the organisation continues to present funding challenges. While our administrative or overhead costs are low, daily running costs are a fact of life, even for a lean organisation like us. Each meal we provide costs only 40c to make. However, as our production ramps up, so do attendant costs. Unlike other agencies working in the food relief area, we do not receive any operational funding from government, and agencies to whom we supply meals have this year reported there is a greater need than ever for our help. So the challenges continue ...

*" Severely full,  
the epicure would say,  
Fate cannot harm me, I have dined today... "*

## News from the Kitchen

Julien “Where-would-we-be-without-her” Jane is just itching to get into our new kitchen, while, as usual, bursting with enthusiasm for what has been going on lately at Hanover.

She reports that we were ostensibly closed for 2 weeks in January. But somebody obviously forgot to tell the numerous volunteers who came in regardless, during their own holidays, and cooked and cleaned and kept the Christmas goodwill flowing well into the new year....oh and of course, their ring-leader, Rob, who worked on Christmas Day at Hanover (with weekly volunteer Mei Chan), and right throughout January. Our warm thanks to all of them.

It was also fabulous to welcome back some long absent friends; previous regular volunteers, who had had to take a break to meet other commitments, but who’ve returned to the fold with renewed vim and vigour.

And bountiful offerings from food donors continue.... Commercial wholesale butchers, Top Cut, tried to overwhelm us with around 6 tonnes of frozen meat – but we are excitedly rising to the challenge. This is gold, given how rarely we come by meat. And what a potent punch of nutrition it provides - many people experiencing food insecurity have a particular need for protein that is so effectively delivered by meat.

So, as soon as we took possession of Abbotsford, we switched on the freezer room - and jam packed it with meat! Soon after, Sunshine Mission received 30 boxes of wonderful pre-prepared meat meals, ready for immediate distribution. And there is plenty more where that came from. Magnificent. Including, dare I say, 30 kg of Peking Duck (or is it Beijing Duck?). Fit for Olympians, either way.

Fruit Box have also been absolute champions, giving us around 800 kgs of fruit per week. Yes, that’s 800 kgs. This goes straight to agencies, helping them reduce their own costs, and stretch their resources further.

Tonnes of all sorts of foodstuffs with a long shelf life have also flowed in from Hamper King, together with daily donations from ISS Catering (which supplies Meals on Wheels) amounting to at least 250kg a week in February. And so the kitchen keeps on buzzing....



Sandy Dudakov

## Spotlight on Volunteers

Sandy Dudakov, a person of seemingly boundless energy, has been a long-time volunteer since we were a fledgling organisation. Actually, we’re not sure when she sleeps.

Many of you who spend time in the kitchen will know her – and she cheekily points out one doesn’t need to have culinary skills to be a big help in our kitchen!

With a background in building project management, including assisting organisations to relocate premises, Sandy has lately been co-ordinating the fit out of our new headquarters – quite a complex task. One aspect has involved assessing a range of commercial ovens worth more than \$25,000 – that’s a scale of oven a little larger than she’s used to....

Sandy has a long history of volunteering, having been closely involved in the Malvern Citizens’ Advice Bureau, among other initiatives. When that outfit closed down (its shelf life in that region having expired), Sandy looked around for something to focus her volunteering energy on that would really make a tangible, immediate difference to people in need. One Umbrella was a perfect fit.

Having seen how City Harvest operated in New York, with its rescuing of and re-distribution of food, Sandy realised the model had so much potential.

Sandy pays tribute to Julien, with her flair and inventiveness, who she recognises is the lynchpin energy force of the organisation. With an almost nil volunteer attrition rate, she says something magic goes on in our kitchen, and those who spend time there will know what she means.

However, Sandy stresses she sees One Umbrella as a conceptual jigsaw – the food donors, the volunteers, the philanthropics who support us in a variety of ways (including, but not only, financially), the staff - we need all the pieces to fit the whole picture together. And what a rich, complex picture we paint together.

These days, she says it makes her heart sing to see how so many people give their time, so regularly, and get so much out of that giving. And that their efforts make so much difference to the lives of those on the receiving end. Right back at ya, Sandy!

## Thanks to Hanover

As we prepare to move the kitchen operations over to Abbotsford, we must of course also say some goodbyes to Hanover – although only in the daily, physical, could-you-pass-the-salt sense!

With their doors open to those in need 24/7, Hanover Southbank Crisis Centre is a bustling rallying point for those in need of crisis accommodation and personal support in inner Melbourne. With around 50 people staying there at any one time, together with various drop-ins and other visitors, Hanover is a critical support station for those in trouble.

For a number of years we have been working out of their kitchen at Southbank, putting on a weekly lunch for residents, and keeping their dining room fridge and emergency food freezer stocked. It has been a fabulous symbiotic relationship, which both organisations will miss.

We have had a particularly fantastic working relationship with Andy and Raelene, whose job it is to keep the wheels turning at Hanover, including organising community development initiatives like special festivities at Easter and Christmas. Our catering last year for their Arts Show at the St Kilda Town Hall, involving over 200 people, was a great example of how well we've all danced to the same tune.

Andy muses that the kitchen might go a little quiet, once we've moved out, and he's certainly going to miss that homey feeling of JJ and Rob's kitchen aromas. But he also expects to miss the warmth and generosity of our volunteers, who so often bring in other donations for residents, such as clothes or special treats like chocolate.

Andy is heartened by the fact that homelessness, with its far-reaching effects on communities, is now on the political agenda. An unheralded visit to Hanover by then Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd in the week before the election seems to have helped raise the profile of this pressing social problem with Canberra policy makers. Given that the fall out of the housing affordability crisis lands squarely on the shoulders of organisations like ours, such a renewed focus and energy for change is welcome.

We will of course continue to maintain close ties with Hanover from our new headquarters. So its more of a ciao for now, but we won't be strangers....

## More thanks

At Christmas time we said goodbye to Frank, our van driver for over 4 years. Frank was such a well-known and welcome face with the agencies whom he visited regularly, and will be missed. Many thanks, Frank.

Our new driver, Joelle Metcalf, has slipped seamlessly into the role, hitting it off well with regular food donors and recipient agencies. And she's not adverse to rolling up her sleeves in the kitchen, either. But she is keen to get behind the wheel of the new Jack Brockhoff Foundation / Andrew Kroger Mercedes van due to pull up outside Hanover sometime in April.... We welcome her to the One Umbrella family.

And just because we can, another wrap up special thanks to our noble sous chef, Rob, who has done a tremendous job over the past two months (even more than usual – doesn't he sleep either?). In addition to helping agencies out with food during January when we were meant to be closed, he also doubled up as ace van driver in the hiatus between Frank and Joelle (move over Jack Brabham in that speed hall of fame...)

*Go get 'em, Rob.  
You're a champ.*