

NEWS LETTER

ST GEORGE COMMUNITY HOUSING LTD



JUNE 2009

WINNER OF 2008 NSW AWARDS IN COMMUNITY HOUSING FOR OVERALL EXCELLENCE

Winner of the Tutoring Program in 2008 & Bursary in 2009

My name is Tina Baradaran and I am currently in year 10 at Malek Fahd Islamic High School. During the time that I go to school it is extremely intricate for me to study and do my homework because of the minimum amount of space I have to study. I go to a very strict and competitive school, which is immensely difficult for most students to cope with. In my family my mother is a sole parent with an extremely low income. My elderly grandma, who is 86 years old, suffers from diseases such as Alzheimer, arthritis and cancer. She is an extremely fragile lady who I love and care for deeply.

With my mother's low income providing for the family can be immensely difficult for her especially after she has to study, cook, clean, care and provide for the whole family.

Fortunately during June last year SGCH provided a competition for a whole year of free tutoring with Professional Tutoring Centre Hurstville. I entered the competition hoping that I would attain this whole year of free tutoring. Soon after I had been blessed and won what I had always wanted. Since I have been attending Professional Tutoring Centre Hurstville my results have enhanced. I have improved my English skills and mathematics. Also because of my improvement I have won the bursary with thanks to SGCH staff.

This is the first year that I have won such a major award and I am deeply thankful for this



Tina with Andy from the Professional Tutoring Centre Hurstville

magnificent opportunity. With this money I will use it to further my studies and improve my results. My mother will buy me a new computer, school books along with a new school bag. I will also use the money for continuing to go to Professional Tutoring Centre Hurstville.

I am very fortunate to have won this bursary and free tutoring at Professional Tutoring Centre Hurstville. Throughout this process I have gained a lot of confidence in my work and life.

With this tutoring it has allowed me to enhance my education and school work. I am very thankful of Andrew who is my tutor and the owner of Professional Tutoring Centre Hurstville. He is an easy going, good hearted, friendly, helpful and knowledgeable

teacher. He has helped me try my preminent and progress and this has been shown through my school report. Without being given this opportunity I don't think that I would be here on this triumphant day.

I would like to deeply thank SGCH staff, Andrew and my mum and aunty who are my role models and my family for helping and supporting me in reaching my goals and achieving my best in life.

As a poet once stated that: "when love and skill work together you shall expect a masterpiece" and when I am given this great opportunity, I endeavor to create a masterpiece!

Thank you everyone!!!!

Highlights



Sydney Aquarium big day out April 2009

Pg2



10 Years Service

Pg4



March 2009 competition winners

Pg3

**St George
Community Housing Ltd**

Suite 1, Level 3, 8 Crofts Ave
Hurstville NSW 2220

Phone: 02 9585 1499

Fax: 02 9585 1564

Email: email@

stgeorgecommunityhousing.org.au

Website: www.sgch.com.au

ABN: 32565549842

Smoke alarms save lives

Smoke alarms are designed to provide an early warning of fire and have contributed to saving hundreds if not thousands of lives in Australia. In April the NSW Fire Brigades took part in a national campaign urging people to use the end of daylight savings as an opportunity to turn your clock back and change your smoke alarm batteries. All homes in NSW are required by law, to have at least one working smoke alarm installed on each level of their home.

So have you changed your Smoke Alarm Battery?

St George Community Housing Limited Rent Incentive

HOW TO WIN - If your rent is in advance at the end of each month you will automatically qualify to go into the draw to win a \$100 Food Voucher. **Congratulations to the following winners: Cemiyet of Merrylands, Amanda of Fairfield, Brian of Bexley North, Jessica of Hurstville.**

Canterbury Big Day Out

On 21 April 2009 St George Community Housing Limited (SGCH) coordinated an information and fun day for all tenants living in the Canterbury Local Government Area (LGA).

Over 150 tenants from across the Canterbury LGA attended the Family Fun Day at Riverwood Community Centre. Staff from the Riverwood Community Centre, Canterbury Family Interagency, Housing NSW and SGCH worked together to make this event possible.

It was an opportunity to find out about the range of services for children and families available in the area and improve social networks. The aim was to help tenants access and connect to services available to them in an informative and supportive way.

Families and children enjoyed a diverse range of information stalls, workshops on environmental and life education, a BBQ, face painting & meeting with Healthy Harold the giraffe.



One of the highlights of the day was when the children got to meet players from the Bulldogs NRL football team: everyone was excited to meet the Bulldogs players Michael Sullivan and Jamal Idris and receive autographs and have their photographs taken with their football legends.

This successful event was kindly funded by Canterbury Council. SGCH would like to thank Canterbury Council for this fantastic opportunity.



On the 15 April 2009 St George Community Housing Limited (SGCH) tenants and their children enjoyed a free family day at the Sydney Aquarium. Over 330 tenants attended.

It was fabulous to see all the smiling faces and happy children enjoying this fun school holiday activity.

All of the kids enjoyed the fairy penguins, octopus and cuttlefish from the Great Australian Bight, plus the Open Ocean Aquarium where they were surrounded by one of the world's most extensive collection of sharks and giant stingrays passing overhead as they walked through the underwater tunnels. For many tenants it was their first experience to see something so spectacular.

Most of the children were very excited that they got to visit the home of Nemo and see clown fish, as well as sea stars and coral. They got to observe this spectacle from a tunnel with totally transparent floor, ceiling and walls.

Sydney Aquarium also has two interactive touch pools which was a great hit.

The amazing and mystical dugongs at Mermaid Lagoon were very cute, sociable and munched their way through lettuce all day. There are only 5 dugongs on exhibition in the world making Sydney Aquarium the only place in Australia where you can see these unique sea mammals up close.

It was wonderful to see everyone at the Aquarium and we hope you all enjoyed your day.

Thank you for attending we look forward to the next big event.



Good Neighbour Competition

What makes your neighbour so special?

Show your neighbour that you appreciate them and vote for them today, it's easy.

Simply, write about what makes your neighbour so special and what do they do for you and your family.

Please send your letter in to Rowa Omari by 1 July 2009.

ENTER NOW

Mutual Exchange

The mutual exchange list is available in the SGCH office, web page or by phoning our office and requesting one to be mailed to your home. This list provides information regarding properties that are available for mutual exchange.

For details on how to list your property on the mutual exchange list please call our office on 9585 1499.

Kids Competition Winners

Congratulations to: Courtney of Gynea, Samantha of Peakhurst, Ella of Yarrowarrah, Boris of Riverwood & Anastasia of Botany.

Thank you to everyone who entered the Colouring Competition held in March 2009.

All the pictures were coloured so beautifully it was very hard to choose a winner.



How your Board of Directors operates.

This article briefly summarises how your Board of Directors operates.

The Board is voluntary and non executive. This means Directors have no involvement in the day to day affairs of St George – this is left to the CEO and her team.

The Board's functions include:

- ensuring St George is well managed and resourced, and financially viable, so that tenants and stakeholders have every confidence and faith in the organisation, and that St George remains an employer of choice; and
- ensuring St George never loses sight of its core social values which include providing

secure, affordable and sensitively managed housing to those in need.

Directors are elected by active St George members for terms not exceeding three years. Director elections take place at St George's annual general meeting in November each year.

Nominations for director positions are approved by the Board beforehand

- this ensures the Board is adequately resourced by people having experience and expertise in various areas, such as finance, social housing management and policy development, asset management, human resources, and law.

Cont Pg 4

From the CEO



This column is a very important way for me as the Chief Executive Officer to let you know about some of the exciting things we are doing and some of our changes. It is also an opportunity for me to let you know that I and the staff are

thinking of you. It is your needs, your struggles, your challenges that occupy a great deal of our thoughts. It is so rewarding when I hear back from you or my staff do about how having a home or winning a bursary or accessing the white goods loan scheme has made a difference. It is knowing that we can support you in meeting your needs that provides us with a sense of satisfaction and gratitude. The staff at SGCH only exist to support you and without your involvement and engagement we wouldn't exist.

At the recent Family Day Out at the Aquarium we were so pleased to see as many as 330 of you having fun. The Canterbury Fun Day out at Riverwood Community Centre was another successful event with SGCH partnering with Canterbury Council, Housing NSW, Riverwood Community Centre and NSW Police, Fire Brigades and Ambulance to offer an integrated community event. Over 170 tenants and residents of the community attended and we were happy to see everyone enjoying themselves.

The Educational Bursary ceremony took place in February and again was a successful event with 54 bursaries given out to primary, secondary and tertiary students. For the first time we included the residents from Bonnyrigg and it was great to see them so involved. Please see the edited version of a recipient's speech which captures the essence of why we support tenants and families in their continuing education. Well done to all recipients and to your future educational achievements.

I am pleased to announce we have recently employed Jo-Anne Edsor as our Chief Operating Officer. Her role is to support the housing management team in meeting your needs and ensuring we continue to provide the best quality service we can. Jo-Anne has more than 20 years experience working in the social and public housing field and has a continuing passion for the growth, recognition and reform of the sector. She has a demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the Australian Social Housing system, with post graduate qualifications in Housing Management and Urban Policy.

Warmest wishes
Nazha Saad, Chief Executive Officer



From the Chair



So much has happened, and we're only five months into the year!

The various Government stimulus initiatives have certainly kept everyone at St George busy, especially

given their commendable objective of increasing social housing supplies to house those in need.

St George has also benefitted from the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS), a Commonwealth initiative, with NSW backing, which aims to increase affordable housing supplies. St George is now the proud owner of 100 new units in Leumeah and Bankstown thanks largely to this initiative and the confidence Government has in the organisation delivering positive social outcomes. I'm pleased to say that tenant demand for the units has demonstrated that these initiatives can only benefit the sector.

The Federal Housing Minister, the Hon Tanya Plibersek, recently launched NRAS through the Bankstown project, which showcased St George in a wonderful way. The Minister is to be commended for her commitment, passion and energy to the housing sector, and the profile she's given the sector.

It was also very pleasing to welcome the Hon David Borger, the New South Wales Housing Minister, and the various federal and

state parliamentarians at the NRAS launch. The Minister is also very passionate about the sector, and he too is to be commended for his commitment.

St George has established sound working relationships with government and other stakeholders, and we look forward to continuing these relationships, and working with the respective Ministers' departments and doing what we can to ensure the sector (and therefore St George) benefits in the best possible fashion. My thanks to staff for fostering these relationships.

In this difficult economic climate, I again say to our valued tenants that St George is doing everything it possibly can to ensure you don't suffer. As far as St George is concerned, it's business as usual, and you should not worry. I do ask that you keep in regular contact with your housing managers, and let them know if you need anything.

I formally welcome Jo-Anne Edsor as our new Chief Operating Officer. I'm sure she'll be a welcome addition to the organisation.

Finally, I acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of staff and the Board in enthusiastically and responsibly responding to the challenges of the new initiatives, while at the same time ensuring the organisation continues performing at a sound level. We all have St George's interests at heart, and this is the key to delivering good outcomes.

Steve Kouris, Chairman

White Goods Loans Scheme

Six loans were approved in April 2009 with tenants purchasing goods including refrigerators, washing machines and dryers.

The loans are expected to be re-paid by October 2009 when new applicants will be invited to apply.

Tenant Advisory Group & Chinese Tenant Group

Meetings were held in April for both groups at the Hurstville Civic Centre. The Chinese tenants reviewed the Absence from Property policy. Both groups also had a worker from the Salvation Army attend to talk to them about what the organisation can offer including financial support and the money care programme.

For any tenants who may not be TAG members but are interested in making a difference at SGCH and being part of the TAG Group please contact Rowa Omari on 9585 1499

The Board *Cont from Pg 3*

The Board also includes a tenant director (currently Leslie Fuller) - this ensures the Board is aware of issues affecting St George tenants, so it responds to these issues in the best possible way. Leslie also vice Chairs St George's Tenants Advisory Group, which allows her to provide valuable feedback to the Board on tenancy matters.

The Board meets monthly at Hurstville, with the CEO and CFO attending.

This gives the Board a good opportunity to monitor the organisation's affairs and performance, including its financial performance.

The Board is passionate and committed to St George, and will always act in the organisation's best interests to ensure it continues delivering high quality and responsible social outcomes.

Congratulations

10 Years Service



Congratulations to Suzan Shuhaiber & Andra Soubris who have recently celebrated 10 years service with St George Community Housing Limited.

Housing Managers Profiles



Rachel Nobile

Team Leader of the Housing Management team

Commenced working with SGCH in 2004 as a Trainee Housing Manager soon she progressed to working as a Housing Manager. Early 2008 Rachel was appointed to the role of team leader for the Housing Managers. Prior to working with SGCH Rachel worked in real estate as a property manager.



Amanda Anders

Commenced working at SGCH in 2007 as a receptionist. She then moved into the Repairs & Maintenance department. In 2008 Amanda was appointed to the Housing Management role. Prior to working for SGCH Amanda was working as a customer service representative at Bankstown Centro.



Bernard (Ben) Majjevac

Commenced working with SGCH in March 2009 as a Housing Manager. Prior to working with SGCH Ben worked in various community service related positions and brings this experience over to SGCH.



Dejan Maric

Commenced working with SGCH in 2008 as a Housing Manager. Prior to working for SGCH Dejan's background was property management.



Evelyn Skilton

Commenced working for SGCH in July 2007 as a receptionist. In 2008 she moved into Housing Management. Prior to working for SGCH Evelyn worked in women's refuge at a local and national level and in many areas of social services including working with youth and children both in New Zealand and in Australia.



Fiona Loveday

Commenced working at SGCH in 2007 as a receptionist. She then moved

into the Repairs & Maintenance department. Fiona then moved to Housing Management. Currently Fiona is a Housing Manager with the Port Jackson Supported Housing Program (PJSHP). Prior to working for SGCH Fiona worked in real estate with 8 years property management experience.



Jo Spengeler

Commenced working with SGCH in 2007 as a Housing Manager. Prior to working for SGCH Jo was working in the UK, for various large inner city national Housing Associations. Jo held several positions including Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, generic housing manager, Rent Officer, Student Lets Accommodation Officer, mainly in areas of poverty and high property turn-over



John Stefanik

Commenced working with SGCH in September 2006 as a Housing Manager. Prior to working for SGCH John has been involved in property management for the last 7 years and 4 1/2 years in community housing in South Australia.



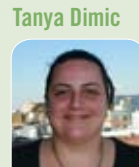
Jennifer Lee

Commenced working with SGCH in 2004 as a Trainee Housing Manager. Before too long she progressed to a Housing Manager and now is a Housing Manager for PJSHP. Prior to working for SGCH Jennifer worked in real estate as a Property Officer.



Nick Zingovski

Commenced working for SGCH in 2008 as a Housing Manager. Nick has an extensive background of customer service and 10 years experience in the private real estate sector.



Tanya Dimic

Commenced working at SGCH in 2006 as a receptionist. She then moved into the Repairs & Maintenance department. In September 2008 Tanya was appointed as a Housing Manager. Prior to working for SGCH Tanya was working in the electrical wholesale industry for over 10 years.