

CRIME PREVENTION

A NEW INNOVATION



An initiative of



CRIME AND ~~PUNISHMENT~~ PREVENTION

At present in Queensland, crime rates are soaring. The prison population is growing at twice the rate of the community. More prisons are being built, extra police are being employed and fear by residents is growing as robberies and other crimes escalate and take their toll.

Correctional Centres have many good programs in place but even with all the best efforts, the rate of inmate rehabilitation remains extremely low, with the majority of criminals continuing to re-offend.

As well as the stress and trauma caused, the financial cost to society is another vital reason for urgent application of more effective solutions.

Three Million Reasons

The cost of keeping an inmate incarcerated is in 2008 approximately \$70,000 per year. This figure is dramatically increased if the inmate has children and the family becomes reliant on government support; however this is only the tip of the iceberg.

The following information was provided by a former Programs Manager of the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre, Mr John Guy:

An 18 year old offender represents the highest risk of re-offending and on average will cost the community three million dollars over the course of his lifetime. This figure takes into consideration costs such as court, legal, police, damages, health, corrections, welfare, victims and so on.

Present figures indicate only a relatively small number of offenders are successfully rehabilitated. Mr Guy however was optimistic about the possibilities of successful rehabilitation if offenders are placed in the right environment and receive appropriate care & support once released.

The following is a breakdown of Correctional Centre inmates:

- ***70% `sad' - Drug & drug related crime***
- ***20% `mad' - Mentally ill (increasing with drug abuse);***
- ***10% `bad' - Truly criminal.***

This means that about 90% should be able to be rehabilitated.

Recent surveys in the UK and our own experience have shown that an extremely high rate of rehabilitation is possible when the ex-inmates make new friends and have mentors. There is a huge saving to society as each one is turned around, it not only stems the tide of the ever-increasing crime rate but also offers a saving of up to \$3,000,000 to society. Many ex-inmates have already been rehabilitated through a new innovation providing that necessary and vital post release support.

This vital post release support has come by way of an initiative of the Community Care Network known as "Bad Boyz Downunder".

Inside and Out

In 1999 there was communication between Community Care Network and Prison Fellowship Queensland in relation to the needs of inmates, ex-inmates and families

At the time Noel Gallagher was appointed as a full time chaplain and worked in this role for several years with his wife Linda working as a voluntary literary tutor with women inmates. Linda continues to visit female inmates, mentor women post release and provide support to wives and partners of serving inmates through her own initiative, *Good Girlz*. Noel himself has continued to be a driving force in prisoner follow-up and due to the interest generated by the success of his work, more chaplains have been appointed.

Community Care Network has distributed thousands of dollars worth of self-help literature to inmates through the chaplains. Support groups inside the Woodford and Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centres have been started by the chaplains covering areas of depression, anger management and other daily issues faced by inmates.

Despite the fact that hundreds of inmates' lives have been touched and redirected inside prison, the greatest challenge faced by inmates is upon their release.

Many inmates are released with a desire to go on the straight and narrow but without the support of positive family and friends a majority go back to their 'old friends' and 'stomping grounds'. As a result drug and alcohol abuse immediately come into play and they find themselves re-offending, and, soon after, returning to prison. To help break this destructive cycle an ex-inmate needs to find or be offered a new group of friends and accompanying support that comes with that friendship.

Community Care Network offers this vital post release support through an initiative called *BadBoyz Downunder*. The concept of *BadBoyz Downunder* came as an answer to this rather obvious need, as our slogan suggests:

'FROM BAD BOYS TO GREAT MEN'

Bad Boyz Downunder

Community Care Network has been running 'Bad Boyz Clubs' since 1999. Bad Boyz Clubs are simply support groups with an emphasis on helping ex-inmates adjust back into the community. We offer support through regular gatherings and participation in Community Outreach Projects across South East Queensland. Bad Boyz Clubs are a place where men of all backgrounds are welcomed without fear of judgment, condemnation or rejection. There are no costs involved to participants and meetings are usually conducted over breakfast in takeaway restaurants such as *McDonalds*, *Hungry Jacks* and *Subway*. These restaurants have allowed us use of their party rooms or sections of dining areas, providing us with a quiet and private environment in which to conduct our meetings.

In this non-threatening environment men are encouraged to share their problems whilst meeting and mixing with others who have perhaps been through the same experiences and are now on a path of personal improvement and keen to assist

others, become 'mates' and help newcomers and their families through their difficulties.

The *Bad Boyz Downunder* approach to post release support has proven highly successful. The revolving door cycle has been broken for many men.

We have seen men who have been branded 'career criminals' and 'no chance of rehabilitation' become healthy, happy, family men and contributing members to the community. We know that the simple yet effective concept can deliver what many have thought to be impossible and we are committed to achieving it. At this stage we have two *Bad Boyz Clubs* operating on a fortnightly basis at Caboolture and Fortitude Valley. Also, Linda Gallagher conducts a *Good Girls Club* in Fortitude Valley open to women from all walks of life but with an emphasis once again on ex-inmates. Clubs can open up or close down as needs change in respective areas. We are not "number-driven", we are "love-driven".

We have also had interest from people elsewhere in Australia, people who see the effectiveness and share in the vision of *Bad Boyz Downunder*. We look toward to planting new groups with a vision to establish many more weekly meetings across the nation over the next few years.

Every week there are more and more men and women seeking support after leaving our correctional centres, support which, apart from initiatives such as *Bad Boyz Downunder* and a few others, is almost non-existent.

We are striving to provide this support through our *Bad Boyz Clubs* and various outreach projects, however further funding of these projects and training of volunteer leaders will be required to achieve such growth.

We have support from those working within the prison system and parole officers who see the overwhelming need and benefits of *Bad Boyz Downunder* and are encouraging ex-inmates to attend. We see these as important relationships, working with chaplains, prison staff, management and parole officers to draw the attention of ex-inmates to the benefits of *Bad Boyz Clubs* and the opportunity for ex-inmates to turn the page and escape the revolving door of crime.

Not Just Meetings

Bad Boyz Downunder is more than just meetings. We are about building personal relationships and creating a place where men feel welcome and accepted. We offer a chance for men to reach their fullest potential by increasing self esteem and interpersonal skills through meetings, breakfasts, courses and active participation in outreach projects.

Courses

We have a Diploma of Christian Ministry course available; the Diploma is recognized and given accreditation by the Commonwealth Department of Education thus providing both national and international qualifications.

In modern Australian society, many men have lost their identity and are unsure of the role of a good husband and father. We provide access to courses which give answers to the many different challenges that are specifically related to men.

Courses cover:

- * Parenting and all the challenges it throws up at us as men.
- * Relating to our wives or partners.
- * Single or Separated Fathers.
- * Dealing with Emotions and Feelings.
- * Shame and Guilt.
- * Sexual Addiction and Intimacy.
- * Addictive Compulsive Behaviour.
- * Co-dependency
- * Conflict Resolution and Anger Management.
- * Depression and Mental Illness.

We can arrange weekend seminars tackling some of the tougher issues facing men in today's society.

OUTREACH TRAILERS

Youth at Risk

As most people already know there are many areas where youth gather, such as streets, parks and shopping centres. Often gangs are formed from within these groups and in many cases outbreaks of vandalism, theft and violence are a direct result. Police are only too aware of this growing problem and in many instances, due to lack of resources, powerless to stop it.

The crime statistics in the publicly available 2006 - 2007 QLD Police Annual Report (<http://www.police.qld.gov.au/>) show the Southern Region experienced a 10% increase in total Offences Against the Person. Contributing to this result were increases in Other Homicide (33%), Assault (13%), Sexual Assault (14%) and Robbery (13%). Offences against Property also increased (5%) with increases reported in Unlawful Entry (7%), Arson (11%), Other Theft (1%), Fraud (27%) and Handling Stolen Goods (16%).

Figures also show that our youth (13 to 25 years) have the highest suicide rate in the world, many of these youths (both male and female) are from dysfunctional families and are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The addition of the prevalence of drug and alcohol abuse puts this group at major risk of becoming our next generation of prison inmates.

Our Response

Bad Boyz Downunder has in the past encouraged ex-inmates to become involved with youth outreach trailers. By doing so the ex-inmates built self-esteem and self worth within themselves and spoke a positive message of hope into the lives of these impressionable youths.

With the approval of the Logan City Council, *Bad Boyz Downunder* ran a successful outreach with a specially outfitted trailer providing a free sausage sizzle and drinks to locals in a Logan City park. During this outreach, local police and the park rangers reported a dramatic reduction in violence, drug use and chroming.

We had a number of ex-inmates involved in outreach trailer ministries to various parks. Because of their backgrounds, our trailer crews were able to give no-nonsense talks to the youth drawing from experience as only ex-inmates can.

The youths in the 13-18 year age group are vulnerable and seeking a purpose for their lives. They need positive male role models that can mentor and prepare them for their future. We believe this provided many of them with the only responsible father figure they have ever had.

Community Involvement

Since the inception of the trailer ministry we focused on lowering the crime rates and restoring community spirit in the surrounding area in which the sausage sizzles are conducted. We saw families from around the parks becoming actively involved in the outreach functions, and residents interacting with each other in more supportive ways.



Mayoral Support

As a non-profit organisation, Community Care Network currently delivers a program entitled '*Bad Boyz Downunder*'. Initiated in the prison environment, the program aims at maintaining and nurturing self-esteem and personal relationships that can fracture under the pressure of enforced separation.

The continuance of supportive personal and familial bonds is imperative to sustain the positive outcomes of rehabilitation programs. This level of support can then help ensure that participants are not drawn back into the downward spiral of re-offending, incarceration and separation from family and loved ones.

It is my understanding that the *Bad Boyz Downunder* program, currently in place upon the custodial release of the inmates from Woodford Correctional Centre has produced some significant results. This support program has already commenced by Community Care Network within the corrective services weekly visitations and I believe it to be a worthy initiative for funding under the Crime Prevention program.

Yours sincerely
Cr. Joy Leishman
Mayor Caboolture Shire Council

Change of Pace

Unfortunately, current blue card legislation has created a major logistics problem and we have had to put our *Bad Boyz* sausage sizzles on hold. We recognise why these laws were created, and respect them. We are currently working on new initiatives to serve both former inmates and our youth. Meanwhile, the trailers are still being used in the wider community to outreach to people who have difficult housing situations or are homeless.

Bad Boyz INSIDE

Today's correctional system is an area of major growth not just locally but worldwide. This is largely due to the ever-increasing decay of moral society and ever-expanding drug epidemic. The explosion of crime is clearly evident with serious increases in violent, sexual and drug related crimes reported daily through our media and touching many of our lives personally.

The government's way of keeping up with this growth is to simply build more prisons such as the 'Super Prison' planned to house 4500 inmates in South East Queensland. We know building more prisons is not the answer - more prisons will not fix the basic problem. We could inject a further 100 chaplains into the state's prisons in an attempt to reform inmates and still not touch the sides.

As mentioned earlier, many inmates desire to change but either:

- * Don't have positive and healthy support post release.
- * Don't know how to make the changes.
- * Don't want to go to churches or similar organisations.

What is the Answer?

Bad Boyz Downunder has proven to be highly successful at providing a range of different support measures for inmates leaving the correctional system. Some of the options on offer include regular meetings in private and comfortable surroundings with trained volunteers facilitating meetings, also outreach trailers in local parks to restore community spirit in neighbourhoods and courses and seminars on topics that are beneficial to the overall health of inmates and men in general.

Chaplains

Bad Boyz Downunder have engaged the help of chaplains and prison ministry volunteers who, until an inmate is released, provide the support that *Bad Boyz Downunder* can deliver post release. *Bad Boyz* encourages the participation of chaplains externally to continue relationships forged inside and to assist in an inmate's transition into the community.

The *Bad Boyz* Coordinator seeks the assistance of prison chaplains to make inmates aware of the post release support offered by *Bad Boyz* volunteers. Some *Bad Boyz* leaders have also been appointed as prison chaplains representing Prison Fellowship Queensland.

Literature

Bad Boyz Downunder have released various forms of literature informing inmates, ex-inmates and the public of the benefits of being involved with *Bad Boyz* Outreach. This literature is available for chaplains and prison industry workers to dispense when offering *Bad Boyz Downunder* post release support options to

inmates. Literature such as posters, business cards, booklets and compact discs will contain full contact information such as web page, direct phone line, email and postal address accessible by both current and former inmates.

Bad Boyz Multimedia:

Emails & Website

Bad Boyz Downunder maintains a free Yahoo! email group which, upon subscription, delivers emails of current and future events on the *Bad Boyz Calendar*, which can also be freely viewed on the website, www.badboyzclub.org.

SMS to Mobiles

These days, it seems some people may not have enough to eat, or nowhere to sleep, but they will have a mobile. Current, former and prospective attendees at *Bad Boyz Clubs* throughout Queensland can subscribe confidentially to a reminder service which reminds subscribers, a day or two in advance, of upcoming *Bad Boyz Club* events, which usually take the form of informal men's breakfasts at popular takeaway restaurants such as *McDonalds*, *Hungry Jacks* and *Subway*. The subscription list is also occasionally used to inform subscribers of particular needs for prayer or practical help for other members on the list (only with the permission of the particular person in need.)

Bad Boyz on Radio

One of our favourite Bad Boys, "Miracle" Mick McGrath has shared his life story on Brisbane radio. God has restored him from a life of crime and over 20 years' incarceration to a life in which he contributes positively into the community, both spiritually and economically.

Past Projects of Community Care Network

Suicide Prevention Handbooks

In 1995 Community Care Network produced a Suicide Prevention Handbook for the first time in Australia. At the time this project drew the praise and support of the Salvation Army, Drug Arm and Teen Challenge. Over 10,000 of these books were distributed free of charge to school libraries, doctors, welfare groups and sporting coaches. The book was so successful that in 1996 the Queensland Health Department requested and was granted permission to reprint and further distribute it. Due to the overwhelming demand Community Care Network produced another 5,000 copies in 1997 and 1999.

Special Funds

In 1999 Community Care Network set up 'The Reece Marshall Fund' to assist in the specialised medical treatment of a child suffering from a rare behavioural disorder. The fund raised over \$14,000 and was the first time an Australian community-backed purchase of specialised equipment to help cure this rare disability had been achieved.

Another fund raised over \$20,000 for the care of a family whose father was sent to prison.

Inmates' Families

Community Care Network has also provided training for the volunteer workers who visit and support families of serving inmates. Services such as delivery of

www.badboyzclub.org

food parcels, advice and financial assistance are made to families and loved ones of serving inmates.

Inmates are also followed up upon their release by Community Care Network volunteers willing to assist them with their transition back into the community.

Support Groups

Since its inception Community Care Network has run numerous support groups open to public, inmates and families. These are conducted by volunteer workers and include topics such as:

- Grief and Loss
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- Divorce Anger Management
- Suicide Stress Management
- Marriage problems
- Parenting
- Domestic Violence
- Depression

What can we do with each other for the community?

Bad Boyz Downunder & Good Girlz contact details follow on the next page.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

BAD BOYZ DOWNUNDER

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