



Magdalena Maazi, Chaplain at Glenroy Primary School



Dear God

I feel happy at the beach. I feel happy when my mum cooks my favourite food.

S...



Dear God,

Thank you for letting us do CRE. It is really fun. God please let me be healthy and friendly and kind to everyone. I am very lucky and thank you for everything you do,

K...



Dear God,

Thank you for inventing sports equipment because it makes people fit. Thank you for inventing games because if there was nothing to do it would be boring.

S...

The young people whose photos feature in this supplement are not necessarily those who have been quoted.

# Evonne Paddison, CEO of ACCESS ministries, invites Anglicans to go local

by Alicia Winters

**A resurgence of fresh and exciting avenues of community engagement for the church is resulting in big dividends for the lives of Victorian young people.**

According to Canon Dr Evonne Paddison, CEO of ACCESS ministries, 'We are witnessing an increasing number of churches actively participating in chaplaincy programs, breakfast clubs and CRE teaching. Church is no longer simply about Sunday but a Monday to Friday concern. We are seeing ministry in a new form. No longer is 'ministry' conducted only from the pulpit or on the mission field; it's available to the wider church and it's in our backyard.'

ACCESS ministries chaplains are often seeking to partner with churches in their area. They need support, both with prayer and with practical assistance, as chaplains



Canon Dr Evonne Paddison

**"I want to commend the work of ACCESS ministries which, from its inception as the Council for Christian Education in Schools, has had major involvement by the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne. Now with the support of government also, ACCESS ministries reaches young people and families through state schools across Melbourne and Geelong. I am glad to see the mission of the gospel being enacted in this practical way through ACCESS ministries."**



Archbishop Dr Philip Freier

are confronted more and more with issues of cyber bullying, depression and generational poverty. These issues are playing havoc in the lives of our country's most vulnerable families and as a church we can do something.

'It's not too big to tackle', says Evonne, who is known for ensuring that her audacious visions become a reality. 'Look at our dinner, held last year at the Melbourne Conference Centre. Last year over 1300 people came to celebrate our chaplains and offer support to ACCESS ministries.' Mountains can be moved, if enough people are willing to do some hard work.

ACCESS ministries sees amazing results when supporters take action. Politicians have taken notice of a ground swell of support from the community for chaplaincy. The government has listened to principals and the overwhelming endorsement

they have given to ACCESS chaplains. Over 1,000 emails have been sent from ACCESS supporters to local MPs with ACCESS staff working tirelessly, calling and visiting politicians. There is a vibrant buzz in their new social media sites on Facebook and Twitter. 'It is this, more than anything' said Evonne, 'that reminds us that our work among young vulnerable Victorians is vital and we rely on our supporters to stand up and be heard, because our nation's leaders are listening'.

Evonne has a strong team behind her, enabling ACCESS ministries to tackle the many issues facing Victorian families. She says however, that 'as an organisation we need the support of local churches. We need the church around the corner, the one meeting in the function centre, the one with the steeple. We are all called to minister to our community and this is a great

opportunity for churches to explore mission beyond their walls.'

CRE programs are in demand in many local schools and ACCESS ministries is simply asking for people to consider it as their ministry. Through information evenings and training sessions, volunteers can be confident and comfortable with the program before they join a CRE team and teach. It is an exciting opportunity for churches in Melbourne, and country Victoria, to share their faith.

It is also an opportunity for local churches to become local heroes and that, in a sense, is something many church members have not seen for a number of generations. Through ACCESS ministries it is possible for the church once again to be seen on the ground in active partnership as a valuable community resource.

Evonne reflected: 'We are finding more than ever that in this generation the church itself is not the focal point of engagement, it's the people that have become the destination, the resource and bridge between faith and the community. It's time to look over the back fence and get involved because young people and their families need our support. My prayer is that each child in Victoria, with your help will experience the transforming love of God and his son Jesus. So get on board.'