



Many Rooms Inc.

ABN 51 850 896 155

Annual Report

October 2014 – September 2015

From the Chair

It is with great pleasure that I am able to report on another successful year at Many Rooms. In the financial year 2014-15 there have been many highlights, and these are detailed in the Annual Report that follows. The report is structured according to the aims and goals articulated in our business plan: to meet needs of people, to develop people and communities, and to advocate for the needs of the poor. Many Rooms is especially aimed at meeting needs not presently met, and is volunteer based.



Key achievements included:

- The successful launch of our second room on Friday nights in January 2015 and the recruitment of our second employee, Friday Kitchen Coordinator, Judith Pallesen;
- The building of capacity in fundraising, including recruitment of Fundraising coordinator Linda Robinson, which has increased our fundraising revenue and has also raised our profile through social media, in part because of successful events such as the Trivia and Taco fundraising night in September 2015;
- Initiation of new programs including the Garden community garden at The Kitchen on Saturdays providing fresh vegetables for meals and involving volunteers and participants in growing them.

Partnerships have been critical in gaining good outcomes. City on a Hill's August Mercy campaign has generated much interest in volunteering in Mercy based ministry. The support of City of Melbourne, Food bank Victoria and Second Bite have remained important in ensuring our viability.

Many Rooms also has plans to open up new rooms in partnership with the broader expansion of City on a Hill church including in the West. The coming years will provide fresh challenges in the process of facilitating expansion – this will require new structures and processes such as new volunteer management software, communications and fundraising capacity and senior management capacity to guide the growth process.

We recognise that our success to date, and our success in the future, is only possible by the grace of our Father in heaven, to whom we give all the glory and praise.

Dave Miers

Chair, Many Rooms Board

Meeting Needs – meals and material aid

'For he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things' (Psalm 107:9)

Many Rooms aims to be a practical expression of God's care for the poor. The main way we help is to provide free meals on weekends, to meet food security needs of low income people, and provide material aid. Its services are aimed mainly at those experiencing homelessness.

Meals services

Many Rooms provides free meals services in two locations:

- *The Kitchen*, a drop in centre in North Melbourne providing breakfast and lunch on Saturdays; and
- *The Friday Kitchen*, a meal service in the CBD providing a dinner on Friday nights.

Together, the services provided around 7,000 meals over the course of the year.



The Friday Kitchen opens its doors

The Friday meal service provided its first meal in January 2015. The news of the service has spread and the numbers have increased to around 45 or more each week.

We have built good relationships with the Hub staff enjoying open dialogue regarding needs and expectations on all sides. Each team has worked well together, and many volunteers are opting to return in 2016.

Participants often give their feedback about our service, enjoying the venue, food and conversations with all. I have seen many participants come to the kitchen entrance to thank the volunteers and say good bye, and several have indicated their enjoyment of the God-centred devotion delivered before the meal.

Judith Pallesen, Friday Kitchen Coordinator

Key highlights for the last year included:

- Consistently high patronage of all our services, with around 100 people served most Saturdays, and 45 people served at our Friday service.
- High satisfaction from participants about food
- High nutritional standards of food
- High standards in relation to environmental outcomes including high use of food bank and recycling and the initiation of a community garden which provides a sustainable source of fresh food for lunches.

In July 2015 we did a survey of participants across our breakfast and lunch and Friday services. People attending each week highly value the service being provided, with the average rating of food quality at just over 4 out of 5.

An important part of our service is to provide nutritious and healthy meals in a safe environment. Much effort is taken in making sure we meet the mark in terms of food safety, nutrition and managing the environment for all volunteers. Key developments included:

- All cooks have been given accredited training in food safety and all volunteers required to do food safety training as part of their induction, a food safety program has been implemented with procedures in place to ensure food safety;
- A dietician from Cohealth has been advising The Kitchen manager so that the food prepared is nutritious and appropriate to the group being served and a Meals and Nutrition coordinator (Bec Mannix) has taken on the role of providing advice to cooks.

A very high proportion of those attending are those that attend regularly, suggesting much repeat patronage and social connection.

A very positive development has been the creation of a kitchen garden in North Melbourne, supplying fresh herbs and vegetables and providing opportunities for participants to volunteer in its upkeep. Already many participants have helped out and much food grown and consumed at Saturday lunches (see feature box).



The Garden produces a bumper crop

A veggie garden was started in late 2014 in the community garden near The Kitchen.

The garden has been surprisingly prolific for a small space, producing lettuce, snow peas, tomatoes, zucchinis, chard and herbs in season over the year. The cooks are notified of the produce available during the week to help them plan and incorporate into their Saturday lunch menu, and have enjoyed extra produce and its freshness.

A handful of participants have attended our monthly gardening workshops, helping with maintenance and new plantings, especially in the warmer months!

Katie Nettlebeck, Garden coordinator



Care Packs



Many Rooms has started a new ministry to provide material aid to women who are homeless. The ministry started after Friday Kitchen Coordinator Judith Pallesen noticed a significant gender ratio discrepancy, with only about three to five participants out of 35 attendees coming to the services being female.

After researching and reaching out to a number of organisations established to help homeless and marginalised women, she found that many of the women were victims of domestic violence and therefore might not feel safe venturing out to a drop-in centre for meals. However, wanting to serve these women without forcing them out of their comfort zone, Many Rooms devised a plan to develop care packs.

Two types of care packs are available – a hygiene pack and a food pack. The hygiene packs contain a number of useful toiletries, such as razors, wet wipes, deodorant, lip balm, moisturiser, a hand towel, and feminine hygiene products. The food packs contain healthy, portable items that would require no cooking and that could easily be eaten on the street, such as tuna and cracker packs, water, protein drinks, ready-to-go soups, trail mix and good quality muesli bars. Both types of care pack contain information about Many Rooms, our meal services and encouraging hand written note. Opportunities are made to connect personally with the women and encourage them to utilize our meal services.

Funded through the generosity of anonymous donors, Many Rooms has been able to provide 160 care packs thus far, and they have already been given to a range of organisations working with homeless women including Women's Information Referral and Exchange (or WIRE); McAuley house, Cohealth Women's clinic and Richmond Boarding house services, and individual women in need we have encountered. We also have plans to provide packs to other organisations including Common Ground, Pink Cross and The Living Room women's clinic.

Caring for our neighbour and fostering community

'...Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment and the second is like it: love your neighbor as yourself'. (Matthew 22:37-39).

Caring for our neighbor

Our kitchen drop in services provide a practical way people can express the love to their neighbor in need. We encourage our volunteers to volunteer for at least one year so that relationships can form, and we encourage them to talk with participants. Over time, we also see that love reciprocated. For many Christians who volunteer with us, serving in this ministry is a practical outworking of their faith in Jesus and so helps them model their life after His.

More recently we have appointed new community development volunteers who committed to attend The Kitchen every fortnight to just talk and intentionally build relationships. This group now comprises over 6 people and includes Chinese speaking volunteers. Those involved in this ministry find it occasionally challenging but also highly rewarding.

Fostering Community

Community is important to all people, and is critical to enabling people who are socially disconnected, especially the homeless, to have identity, sense of belonging, purpose and meaning. Many of our participants talk about how The Kitchen provides an important point of social connection, helps structure their day, and is a welcome change from being isolated in the home in front of TV or out on the street. Others face language or other barriers to full involvement in wider society.

The increase in the involvement of participants at our rooms, including in community activities and their desire to return each week is evidence that people value the social connections created at The Kitchen. Many indicate that being recognized and valued is as important (if not more important) for them than receiving a meal.

Many of those coming to our services come less for a meal but for social connection. While the meals are a focus for community life, special events are also an important way to celebrate together, and culminate in a special Christmas party which has grown in numbers each year since we started with 160 participants last year.

Community life has been supported through a range of other programs and activities including:

- The Studio art group (which ended in late 2014);
- The Garden community garden which started late 2014;

- social activities including ten pin bowling, a footy tipping competition and informal activities including table tennis and pool matches, DVDs, internet and board games.
- Towards Belief and The Life of Jesus series of bible studies;

Supporting community has been met with challenges including the fact that many speak only minimal English, but we have recruited Chinese language speakers to most of our teams and also involved Chinese speakers in translating our announcements and talks into Chinese.

We intend to further develop the community aspects by involving participants more in prayer and volunteering. We are also opening up a library service (to be opened in November 2015) to respond to participants who have consistently suggested they would value such a service.

Our focus groups found that perceptions of safety, attitude of volunteers and company were high. The process has also enabled us to identify new ways we can serve our participants including the creation of a suggestion box which has been implemented.

Creating opportunities to serve

Because we involve volunteers in the running of all aspects of our programs, volunteers also acquire new skills in cooking and working in a team. They also become more aware of the needs of the poor and gain an understanding about people with very different life experiences than their own. We provide induction training which informs volunteers about safety, informs them of their duties, familiarizes people with the issues faced by our participants, and provide specialized training in working with people with complex needs to leaders and those volunteers working closely with participants. Our recent volunteer survey indicated that volunteers are generally happy with their experience of being a volunteer.



Involving Participants

We also seek to grow participants in the community life at each room, by involving them in volunteering opportunities and other programmed activities, including those outside our programs, that help them to acquire confidence and skills, including Jamie Oliver cooking classes (see box below). Around 6 participants volunteer regularly at The Kitchen.



Jamie Oliver cooking classes

Many Rooms has helped a number of participants learn more about healthy eating on a budget by sponsoring their enrolment at Jamie's Ministry of Food Australia.

Using Jamie Oliver hints, tips and recipes, Jamie's Ministry of Food Mobile Kitchen delivers practical cooking classes in a five-week course to communities across metropolitan and regional Victoria, with the aim of educating, empowering and inspiring people to make better food choices.

Chase says he knew little about cooking prior to the course and that Jamie's Ministry of Food Mobile Kitchen provided a friendly and cheerful environment in which to learn. "Food can be expensive," he says. "If you cook yourself, it can help economically."

Peter also enjoyed the opportunity to meet new people. "For the first couple of weeks I was nervous, but now I'm more confident in myself,"



Leadership development

A key part of enabling all the activities at The Kitchen has been a commitment to leadership at board and team levels. The organization now has 12 kitchen teams, a community development team, care pack team, garden team, fundraising team and board. These teams are ably supported through each having at least one leader, and the capacity to build new leaders organically has been crucial in sustaining the ministry over time. Further training and support, and recruitment and development in leadership, in partnership with City on a Hill church, is crucial to maintaining and growing our ministry.

Advocacy and Fundraising

'Jesus said: The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor' (Luke 4: 18).

An important role for Many Rooms is to proclaim and be part of the good news for the poor. It aims to advocate for actions to help the poor, engage and lead people in action, and show how people can make a difference.

We have sought to proclaim the good news to the poor each week at The Kitchen and Friday Kitchen through a short gospel message. Many Rooms has also been involved in a number of ways this year in educating the community about issues around homelessness and engaging people to demonstrate a practical and generous response to this issue, including by:

- Building profile by increasing our followers on Facebook and our mailing list for our e-newsletter which features stories profiling our participants and highlighting current issues;
- Doing presentations to schools (Highvale Secondary College in June and Ruyton Girl's school in August), and involving one school (Ruyton Girls) in baking food for Many Rooms;
- Speaking at City on a Hill services and providing promotional materials about Many Rooms in welcome packs at COAH Newcomer nights to widen knowledge of Many Rooms and engage new volunteers;
- Engaging with a range of other service providers and COAH Gospel communities by starting up the Care-packs ministry for women in need
- Inducting, training and involving over 80 new volunteers over the course of the year, building awareness of the work of Many Rooms and engaging people directly in its work.
- Hosting or being featured in fundraising events, including the Taco and Trivia night fundraising night which involved 120 people (raising \$3,500); starting an online crowd funding campaign through Chuff'd, and featuring and winning funds through Grill'd jars have also all started to build some profile for the organization.





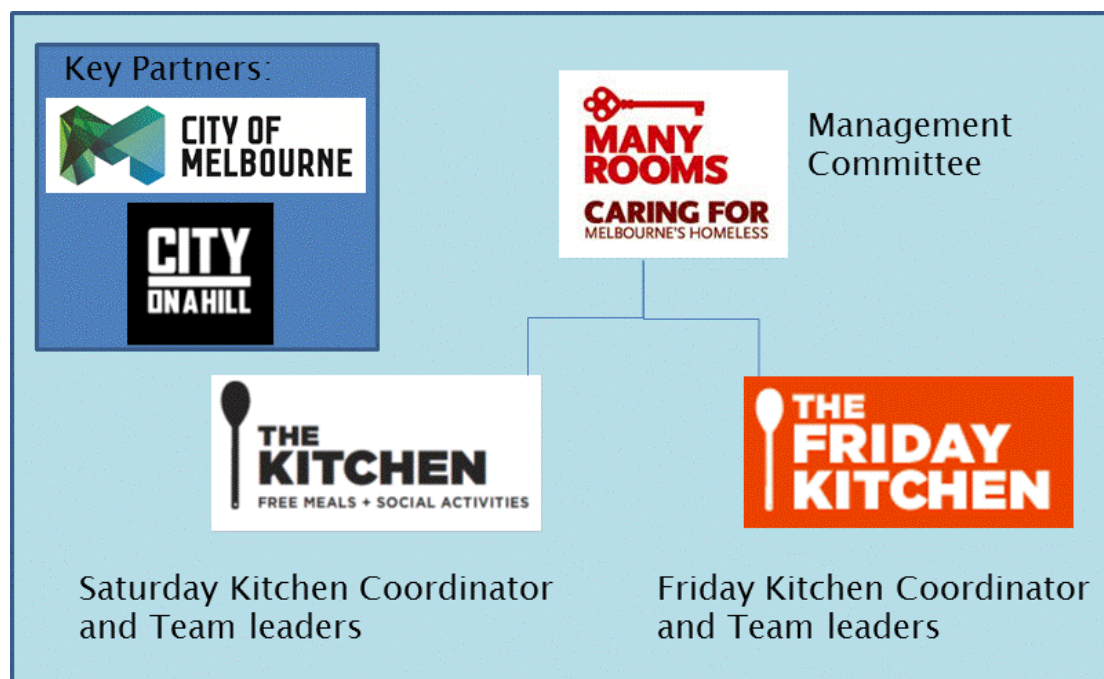
Trivia and Taco night at the Kensington town hall involved over 120 people raising \$3,500.

Structures and Partnerships

'I am the vine, you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing' (John 15:5)

Structures

Presently, our structure (see figure below) involves a management committee overseeing two main rooms (Friday and Saturday Kitchens). Other ministries are attached to these rooms (e.g. The Garden is connected with The Saturday Kitchen). Our key stakeholders and financial partners remain City on a Hill church and City of Melbourne. It is our intention to remain closely linked with the life of City on a Hill Church, reliant as we are on a core of volunteers from the church. We intend to also plant ministries geographically near to the communities our congregations serve, in Melbourne, Western Melbourne, Geelong and further afield. At present we have two locations in North Melbourne and Melbourne city. Our intention is to create a new room in the west, which will be closely aligned with the COAH west congregation.



Partners

The work of Many Rooms would not exist without other organisations partnering with us.

Many Rooms is a ministry of **City on a Hill**. In their church services they have frequently given us an opportunity to share about our activities including through their series of the Book of James which had a particular focus on Mercy. A large percentage of our volunteers are also drawn from members at the church. Our finances are organised through City on a Hill, and

their office staff team frequently handles enquiries on our behalf. They have also provided a substantial slice of our budget. We are very thankful for the support of City on a Hill and look forward to continuing this partnership.

City of Melbourne are a major supporter having provided financial support since we commenced operations and providing \$62,000 over the last year. We continue to be grateful for their financial support and advice. They have also provided us with networking opportunities with other organisations through the CBD homelessness provider network, and CoM staff have also volunteered their services at Christmas time. We are very grateful for their help and look forward to continuing this partnership into next year.

We continue to have good relationships with a range of other organisations operating in the North Melbourne neighbourhood, including **Ozanam Community Centre, YMCA (North Melbourne Community Centre)**. We have established good working relationships with **AMES** and the **Cohealth** Community Health Centre in the city. We have also valued the support of **Grill'd**, who have provided financial support and publicity through their restaurants.

Cohealth have also been an important partner in our work in establishing the Carepack ministry, as have a range of other women's organisations such as **St Kilda Gatehouse, WIRE and Macauley house. Cultivating Community** has also been helpful in allowing us access to the community garden plots to start up The Garden.

We have continued good relationships with **Second Bite** to source fresh fruit and vegetables on a weekly basis. We also value our relationship with **Food bank Victoria**, who provide us with free or discounted food and sundry items that are useful for running the Kitchen. We have commenced a relationship with Vietnamese food outlet **Roll'd**, which is providing discounted food for our Friday service.

Board of Directors members

All aspects of Many Rooms are overseen by a Management Committee which meets approximately every month. The management committee was made up 7 people as at September 2015:

Dave Miers (Chair) is one of the Pastors at City on a Hill. He currently serves as the Generations Director and Mercy Director. He is passionate about showing comfort, care and compassion to others in response to the kindness shown to him by Christ. Dave and his family will be relocating to Brisbane in 2016 to lead the team planting the first interstate City on a Hill.



Jim Davison (Vice-chair) is the Kitchen Director and has weekly responsibilities for managing volunteers and facilitating social activities at the Kitchen each Saturday. Jim works part time at the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited (AHURI), helping to manage a national program of research on housing and urban topics relevant to public policy. He has also had experience in working on welfare policy at a federal level, working for the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations in Canberra. Jim is married to Fleur and has two young daughters, Alice and Sophie.



Josie Essery is the secretary of the Management Committee of Many Rooms. Josie is a Senior Associate at Herbert Smith Freehills, where she specialises in corporate finance law. She has volunteered with Many Rooms since 2010 including leading teams at The Kitchen. Josie is married to Todd and is currently on maternity leave, looking after sons, Alexander and Benjamin.



Meredith Hinze works full time managing eLearning/eTeaching, for the Faculty of Arts at The University of Melbourne. She previously worked as a Web & IT Manager at the University. She has special interests in social media and digital communications, and teaches digital media in the graduate publishing program in the Faculty of Arts. She has over 14 years professional experience managing both large and complex websites as well as small project based sites. Examples include Asialink, Asia Education Foundation, Asia-Australia Mental Health and Asia Society Australia Centre.



Jessica Kelly is the finance officer on the Many Rooms board. Jessica works full-time with Ernst & Young as a Consultant in the Performance Improvement, Advisory practice in Melbourne. She has experience across a range of both state and fed-



eral government departments, ASX listed and private companies with a focus on cost reduction and process improvement.

Sam Grace is the expansion coordinator for Many Rooms. He has been a volunteer at The Kitchen since its inception, including a team leader. He has a professional experience in project development and management in the health services industry.



Linda Robinson is the fundraising coordinator for Many Rooms. Hailing originally from Texas in the States, she has experience in marketing, journalism and fundraising projects including for other not for profit organisations.

Looking Forward

'Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up' (Galatians 6:9)

Many Rooms is always looking at ways to expand services to demonstrate God's love to the homeless and marginalised in our community. We are aiming to create a range of services to meet diverse needs in the community, not just the needs of the homeless.

Having successfully established our second room last year, we are aiming to continue to grow and establish new rooms and initiatives, and deepen our engagement with local communities in need. Our vision is to grow with our partner City on a Hill church, and locate services in areas where the churches themselves are located - in the Western Suburbs, Geelong and hopefully interstate in Brisbane in future. City on a Hill plans to plant churches in up to 10 cities – an ambitious target indeed, and so that lifts the expectations on us to also increase our ministries. We are reminded that all things are possible with God – but we pray that the right people will step up to help fulfil the vision.

Our first priority is to initiate a room in the Western suburbs – the planning process for this room has already commenced and consultations have taken place at West to find out ideas for new initiatives relevant to the local needs.

Starting a room in the West

This year we have been exploring what that might look like in partnership with City on a Hill West. We have been meeting regularly with Pastor Luke Nelson and COAH West Mercy co-ordinator Brett Woods and have been greatly encouraged by their enthusiasm. We reached out to the congregation at COAH-W through the "What is our room" campaign and promoted the vision. As Brett puts it: "We have the opportunity to speak life and hope into this darkness and point people to Jesus as we practically love and serve them. This isn't an optional calling for a select few of us – rather, this is an essential expression of the overflowing grace we have received from Christ". In September we conducted a mini workshop which was very well attended. We received a wealth of feedback and information and were blown away by the passion that exists in our congregation. We were humbled by the deep desire of people to sacrificially serve their community. The challenge for us it to faithfully translate that into meaningful, God-centred ministry. We hope by God's grace, to launch the new room in 2016.

Sam Grace - Expansion coordinator

We are also in conversation about how we can resource and support mercy based initiatives in Geelong, with work already advancing on creating an Op Shop and Crisis Accommodation for women.

We are also looking to expand our Care pack ministry, working with Gospel Communities at City on a Hill and a range of partners. We hope to develop men's hygiene packs and 'Eat on the street' food packs.

The board are also seeking to develop new ways to facilitate growth through a number of initiatives to improve our capacity across Many Rooms operations:

- Developing leadership and management capacity utilizing skilled volunteers and paid coordinator positions (where needed), including recruiting someone to oversight the ministry;
- Developing local leadership to oversee ministry at local level;
- Increasing volunteer management capacity by utilising improved Volunteer management software and the in-house expertise to run it;
- Increasing financial resources through philanthropic grants;
- Increasing profile and potential for corporate sponsorship through volunteering, events and social media profile.