



OUR LIFE TOGETHER

Building inclusive homes and communities in Christ

Newsletter of Our Place Christian Communities
and Hope Christian Homes - March 2025

A new season

You may have noticed that the title of our newsletter has changed this quarter! This marks a significant shift for the partner organisations of HCH and OPCC. The first HCH property is now set up with housemates settling into their new home. OPCC has employed Dan our chaplain and church connector working 8 hours a week.

We now turn our efforts towards new and exciting possibilities. We look forward to partnering with future homes who see value in the unique model of OPCC. A model that seeks to meet the spiritual needs of housemates and to help them connect with their local church community in a meaningful way.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote the classic book "Life Together" with which this newsletter shares its name. Bonhoeffer wrote "if there is so much blessing and joy even in a single encounter of brother with brother, how inexhaustible are the riches that open up for those who by God's will are privileged to live

in the daily fellowship of life with other Christians!" This is our vision for all people - but particularly for those with intellectual disabilities in SIL accommodation. We hope that through our chaplaincy, church connections, training workshops and awareness raising we can continue towards this life together. We ask that you consider partnering with us through prayer and financial contribution so you can also be a part of this exciting season.

-The Team at Our Place

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our place
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES 

Disability Chaplaincy?

When we hear the word “chaplain” we most often think of ministers working in institutions such as military and police services, hospitals, aged care, prisons and schools. So what is a disability chaplain? If you Google the term, there are few (if any) relevant results to be found. This raises the question - is disability chaplaincy a real thing? OPCC has been pioneering the way forward in providing disability chaplaincy to people with intellectual disability. We recognise that all people, including people with disability, are spiritual beings who are equally loved and cherished by God. Unfortunately many of the support systems that are accessible to people with intellectual disability overlook this essential part of their person. OPCC seeks to address this through chaplaincy. Dan Molteno works 8 hours per week as our chaplain and church connector. His current focus is our partner home, Welcome Home Springwood. His goals are to disciple the housemates and resident neighbour, help build good friendships in the house and finally to assist the housemates to connect to a local church of their choice.

Dan’s role as chaplain is relationally driven - interacting with housemates and other members of their chosen church community. Practically what this looks like changes week to week, but is always working towards the aim of creating a place where housemates belong and are valued for who they are.



Prayer Points for March



- Give thanks for the HCH Board, OPCC committee and OPCC members who faithfully support and lead our organisations.
- Pray for the new season for HCH and OPCC as they look towards new possibilities and support the first house in Springwood
- Pray for God’s provision for financial sustainability

Side By Side

Our CEO and trainer Kirk Patston recently had the privilege of spending time with a ministry team from All Saints Anglican Church North Epping to equip and encourage the leaders of a mixed-ability ministry. Grace Dandie an MTS worker at All Saints founded the group after praying that God would bring those in their community living with a disability into our church just like in Luke 14:21-23. Grace says “One year later, on a random Friday night, a young man with intellectual disability turned up at the church. After seven years of living nearby, he had heard the chaos and laughter of our Friday night youth group and wanted to be included. What a privilege it was to have such a direct answer to prayer from God, and what a joy it was that he wanted to be part of our community.”

After getting to know him and his parents, Grace and her trainer began brainstorming how they could include him at their church. They quickly realised they needed a ministry that was safe, inclusive and welcoming to people who were looking for genuine friendship and connection (with the hope that they would eventually want to come to church and encounter the love of Jesus!). That’s where the initiative of Side by Side was born.

Averaging 15 regular members from the community each month, the church is filled with lots of noise and quiet moments, board games and Mario kart, handcrafted pots and messy paintings, yummy meals, joy, laughter and lots of time for connecting and friendships. There is a real sense of mutual giving and receiving at Side by Side, where everyone’s unique gifts and abilities are honoured and celebrated, and where members can just be with one another enjoying the God-given gift of friendship. A few members have even joined church services as they have encountered the life giving message of Jesus!

When asked if other churches should consider launching a similar ministry Grace commented: “Yes! This ministry has had a profound impact on the life of our church, teaching us all to be better listeners, better friends, and better followers of Jesus. As members of Side by Side come along to church, our community continues to reflect on our barriers to inclusion and what it means to love people like Jesus loved.”



HCH and OPCC AGMs

The AGMs for OPCC and HCH were recently held in December and February respectively.

The appointments are:

OPCC Committee

Chairperson - Jenny Bawden

Secretary - Ian McGilvray

Treasurer - Paul Dickens

Committee members - Caitlin Bakon, Renee Dickens, Olivia Oleksyn and Lisa Patston

HCH Board

Mark Elkington

Ian Fryer

Celia Gleeson

Robert Johnston



Welcome Home Springwood News

The new house at Springwood continues to be an amazing blessing. There are now two housemates and our resident neighbour settling into the property. A third housemate is close to settling in soon as well meaning the house will be fully occupied.

Hospitality continues as a central value in the house. Recently the congregations at Springwood and Winmalee Presbyterian Churches were invited for a Sunday potluck lunch and swim in the pool. It was a beautiful sunny afternoon with about 40 people in attendance with lots of yummy food and encouraging conversations.

Our home is also enjoying fortnightly visits from Chaplain Dan, This has been a great time to share a meal, pray, delve into God's word, and generally spend time doing life together. Pray that this time will continue to be a blessing for everyone who comes along to join us!

Thank you!

Rod Thompson and Wendy Wheatley have both stepped down from the HCH Board this year. We are thankful for both of them, their efforts, skills and hard work to see our first home become a reality. Thank you!



Contact us today
admin@ourplacecc.org.au
ourplacecc.org.au