

## 9. NEIGHBOURHOOD TRUST (ST ALBANS BAPTIST CHURCH)

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| <b>Officer responsible</b><br>Community Advocate | <b>Author</b><br>Bruce Meder, Community Development Adviser |
| Corporate Plan Output: Community Activities      |   |

The purpose of this report is to seek funds from the Community Board to assist the Neighbourhood Trust to establish and maintain a variety of social/community programmes in the St Albans area.

### BACKGROUND

Members will recall that Tony Marsh (from Neighbourhood Trust) and Douceline Wardle (St Albans Community Facilitator) presented a deputation to the Board at the July meeting. That presentation outlined a variety of activities and programmes that the Neighbourhood Trust is involved in. The Neighbourhood Trust is an outgrowth of the St Albans Baptist Church, based in McFaddens Road. St Albans Baptist Church has been involved in community initiatives in the St Albans area for many years. In early 1999 the Neighbourhood Trust was registered to distinguish clearly between the Church's ecumenical work and its community development work.

Over the past 18 months the demand for the services provided by the Trust has been enormous. Through a questionnaire and by listening to people in the area a number of needs have been identified, including:

- Loneliness
- Lack of food
- Safety for women, including self-defence classes
- Budgeting skills
- Cooking for men
- After-school and holiday programmes for primary school aged children
- Visiting elderly people in Retirement Homes
- Support for dysfunctional families
- Support for parents and care-givers of babies
- Craft activities

### POVERTY AND HARDSHIP

Underpinning the research carried out by the Neighbourhood Trust is the Poverty and Hardship Survey conducted by the City Council and published in early 1998. That survey indicated a number of "hot spots" of multiple hardship throughout the city. Two of those areas are found within the area that Neighbourhood Trust have identified as their sphere of work: eastern St Albans, bordering on Richmond, and the north-western part of St Albans immediately north and west of Edgeware Road.

### THE RESPONSE

The Trust does not have the people resources to meet these needs fully. However, through effective networking the Trust is utilising the skills of a number of other community organisations, eg the Kingdom Resources Trust for budgeting.

They have also recently been offered the services of a retired couple with counselling qualifications and experience. There are few other organisations operating in the area from a community development perspective. Those that do are often located on the periphery of the area (eg Delta Trust) or operate from outside the area through intermittent and discontinuous interventions.

The manner in which Neighbourhood Trust is working is to build relationships with individuals, families and community groups and to facilitate the building of relationships between individuals and families. This is a long-term process, yet is crucial to a positive outcome. The Trust has been highly successful in doing so and is now reaping the benefit through word-of-mouth multiplication of contacts. However, this also means that the demand for services is also increasing.

Difficulties in obtaining sufficient funding are of a real concern to the Trust. For example, this year, they have had to close their “407 Club” – a club that catered for the needs of children after-school one evening per week. This club had been effective, popular and provided a service in an area (McFaddens Road) where no other similar opportunities existed for primary aged children. The Trust has also had difficulty in accessing grants from traditional funders such as Lottery Board and Community Trust, possibly due to the Trust being a new initiative.

#### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

In order to provide these services and programmes effectively, the Neighbourhood Trust is in need of some basic infrastructure, including: whiteboard, headset (microphone for the Mainly Music pre-school programme), cups and saucers, educational books and videos. There is also a need for administration costs of postage, photocopying and printing to be covered.

The total cost of this infrastructure is approximately \$7,500. The annual cost of the “407 Club” (previously referred to) is approximately \$3,000. A van would be a further asset that would enhance the ability of the Trust to respond to the needs in the St Albans community. The cost of a van could be between \$10,000 and \$15,000.

The Trust is not approaching the Board with a request for any specific part of its services or funding needs. It is prepared to accept any funding that the Board is willing to offer and will utilise that in as efficient a way as possible.

The balance of the Community Services Fund is \$30,000

**Recommendation:** That the Neighbourhood Trust be allocated a grant of \$2,500 for equipment from the 2000/01 Community Services Fund towards their work in the St Albans area.

#### **Chairperson’s**

**Recommendation:** That the officer’s recommendation be adopted and that a visit be arranged for Board members to see the Trust working.