



Making a difference for homeless people

IF Sara Griffin can convey one message, it is individuals who can make a difference.

The Anglicare family support worker is a participant in Playford Council's Mayors' Community Leadership Program 2009, where she has been working with participants Steve Coppins and Vicki Bourke to initiate a 'Shelter for the Homeless' project.

The aim is to provide temporary shelter packages for homeless people in the community, to reduce the risk of harm for people in this situation.

Earlier this week the group unveiled a homelessness tent display in the Playford Civic Centre, which will be on display for three weeks to highlight the plight of homelessness and to encourage local businesses, organisations and individuals to support the project.

Ms Griffin said their mission is to provide accommodation packages for about 120 families, with each package consisting of a tent,

sleeping bags, mattresses and an information pack with local emergency assistance services, legal camping locations and vouchers.

Through her work with Anglicare, contact with emergency assistance providers and background research, Ms Griffin was aware of the extent of homelessness in the area.

"We would hear tragic stories about people living in their cars and mothers with young babies having to spend time moving from house to house," she said.

"So I thought there has to be something to be done in the short term."

Ms Griffin said that while some people would have been able to stay with family and friends, lack of space limited their options. Her thinking was that if these people had a tent, perhaps they could stay in a family member or friend's backyard, or at a caravan park, and still have access to basic amenities such as a toilet and shower.

As part of the Shelter for the

Homeless project, the group is seeking community support to kit out the shelter packages.

"Now we are at the point where we are going out to local businesses and individuals to help support the project and support the community," Ms Griffin said.

"Anybody can help out by donating a tent or sleeping bag or some money."

While the project is initially planned for six months, she hopes it will continue for at least 12 months, or become an ongoing service.

"I think a lot of people don't realise the amount of homeless people that live in our area," Ms Griffin said.

"It certainly breaks my heart to think that there are children out in the cold and unprotected every night.

"For many people in our community, this scenario is a reality for them."

For businesses and individuals wanting to donate sleeping material or money, please contact Ms Griffin on 8209 5454 or 0438 851 804.



Project team members of Shelter for the Homeless, from left, Sara Griffin, Steve Coppins and Vicki Bourke along with Dennis Jarman, of the Playford Community Fund.