

The expression “Quiet Achiever” has been used in relation to a solar powered experimental car, to sports figures and commercial companies. Well, we have an organisation in our midst that could also be called by that name, as well as maybe the “Quite Donor”. The organisation is the Traralgon Neighbourhood Learning House please forgive me if I occasionally refer to this organisation by the initials TNLH.

The key or motivating word appears to be “Neighbourhood”. Let me explain.

A couple of years ago, I was vaguely aware of the “Neighbourhood House” as a place where people went to learn textile crafts, pottery painting, creative writing and similar handicrafts and personal enrichment classes.

Then, for a while, I went to work there part time, as a volunteer. I saw they were involved in much, much more. They had language classes, computer classes at various levels, cooking, belly dancing and much more. OK I thought, I saw it all, I thought I knew about everything they did. Once again, I was wrong.

Within days of the fire there appeared a notice at the original relief centre offering free internet access at the Neighbourhood House. We were without power for more than 2 weeks, and I had withdrawal symptoms!

After seeing that poster, I called in, and I was offered a vacant computer to check my emails, I was also offered a mains power connection to charge up my mobile phone’s battery, access to a welcoming “cuppa”, and a willing ear that listened to how we fared, how we survived. Do you have any idea how good that felt?

The welcome that I, and many others enjoyed did not just appear out of thin air, it was a manifestation of the philosophy and enthusiasm of the Co-Ordinator, Jenny Poon. And Jenny’s outlook is infectious, it has been adopted by the staff and volunteers who come into contact with Jenny and the Traralgon Neighbourhood Learning House.

The list of projects and donations is hard to identify, as Jenny is pretty tight lipped about her helping activities, here are some that I am aware of, and I have no doubt that there are many more that I am not aware of.

Soon after the fire a community lunch as organised at the TNLH, for a donation. Free to the fire affected people. That was courtesy of Jenny and her network of concerned community members who prepared and donated the meals. I remember having lunch there. It was after our power was restored, but we still had no water as the rainwater tank was polluted and the pump was dying fast. Any meal where we did not have to wrestle with the elements was a blessing.

Jenny organised a donation of \$7,500 towards the kitchen refurbishment at the CATS Cricket Club where we have our Friday night community dinners. The money was donated by the Traralgon, Morwell, Moe and Churchill Neighbourhood Houses.

Speaking of the cricket club, have you noticed the 7 burner barbecue on the veranda?
Yup, you guessed it, Jenny and her network of helpers again.

At the recent visit by the cadets, the food was partly funded by the TNLH, with the help of Our Kinda Country, an organisation that will be represented in this section by another report.

OK, where is this Traralgon Neighbourhood Learning House I hear you asking. They're not hidden, it's just their location is not advertised widely.

If you turn onto Breed St, off the highway, you'll come across a bus-stop on the left hand side of the road, opposite the fast food outlet and office supply shop on your right.

Look at the building behind the bus stop, you might remember it as the site of the old Traralgon Library, or you might know it as the Kath Teychenne Centre. Well, that 's it!

I had intended to include a group photo of the three ladies who work there from day to day. However, they are pretty busy, and it's pretty hard to get them together for a group photo. So no photo. However, if you should call in with a query or to enrol in one of the classes, you will find a helpful response and a friendly face waiting behind the counter.

You'll also find two networked and Internet connected computers set aside for use by anyone from the community. How's that for service?

To Jenny, her staff, the volunteers and her network of resources, Thank You One And All! We appreciate your help and your presence in our community.

By the way, if you want to contact the TNLH the contact details are as follows

11-13 Breed Street, Traralgon Vic, 3844

Telephone 5174 6199

Fax 5174 0974

Email tnlh@wideband.net.au

Web page www.tnlh.org.au have a look under Our Team, at the bunch of talented people presenting and running the various training courses