



PROJECT REPORT

Project Name: **MCF OUTREACH**

Project Manager: **Hamza Maestracci**

Duration: **Year ending June 2019**

Looking back over a year of case notes I see the same word coming up again and again from week to week, and month to month, Rehab and Accommodation. By far these two subjects have dominated the outreach work I have been attending to in 2019.

Brothers are in constant need of accommodation, whether it is a 30 year old brother being released from prison with nowhere to go, or a 15 year old fighting with their parents, kicked out unable to sort out their differences. Sadly our community lacks short to medium term accommodation options for our brothers and sisters.

MCF house is a 3 bedroom house in Woodridge with cosy bedrooms and a nice large bathroom with spa and massive kitchen and dining area. We make this available as an immediate emergency short term solution to any brother or sister who needs a place to stay desperately. But we can only offer it generally for a week to 10 days because we need the place available for when we get emergency calls where sisters are forced out onto the streets by abusive partners, or someone is found sleeping on the stairs at the Masaajid's.

Sadly this is the only place of this nature within our community and it simply isn't enough. When we have brothers getting out of prison with little to no family support, in many cases it leaves us frantically calling everyone we know and sending out group messages on WhatsApp asking if there is a room to rent anywhere. To be honest many of our clients come with a not so wonderful resume. Coming out of prison after 3 years isn't exactly first pick for the type of person most people are looking to share a house with. Many people have addiction issues or used to at least, and many have some level of mental health issues. As a community we must put our heads together and have a good discussion about what we can do to provide housing solutions to our brothers and sisters who need help in this area.

I have worked with more clients this year than ever before helping them to put themselves through rehab for drug addiction. I must say the success rate coming through the other side of the process hasn't been outstanding but wherever there is someone willing to make an effort to change, we stand firmly beside them. For as long as they are committed to making an effort we are committed to helping. Freeing oneself from addictions is rarely something achieved on the first go.

On this Topic sadly we lost one young Man in his mid-twenties from the Holland Park area. Having worked with him for years to free himself of drug and alcohol addiction, last December he finally agreed to go and get the help he needed. We checked him into the rehab; he had to stay clean for a week beforehand just to be accepted. So we were all super proud of the efforts he made just to be admitted, 3 days into his stay staff became concerned for his health, and they sent him to hospital. His liver had failed. He never left the hospital. I'll not name the brother but will say that he is sorely missed and had a tremendous impact on my life. Through the mercy of Allah, he died a clean man struggling and striving to better himself, may Allah accept him as a Shaheed. Aameen.

This year has opened my eyes to the real risk of deportation young men face when going down the criminal road. I've seen many young men get thrown from prison to detention centre, then back to wherever they came from. Refugee parents need to be vigilant in helping their kids understand that this is the punishment that awaits them if they don't pull themselves up and start doing the right thing.

When asked, all young people I work with tend to say the same thing as to what motivates them to sell drugs and commit robberies and crimes in general, not surprisingly it's that they just want money. The sense of entitlement within our community is sickening. We can't blame the kids either; they grow up watching the parents tell 'white lies' to get Centrelink. They claim benefits even though they are working, or claim single parent pension when the father is still at home and has a job. How can we expect the next generation to live by values and morals that supersede our own?

Kids don't do what we tell them to do but they do what they see us do. I've started off blaming our youth for their actions. After five years' experience under the belt, I now always look to the family first. Broken kids come from broken homes. The Sunnah tells us to love our kids from 0 to 7, raise them from 7 to 14 and befriend them from 14 on. If you don't have a friendship with your teenager you will never really know what they are up to and if you don't know what they are up to, you don't know how to best advise them.

That said my advice to our beloved community for 2019 from a person who has spent the last year serving it, is set the best example yourself before you ask the child to change. Also, where there is a breakdown in communication between parent and child, do not expect the child to be the one to step up and have the answers to fix the relationship, a 17 year old is and always will be just a 17 year old.

May Allah guide us all and grant us goodness.

I urge Parents to play a more active role in their children's wellbeing as we find lack of discipline a major issue.

Aameen