

cheaper for a family to have a car than use public transport'.

Wendy Frazer, the Limurru worker who co-ordinated the project, says 'For people who are poor like the majority around the high rise flats, public transport is hard. If you're on unemployment benefits you don't get a cut rate.

'And it will mean some independence for the women — that's why the project is for them, it's always the men who've got the licences.'

At \$290 for 15 lessons — the minimum usually necessary — getting your licence could be seen to be a luxury these days. TAFE has provided \$500, which with their own contributions, is sufficient for two people to learn.

The names were put in a hat and the lucky two, Stephanie Dowker and Debbie Seddon were able to start. Maria Jackson, one of the few Limurru mothers who already had a licence, but for an automatic only, was also able to change over to a manual, enabling her to drive the Brotherhood's small bus.

'Holding my licence already made me realise how much independence I've had compared to some of my friends from Limurru', Maria said. Limurru hopes eventually to get a community car that families could use and learn to maintain. If someone has a car or station-wagon in reasonable condition that they no longer need, the families at Limurru would give it a loving home.

## Can You Help?

We need volunteers for our shops in Eltham, Greensborough, Watsonia, Box Hill, Parkdale, Fitzroy, Clayton, Bentleigh, Royal Arcade and Glenroy.

If you or a friend would like to learn some new skills and have spare time you can give, please telephone Mrs Thelma Tuxen on 419 7055.

## From Donors

'Each month students of the Whittlesea Primary School sell Munch and Crunch lunches for charity. We decided by vote that your organisation would receive this month's money.'



Material Aid Co-ordinator Mary D'Aprano has worked in a number of Brotherhood services since 1971.

## Material Aid Moves

The Material Aid Service has moved from its premises in the Sharing Centre building in Fitzroy Street, Fitzroy, to a shop-front at 97 Brunswick Street, a few doors down from the Brotherhood's main office.

The move is one of several made after the acquisition by the Victorian Government of our historic terrace rooming-houses. Two shops were purchased with the acquisition

payment, to house the Material Aid Service and the Credit Union for low-income people, while the Sharing Centre building is being converted to rooms, replacing the terrace house accommodation.

The Material Aid Service continues to provide free clothing and furniture to people who cannot afford to buy. Families can also purchase, at cost, some essential new items such as school shoes, jeans and manchester, as well as some low-cost second-hand items.

## Coolibah Follies

'The Apple Sisters — Pip and Core', 'The Shamrock Songsters Sing-a-long', 'The Sundown Races', 'Click go the Years', 'Bourke Street on Saturday Night'.

No, it's not the old 'Tiv' re-opened, but the program for the Annual Follies, Cabaret and Ball for members of the Coolibah Day Centre for older and disabled people in Fitzroy.

Late December they wrote and put on their own show which was followed by dinner and dancing. How many invitations to 'dance the night away with Dennis Farrington's Band' also say 'over 80's welcome?'

## Housing the Young

In late 1981, a three bedroom house in St. Georges Road, Thornbury, became home to a group of homeless, unemployed young people. Purchased by the Ministry of Housing, the house was leased to the Northcote Accommodation Project (NAP). This project had been set up by the Brotherhood with funds from the Diocese of Melbourne, to be run by a local committee, including representatives from the local council, the Church and the Brotherhood.

A residential worker, responsible for the internal functioning of the household, and a youth housing officer, responsible for community

liaison and a skills transference program, were employed.

By mid-1983, 23 young people had been accommodated, the original grant from the Diocese had been spent, and the staff reduced to one part-time worker while further funding was sought.

Running a residential youth service is a difficult business, as a recent evaluation of the project shows.

Rather optimistically, the original proposal hoped that the young people would live in the house for six months, acquiring sufficient 'living skills' to enable them to live independently.

Although some ex-residents have managed to find reasonably secure accommodation, many have not. Nearly all were 16-18 year-olds who had left school early and were unemployed, and were therefore living on incomes well below the poverty line. Costs alone made the private rental market very inaccessible, regardless of 'living skills'.

An important part of the project's learning was about the question of 'group dynamics' in any such household. Five or six people of this



age living together can be fairly . . . well, dynamic. The staff were frequently faced with the problem of maintaining stability and were in the somewhat contradictory position of having to exert authority while attempting to foster a self-managing household.

Both the staff and the committee were aware of these contradictions, and it may be said that one of the strengths of the project was that it constantly wrestled with these questions, rather than simply reverting to more authoritarian solutions, or deciding to select a less disadvantaged group of young people.

There is no doubt, either, that the young people learned a great deal from living together. Often for the first time they were having to assume responsibility for all the domestic routines that adults take for granted: managing a budget, shopping for a group, taking turns at cooking, and organizing a roster for cooking. The project staff also arranged group activities — not only social and recreational, but also instructive sessions on human relations, budgeting and the legal system.

Although the Brotherhood's involvement ceased after the initial three year pilot phase, the project continues to operate with a wholly local committee of management and it is providing a much needed accommodation service for young people in the region.

Justin McDermott's evaluation of NAP will shortly be available from Publications, 67 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy.



Children from the Fitzroy Community School painted their view of the Brotherhood and its work. The painting now hangs in the main office in Brunswick Street. Artists are (from left) Cassie McFadyen, Jeremy O'Carroll, Lata Phoenix holding her sister Chemundi, Amber Strantzen, Camilla Bird and Benjie Millar.