

Link Housing's inaugural fundraiser Home Sweet successfully raises funds for homeless young people.

Leading Northern Sydney Community Housing provider Link Housing's inaugural fundraiser 'Home Sweet 2017' has raised an incredible \$120,000 to help homeless young people, well over the target of \$100,000. The event was a huge success, says Link Housing's Chief Executive Officer Andrew McAnulty.

"We're delighted with the funds raised, all of which go directly to The Burdekin Association so they can continue their vital work helping vulnerable young people on the Northern Beaches." Link Housing and The Burdekin Association have been working together for more than 25 years and have provided support and accommodation to more than 500 young people in need.

'Home Sweet 2017' also raised awareness about youth homelessness and its causes. The problems leading to youth homelessness can happen anywhere, even in seemingly affluent communities like the Northern Beaches.

Mr McAnulty says the community response has been amazing. "We've had donations, feedback and enquiries from sports groups, schools and families. We would like to thank all those who helped make it a success and encourage the community to consider getting involved in Home Sweet 2018."

Model and homelessness activist Christin Wilkins brought a touch of glamour and first-hand homeless experience to his role as MC. Christian, son of entertainment reporter Richard Wilkins, swapped his red carpet lifestyle for ten days on the streets of Melbourne as part of the SBS documentary *Filthy Rich and Homeless*, an experience he says completely changed his outlook. "Being ignored and feeling powerless was devastating. I also met some wonderful people when I was on the streets. I was overwhelmed by their kindness and generosity, they shared the little they had and supported me when I needed it."

More than fifty people spent the night at Freshwater Surf Life Saving Club, with all funds going to this year's nominated charity The Burdekin Association. Fundraisers heard stories from young people who were part of the "Burdekin family," like Beth* who went from being homeless and alone to graduating from university, travelling, and forging a career. Beth now helps vulnerable children who need support as she once did. Community leaders outlined some of the contributing factors behind youth homelessness, and ran a forum discussing solutions and awareness raising.

Justene Gordon, Chief Executive of The Burdekin Association says it shows enormous generosity and vision for Link Housing to have organised the event. "We could not have hoped for a better result. As well as the extra funds - so we can provide more services to more young people - there is now more awareness of the causes and extent of youth homelessness on the Northern

Beaches. Home Sweet 2017 has directly benefitted the whole community, and as this is the first of many, it will have a really solid long term impact too.”

The Home Sweet 2017 appeal for homeless youth on the Northern Beaches is open until September 30. To find out more and donate, head to homesweet.raisely.com

*Name has been changed at individual’s request.

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About Link Housing:

Link Housing Ltd is one of the oldest not-for-profit community housing providers in NSW having been formed in 1983. We have a history of providing affordable rental accommodation to people on very low to moderate incomes. Link is a Tier 1 registered community housing provider with more than 1500 homes under management. We have an independent skills-based Board, and the skills and financial capacity to deliver new ideas, concepts, and growth.