



News

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Aussies Dent Unemployment as part of Public Housing Cleanup Effort

Service Provider, Provincial Housing Authority and Anti-Poverty Group Present Success Story at CoreNet Global Summit

ORLANDO and ATLANTA – November 13, 2006 – They were there to clean and tidy. Unemployment and hopelessness were swept away, too.

An Australian service provider, GJK Facility Services, the state government in Melbourne's home of Victoria, and the Anglican anti-poverty group, the Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL) tell CoreNet Global Summit attendees in Orlando next month why they teamed to clean up a public housing complex and how they reduced unemployment in the process.

"Astonishing achievement can be made when organizations think outside the square. This is the story of three organizations that truly embraced new and innovative ways to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes," says George Stamas, Director GJK Facility Services.

In April 2003 a collaborative partnership was forged between GJK, Victoria and the BSL to clean a public housing complex and its grounds and manage its waste. What resulted from the modest cleaning contract -- \$2.8 million – has provided impoverished Victorians with pride of ownership of their living environment.

Plus, Stamas says, "this project could potentially change the face of long term unemployment nationally and significantly impact local communities at large," as the unique cleaning and maintenance contract is being replicated across the province.

The project was challenging because of a stipulation that GJK not only engage some of the most financially and socially disadvantaged people in Victoria, but employ a minimum of 35% of their full-time employees on the job from the public housing complex, called Collingwood and Atherton Gardens.

Training and mentoring were key components of GJK's partnership with the BSL which addressed the tenant's mental health issues, cultural differences, language and literacy, child care issues, low self esteem, and engrained behaviors resulting from long-term unemployment.

Collingwood and Atherton Gardens is a changed place today as a 40% vacancy rate is now a 100% occupancy rate. The Victorian taxpayer has reaped savings of approximately \$500,000 per year.

Not only is GJK presenting their successful case study, but they are a finalist for this year's Global Innovator's Award at the 2006 CoreNet Global Summit in Orlando, Florida.

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