



Picabeen Community Centre

Voices of Volunteers





Brisbane City

Picabeen Community Centre

PCC



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Acknowledgement of Country

Picabeen acknowledges the Turrbal and Yuggera Peoples as the traditional owners of the land which Picabeen Community Centre is located. We wish to pay respects to the Elders, past, present, and emerging, and recognise those whose ongoing effort to protect and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture will leave a lasting legacy for future Elders and Leaders

About the Book

In the heart of our community beats a vibrant pulse, fuelled by the unwavering dedication and passion of volunteers who have chosen to devote their time, energy, and hearts to Picabeen Community Centre. These individuals, from diverse walks of life, come together with a common purpose: to make a difference. "Voices of Picabeen: Stories of Volunteering and Community Building" is a celebration of these remarkable volunteers, whose collective efforts have woven a tapestry of support, compassion, and resilience that defines the spirit of our community.

This book is more than a collection of stories; it is a mosaic of lives interconnected by a shared commitment to service, a testament to the power of volunteering in forging stronger, more vibrant communities.

The stories and the photos illuminate the motivation of individuals and highlights the profound impact of volunteering on both the giver and the receiver.

"Voices of Volunteers" seeks to do more than acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our volunteers; it aims to inspire.

Through these pages, readers will encounter the essence of community building: it is hoped that this book serves as a beacon for those who believe in the transformative power of giving back, encouraging others to take up the mantle of volunteering and join in the noble cause of nurturing and strengthening our community.

Student Testimonies

Picabeen offers a student program for aspiring Social Workers and Youth and Community Services workers who are invited to join and actively contribute to our community-focused initiatives.

The student program originated in 2013 through a collaborative effort with Jabiru Community Services, and has since undergone substantial growth and refinement, now proudly managed independently by Picabeen.

Each student brings their unique skills and perspectives, contributing to the success of the program while gaining invaluable knowledge about community service and advocacy.

We gratefully acknowledge the incredible contributions of many students who have brought the 'Voices of Volunteers' to fruition.

Student Testimonies



Diana

This project meant a lot to me because the essence of Picabeen Community Centre is not only the community, but the volunteers who support these activities on a daily basis. For that reason, it is essential to acknowledge and thank the volunteers for their support by documenting, sharing and highlighting their voices and experiences in this book.

These collective efforts, compassion and resilience define Picabeen's identity.

Creating this book has been a really great experience for me personally. It has been a good opportunity to dive deep into the history of Picabeen and the people involved. It facilitated conversations I would not have normally had and, as a result, I have gotten to know some of the familiar faces on a more personal level. It has given me a great appreciation for these volunteers and all they do and reinforced my belief in the power of community!

Angus



Other Contributors

- Liam Powell (Semester 2, 2020)
- Kit Sum Kitty Ko (Semester 1, 2023)
- Ivan Tan (Semester 2, 2023)
- Olivia Healy (Semester 1, 2024)

A Message From Our Centre Manager

Picabeen wouldn't be the same without our volunteers- they are the true backbone of our centre, generously giving their time and skills to make a real difference in our community.

This compilation of stories, memories, and photos is a tribute to all the volunteers who have been a part of Picabeen's journey since its inception in 1992.



Our strong volunteer team allow Picabeen to offer essential services and activities that enrich our community. An annual survey by Neighbourhood Centres Queensland (NCQ), highlighted the incredible impact of our volunteers, valuing their contributions at Picabeen at over \$428,665 in the year 2022-23.

The diverse skills, dedication and commitment of our volunteers make Picabeen the vibrant hub it is today. These volunteers truly make a difference in the lives of countless community members, and we extend our thanks and gratitude to every volunteer who has passed through Picabeen's doors.

The Essence of Volunteering: The Heart of Picabeen

The History of Picabeen Community Centre

Picabeen's story is one of community spirit taking root and blossoming. In 1992, recognising a gap in essential services for Brisbane's north, dedicated volunteers planted the seeds by establishing the Hills and Samford District Welfare Association. Their passion fuelled Picabeen's early growth, transforming premises in Everton Hills, named Bunya House, into a hub for programs and fostering connections through services and activities.

In 1996, the association took on a new identity, adopting the name "Picabeen" after the native Piccabeen Palm. This same year, an exciting opportunity arose when Brisbane City Council offered a more central location; a house on Hoben Street in Mitchelton. Recognising its potential to better serve the community, Picabeen embraced the move.

While dedicated staff now support the mission, Picabeen's heart remains with its incredible volunteers. Their tireless efforts at the Picabeen Community Centre have fuelled significant growth in services and activities, allowing Picabeen to connect and enrich countless lives within the community.

The Essence of Picabeen

In records that the organisation holds, the naming of the centre as 'Picabeen' was chosen by founding members to align with the abundance of Piccabeen Palms in the area and purportedly Picabeen's meaning was 'meeting place', however, in later years a new meaning came to light ...

Piccabeen/Bangalow Palm:

The leaf bases were used as water carriers by Aboriginal people and the names Piccabeen and Bangalow supposedly come from Aboriginal words for water carrier. The Picci buckets or baskets were constructed from the base of the fallen fronds. The cabbage (the shoot and surrounding young leaves and tissue) is edible and was widely collected by Aboriginal people and early settlers.

Australian National Herbarium and Botanic Gardens:

This new discovery of the meaning behind 'Picabeen' is equally symbolic, as it recognises the beauty of communities coming together in a resourceful way. The Picci buckets were made from what would otherwise be composted into the Earth and thus are used as tools to move forward and to progress. Picabeen Community Centre welcomes the discovery of this definition, and we strive to embody its principles by utilising sustainable resources, bringing our community together and providing valuable services.



A Beacon of Hope and Connection

Mission

Picabeen is a community hub that:

- Delivers support services to people in our community;
- Responds to local needs;
- Respects the diversity of people in our community; and
- Promotes opportunities and activities to help local residents enhance their quality of life.

Vision

To provide opportunities for community members to experience all aspects of wellbeing including:

- physical
- emotional
- social
- spiritual
- economic
- environmental.

Values

Picabeen will conduct our operations and serve our community by observing our Values which are based upon:

- Social Justice principles; Equity, Access, Participation, Rights
- Inclusiveness;
- Collaboration and Cooperation;
- Responsive quality services;
- Promoting sustainability;
- Health and well-being.



Picabeen's People: Who We Are

At the heart of the north west Brisbane community, Picabeen has emerged as a place of inclusion, connection and belonging, a place that, over its years of operation, has embraced a wide variety of human stories and experiences.

The essence of Picabeen is woven from the lives of thousands of people who have crossed its threshold, each of whom adds a unique thread to the fabric of our collective identity.

Through their contributions, a culture of warmth, dignity and respect has flourished, creating an environment where compassion, understanding and acceptance are not just values, but a way of life.

At Picabeen, our volunteers take on a wide variety of roles and activities, each contributing uniquely to our community.

Together, they form the heart and soul of Picabeen's vibrant volunteer community.

Management Committee

A core pillar of Picabeen's operations is its Management Committee.

The Committee is comprised of members with varying professional backgrounds, skills, and areas of expertise. Through drawing upon each other's individual strengths, the Committee can collectively oversee the Association's governance with efficiency, proficiency, and integrity.

The Management Committee has been integral to Picabeen's past successes, is essential to its present functioning and will be of fundamental importance in guiding the Association into the future.



Our Committee

Martin Turrel

Committee President: 2012-
Present (2024)



Bronwyn Cervantes

Secretary: 2018-Present (2024)

Stuart Jaeschke

Treasurer: 2022-Present (2024)



Our Committee

Pauline Coffey

Member: 2020-Present (2024)



Luke Roberts

Member: 2019-Present (2024)



Birt Girle

Member: 2017-2024)



Management Committee Members Across the decades

Adrian Holbeck: 2008
Alan Marsh: 2007 - 2012
Albert Girle: 2017 - 2024
Andrew McMicking: 2004 - 2009
Anna Gillbard: 2017 - 2022
Anna Lennen: 2007- 2008
Arleen Naivie: 2023-2024
Arlene Moore: 1994
Barbara Barnes: 1994 - 2002
Bill Howie: 2003 - 2005
Bob Vine: 2000 - 2003
Bronwyn Cervantes: 2018-Present (2024)
Bruce Kimball: 1998 - 2006
Carmel Harris: 2008
Carolyn Healy: 1992 - 1999
Catherine Hayward: 2006
Charles Adamson: 2007
Chris Attwood: 2005 - 2006
Clem Fryer: 1998 - 1999
Corey Walker: 2020 - 2021
Craig Adams: 1994 - 1997

Dan Whelan: 1997 - 2003
David Cameron: 1995 - 2010
Deanne Brogan: 2004
Dev Kaphle: 2006
Emma McCabe: 2013
Erica Rasche: 2012
Gary Waite: 1994 - 1996
Gayle Cameron: 1993 - 1994
Glenys Saunders: 2016
Gloria Kirkness: 1997 - 2004
Ian Plowman: 2014 - 2015
Ingrid Marsh: 2009 - 2014
Jan Carseldine: 2005
Jenny Noble: 2009 - 2021
Jessie Turner: 2024
John Goodship: 2015 - 2016
Julie Tancred: 2014
Lee Hurst: 2017
Lona Baskerville: 2015
Luke Roberts: 2019 - Present (2024)
Martin Turrell: 2012 - Present (2024)

Matt Boland: 2015
Patrice Harald: 1997 - 2010 (8 yrs)
Pauline Coffey: 2020 - Present (2024)
Philip Statham: 2002 - 2005
Rilla Marsh: 2000 - 2001
Robyn Caldwell: 1997 - 1999
Robyn Clark: 2013
Rose Hargrave: 2006- 2014
Ryan Foster: 2004
Sandra Nugent: 2007
Sarah Wiseman: 2013
Scott Wilson: 2017
Shellan Bourke: 2004
Shelley Neilon: 1998 - 2000
Stuart Jaeschke: 2022 - Present (2024)
Tiffany Trindall: 2017 - 2021
Tracey Scovell: 2014 - 2016
Vicki Williams: 1997

Martin Turrel

Picabeen President 2012-Present (2024)

I am currently President of Picabeen, and when I reflect on the history of the service, I think of the people who have given their time and energy to support the delivery of programs and activities as well as the service recipients and community in general, in particular the local public who have benefitted.

Those who have contributed to the community include many current and former employees, volunteers, students, and general members. These groups of amazing people have demonstrated a commitment to social justice through their engagement with the service and have given their time and energy to support those who have found themselves temporarily in difficult circumstances and those, who through no fault of their own, have experienced marginalisation and disadvantage in our so called 'Lucky Country'.

If you are reading this, I invite you to 'come on board' and help support others to make positive changes in their lives through contributing to our social and youth specific services.



The Journey of a Thousand Miles: Life Members

In the records of Picabeen's history, there are certain stories of volunteers whose presence and influence have been pivotal since its inception. These remarkable individuals are the pillars of our community, whose unwavering dedication and tireless efforts have shaped the very essence of Picabeen into what it is today. Without their deep commitment and steadfast support, Picabeen's trajectory would have been very different and would lack the depth and resilience that now characterise it.

In recognition of their extraordinary contributions and enduring devotion to Picabeen's growth and prosperity, the association has awarded them the prestigious honour of life members. These individuals were and continue to be the spirit of Picabeen, inspiring us all and leaving an indelible legacy that will continue to enrich our community for generations to come.



Life Members

Barbara Barnes



Barbara, whose memory remains a source of inspiration, was "part of the original group" (1994-2002), as she put it, and was involved before the creation of the association in 1992.

She was a pillar of the Picabeen community and was even instrumental in changing the name of the association. From the creation of "Coffee, Craft and Talk", one of Picabeen's first programs, to her presidency, Barbara witnessed first-hand the growth of Picabeen over the decades.



Barbara is quoted as saying, "It's just gone ahead so much... It's just been so good. I reckon it's a great little service. I like the direction it has gone. We're outgrowing it though, that's the trouble".

Deeply passionate about homelessness, women's issues and the wellbeing of the elderly, Barbara always believed that Picabeen's role in the local community was invaluable and irreplaceable and her legacy runs deep within the history of Picabeen.

In 2020 Barbara said, "Anyone can turn up here, and everyone is welcome. That's very much to the point of what Picabeen is about. Getting to know people on an individual basis. It is so important to have a place where you feel welcome, and you know people aren't going to look down on you".

Life Members



Bruce Kimball



Bruce served on Picabeen's Committee from 1998 to 2006 in roles including Committee member, Secretary, and Vice President. He notes that the late 90's was a pivotal time in Picabeen's development, thanks not only to the Management Committee's absolute dedication and breadth of expertise, but also to Picabeen's "quiet achievers".

"There were a whole range of reasons why we were so successful. It was a perfect storm. It was a critical, transformative time in which we went from a shoestring budget, to becoming a well-managed, professional organisation servicing and engaging with the community".

"It's lovely to know Picabeen is still standing, but more than that, it has just gone further. That is personally rewarding. I take great pride in what we have achieved together. It is fantastic to still be able to refer people to this centre, where they can get some kind of support, someone to sit with them and hold their hand". Currently, Bruce is supporting Picabeen with immigration matters for some clients in the community.

Jenny Noble



Jenny became part of the Picabeen community in 2008 as a front desk volunteer, a role she adored for the connections she was able to create with people of varying ages, different nationalities, and diverse backgrounds. Jenny has since served in a variety of roles on the Management Committee including Committee Member, Secretary, and Vice President. For Jenny, Picabeen's value is immeasurable.

"I think Picabeen fulfils a very important role in the community. There is something here for anybody, and for everybody. It is a very comfortable, safe space with such a warm feeling. Picabeen isn't trying to be something for everyone, it just is. It offers great services, great activities, and a conduit for people. Whether people need food, whether they are looking for a hand up at the moment, whether they want to participate in a class, Picabeen can somehow link them in, or create what it is that they need".



Life Members



Gloria Kirkness



Gloria became involved with Picabeen in 1997. Through her work at Centrelink, she became aware that locals were so often in search of a warm space in which to develop their skills and connect with community.

“At Centrelink, we needed a local place to refer our own service users for the extra support that they needed. It was about welcoming people to a new area and appreciating their circumstances. Giving them somewhere to go. Getting people and families connected with community again. You would see the impact on people’s lives daily. That’s why I got involved with Picabeen”.

Serving on the committee for 8 years, including 6 as President, Gloria now looks back fondly at Picabeen’s transformative first decade. “It was all about the opportunities that arose at the time, and we just grabbed them. It was a pioneering time in many ways. It was so interesting. If you sat down and thought about it from year to year, there were just so many things happening”.

Contributing to the Picabeen community since 1995, David has served in a variety of roles including Committee Member, Secretary, Treasurer, and Vice President. David’s financial management and work as Treasurer from 1995-2006 is widely considered to have been integral to Picabeen’s successful development, particularly in its formative years.

“The reason I joined Picabeen was because I wanted to meet people. I wanted to do something for the community. It’s something that has always been important to me”.

In recognition of his commitment to the betterment of his community and its people, David was awarded the Centenary Medal in 2001. Only 15,841 individuals have received this award across all of Australia. As well as this, David was awarded a ‘25 Years of Service’ accolade by the Picabeen Management Committee in 2020.

David Cameron



Volunteer Insights

Alan Marsh



“Picabeen brings connection. Connecting people with people. I think that is really, really important. And I heard a lot of people express thanks for what Picabeen was doing, for things like food parcels and helping people with referrals when they were in a bit of trouble. A lot of things were happening that you wouldn’t hear about widely, but those things were so meaningful”.

Picabeen means a lot of different things to a lot of different people; support, connection, a place to build relationships, and somewhere where there is a friendly atmosphere for people to come to join into.

“It’s just a really good place, and quite dynamic at times. What gets to me about Picabeen is its inclusiveness. I really connect with the principles of inclusiveness. It doesn’t matter who goes there. It doesn’t matter about race, or nationality, or gender, or sexuality. It’s just so good to talk to others and find out about what life is like for them.”

“I really got a lot out of my time at Picabeen. I saw a lot of good done. It was lifechanging.”

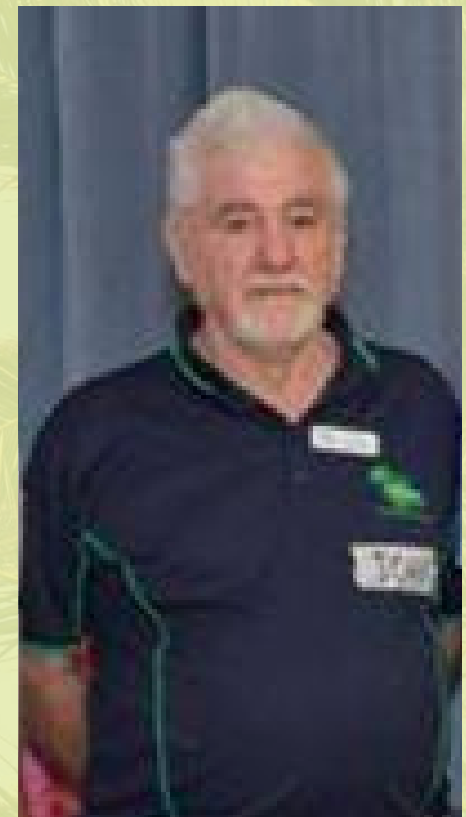
Volunteer Insights

John Goodship

“I retired just on 74 and I had to do something. I went out looking for volunteer roles. Work wise, I was in sales and marketing. I was always out there mixing with people. I needed to keep that contact going. I can use my marketing skills for a whole range of other purposes. And in actual fact, you grow a bit from that. It is a community asset. You suddenly arrive at retirement and there you’ve got a couple of big bags beside you, one is experience, the other one is knowledge and you’ve got skills as well. What are you gonna do with it? The journey could start from there.

On reflecting on his volunteering John says, “I’ve met people since I retired that I wish I’d known all my life. And that’s important. You develop very good friendships. You’re working together, and you take great pride in what you achieve. Personally I feel it’s much more rewarding.”

As a volunteer he says that it is important to have respect for people. “Even the people we meet when we’re serving them here at BBQ, some really interesting people there. You just want to know more about them. There’s one lady who came here and she has one meal a day so she could feed here kids and pay the rent. She’s a single mum. These things really impact on you .”



Volunteer Insights

Angela Fusco

Angela was welcomed to the Picabeen Team in early 2021; her role has included being at reception on a Wednesday. Angela helped to update procedures and contributed to the Blue Card operations and Volunteer register which has helped with streamlining the process and coordinating volunteers who are new to the centre. Angela always brings a sparkle with her bright and bubbly personality.



“Picabeen, a strong pillar in our North West Corridor, has supported many individuals, families, couples and young people. Whether it be social offerings at the centre, food parcels, assisting with paperwork, computers and phones, and sharing information of other organisations that may assist with their enquiries or needs.

Picabeen values align with my morals in that they do not discriminate, they are over generous and filled with compassion in assisting those in need. Picabeen appreciates their volunteers and acknowledges them each year.

Due to under lying health conditions I am unable to work full time or part time every day for an organisation. Therefore, I decided to find volunteer work and offer skills I have gained throughout my working career. I started in June 2021. It will be three years in June 2024 since I joined Picabeen.”

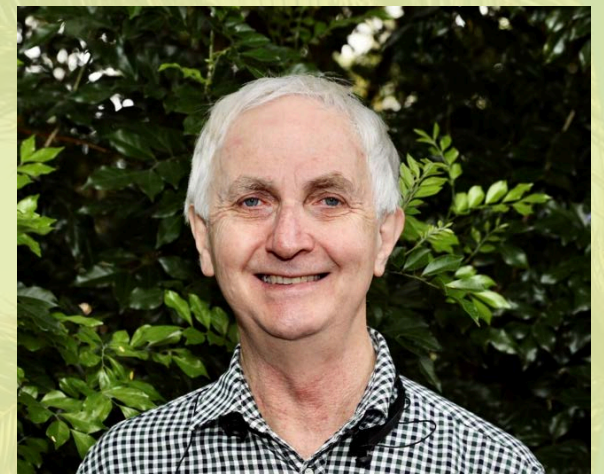
Volunteer Insights

Anthony Bloomer

Anthony began volunteering at the Change Room and now spends two days a week at Picabeen Community Centre, where he facilitates conversational English classes. Known for his dedication and patience, Anthony helps participants improve their language skills. Beyond teaching, he is the centre's "Mr. Fix-It," handling repairs, organising events, and supporting staff and community members.

His resourcefulness ensures Picabeen runs smoothly and remains welcoming. Anthony reflects on his experience, saying, "I've done a lot of different jobs in my life".

I wound up helping out at the English class, two days a week. It's very rewarding when people thank you for the class. You can see their learning." When asked how Picabeen might run without its volunteers, he stated, "It might run without them, but it lets the organisation get a lot more done; a hell of a lot more done, frankly. It may not collapse without them, but some of the services would shrink or disappear."



The Art of Community Building

Imagine a community BBQ lunch, a regular weekly gathering where local residents share conversations, a meal, and build lasting connections. This is the spirit of Picabeen, a community centre where engagement, collaboration, and innovative programs result in a more vibrant and resilient community.

Through a variety of initiatives, Picabeen addresses both immediate needs and long-term development. The Change Room, our 2nd Hand Clothing store, for instance, provides much needed affordable clothing to the community. Another program, NILS (No Interest Loan Scheme), provides financial assistance, empowering individuals and families to overcome temporary setbacks and achieve a better quality of life. Dedicated volunteers are the backbone of these initiatives, ensuring the programs run smoothly and participants receive the support they need.

By building on the strengths and resources of the collective, Picabeen's programs lay the foundation for sustainable growth and development.



Collaborative Programs and Initiatives

NILS Program

Since 2010, Picabeen has been a proud partner in the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) program. This national initiative, rooted in the work of Good Shepherd Microfinance, provides safe and affordable loans to people on low incomes.

Recognising this critical need within our community, Bill Sargent, the Centre Manager at the time, initiated a collaboration with Communify, a local social support organisation. Today, the program thrives under our partnership with LECNA (Logan East Community Neighbourhood Association).

The NILS program, delivered by our dedicated volunteers Jane Paterson, Anita Anderson, and Simon Jukes, has become one of Picabeen's most utilised services. It empowers individuals and families to overcome financial challenges, promoting stability and well-being throughout our community.



NILS Program

Simon Jukes

Simon has been volunteering at Picabeen since 2017 when he commenced as a Tax Help Volunteer; a program run through the ATO in July-October each year. In early 2023 Simon took on the additional role as NILS volunteer.

Simon believes the NILS program “Helps community members access essential goods and services that many take for granted, and thereby enhances their well-being. Also, it helps to keep clients away from predatory lenders”.

“NILS is a good fit for my skills and interests. It is a positive experience to contribute to the community and also through personal development”.



Anita Anderson

"Volunteering in the NILS program at Picabeen has been both enlightening and rewarding. I have heard many stories of courage, sadness, desperation, and strength. NILS can be life changing for our clients who are unable to access mainstream financial services.

Picabeen provides a safe space for our many valuable and often vulnerable clients. It's always lovely to see so many of whom return to the centre for the BBQ lunches/art classes/food parcels etc and to simply catch us up on their lives."



NILS Program

Jane Paterson



“I initially came to Picabeen when I retired and had some more time. It was an opportunity for me to give to my little, local community. The NILS program, I think, it is a very valuable program. I really value the day of being here and in this centre and to some extent being exposed to lives I wouldn’t otherwise be exposed to. So that’s my grounding day. That’s a small role that volunteers can play in addressing community needs”.

“I think that the staff here at this centre are amazing. And I think Jill in particular is just extraordinary and her ability to support everyone here is incredible. And the other staff here are amazing as well. They’re all just lovely people. In terms of clients, there are some clients that you know that the help they got through the NILS program was the right thing at the right time and that their lives have just continued on a little bit more easily as a result”.



Collaborative Programs and Initiatives



Sustainable Pantry Program

Strong communities - Strong Support

The Sustainable Pantry Program at Picabeen provides critical food assistance to locals facing hardship.

Year after year, Picabeen offers a helping hand through food hampers, ensuring no one goes hungry.

This program is powered by you, the community. Volunteers donate food or cash, keeping the pantry stocked and responsive to local needs. Emergency relief funds also play a vital role in supporting the program's ability to assist local members of the community.

Donations are always welcome, reflecting our ongoing commitment to a sustainable and supportive program.



Sustainable Pantry Program



Collaborative Programs and Initiatives

Picabeen Change Room

In February 2019, Picabeen took ownership of Picabeen Change Room, a second-hand clothing shop located in Keperra.

Picabeen Change Room was established in 2015 by Build The Future Foundation (BTF). and was initially opened as a drop-in space for young people and then BTF discovered that the shop had a great capacity to act as a connection point for the local community and it grew as a community hub.

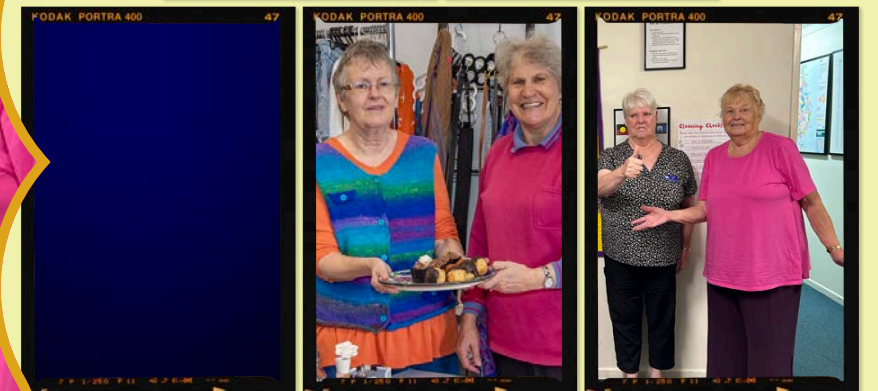
Picabeen had worked in partnership with BTF for many years and it seemed a natural path for Picabeen to take the reins when BTF decided to move forward.

Today, Picabeen Change Room remains a place that goes beyond offering affordable clothing; it's a warm and welcoming space where you can:

- find a wide selection of clothes at affordable prices;
- connect with your community and build relationships with friendly faces;
- access vital resources with referrals to Picabeen's centre in Mitchelton.

Picabeen Change Room empowers the community by providing both practical needs and a space for connection.

Picabeen Change Room



Picabeen Change Room

This programme has had over 25 volunteers be part of the team at Picabeen's wonderful little 'Op' Shop. Each valued team member contributes something special in the day-to-day running of Picabeen Change Room.

Our volunteers come from various walks of life, ages, and experiences, but they all share a welcoming smile, have a great team spirit and a common goal of supporting Picabeen and the local community.

Gayle Brook
Lynne Martin
Carol Watts
Christina Keenahan
Debra Carpenter
Gleny Tesch
John Jones
Judith Nothdurft
Julie McKenzie
Lynn Collins

Margaret Zell
Margaret Brandt
Margeret Urquhart
Leena Salim
Pam Johnston
Patricia Rushby
Paula Maxwell
Ruby Huntington
Shelly Jones
Billy Cope



Picabeen Change Room

Gayle Brook

The Change Room is a “little op shop with a big heart,” says Gayle, who served as the original project worker until November 2021. She emphasizes the vital role volunteers play: “Picabeen Change Room simply wouldn’t be able to operate without its network of dedicated volunteers”.

“Our volunteer program is really valuable, and we have people who volunteer for lots of different reasons. It provides social connection, it helps people to feel that they are part of something bigger than themselves, to have purpose, and to give back to community. It’s really important”.



Lynne Martin

Lynne enjoys engaging with the local community and being able to help with clothing, having a chat and providing a safe happy place for them. Although Lynne is a part of the Picabeen staff team, she spends many hours working in a volunteering capacity.

Picabeen is such an important part of the local community. My time working here gives me a chance to put back into the community and allows me to see things with a different eye."

“It is the small things in someone’s life that have the most impact.”



Picabeen Change Room

Deb Carpenter

Deb reflects that volunteering is a part of her life and she really enjoys her mornings at the Change Room.

“You get lots of people from very different walks of life. Everybody’s got a story and people wouldn’t talk often, but you get the regulars that come in and gradually they open up to us. I really enjoy it.

The other volunteers I work with are fun too. They’re quite supportive. Lynne’s wonderful to work with, she and I get along really well.

For me, I think I get back almost as much as I give, really. You’ve gotta have some courage I think to get outside your comfort zone”.



Building a Stronger Community

At Picabeen, we believe that everyone deserves to feel connected, valued, and part of a vibrant community; we're passionate about bridging social, cultural, and linguistic divides, fostering a welcoming space where people can come together, celebrate their uniqueness, and build a stronger future together .

Picabeen recognises the power of connections and the importance of inclusion. Through engaging activities like special events, weekly Playgroups, and Community BBQ Lunches, it fosters a welcoming and supportive environment where everyone feels valued.

Whether you're seeking to improve your English, prepare for citizenship tests, connect with neighbours over a shared meal, build a support network, feel a sense of belonging; there's a place for you here at Picabeen.

Through the many offerings, a more vibrant and resilient community is created for all.



Picabeen Events

Across the year, Picabeen hosts numerous public events which connect community, foster awareness of important issues and mark special occasions and causes. Examples include our annual Christmas event, 25th Anniversary event, Harmony Day, National Volunteer Week, Mental Health Week, Disaster Resilience event and LGBTQIA+ Workshop event.



Community Play Groups

Picabeen's Play Groups occur twice a week beneath the shade of our lush jacarandas and palm trees. It's a relaxed space in which parents and carergivers can connect, and children can explore, learn and grow through interactive play.

Between 2011 and 2020, Picabeen's playgroups were predominantly led by Wendy Goodship and Jane Watkinson; nurturing volunteers who were both passionate about early-childhood education. Wendy and Jane decided to pursue new adventures in 2020, but their contributions will be forever appreciated and cherished.

We also thank Tracy Horne, Brenda, Maureen and Sheila who have contributed to our Play Groups since 2020.



Community Play Group



Community Play Group



Wendy Goodship

Wendy volunteered for several years as Playgroup Coordinator. When asked what she enjoyed most about volunteering for playgroup, Wendy said her highlight was interacting with children and parents and that she enjoyed seeing children growing and developing in a social environment.



Jane Watkinson

I love being with children. Watching them learn and grow throughout the year is so wonderful. It really is warming. And it's all done through play-based learning. It's just the best way, and we see the benefits every week. I also think the children get a great social grounding when they are here as well, as they learn and connect alongside other children. And the benefits for parents are immense too.

We've had a few mums come here who have been suffering from post-natal depression, who have just been looking for a place to integrate, to meet people. And this is a group where mums can come to meet other mums, in a non-judgmental, non-threatening space. It's really nice".



Tracy Horne

In 2020 we welcomed a new volunteer to the playgroup. Being a person who likes to keep active, Tracy sorted volunteering opportunities with us at the beginning of 2020 and took on a role in playgroup facilitation. Tracy did an amazing job, and we are eternally grateful for the fun she brought to the group.



Community BBQ Lunch

Local business owner Steve Brett, inspired by a similar project in Redcliffe, partnered with Picabeen in 2019 to launch a community breakfast BBQ in Mitchelton.

Picabeen, recognising the rising number of people experiencing homelessness and other vulnerabilities who were seeking help, saw this as a vital opportunity to address a growing need.

Another local organisation, the Older Women's Network QLD (OWNQ), played a vital role in the early stages of the project by providing volunteers which helped in establishing the BBQ and build a strong volunteer network.

The BBQ, needed to be rebuilt after COVID lockdowns, and has emerged stronger than ever. The now lunchtime BBQ offers a thriving and welcoming space for a diverse range of people where they can connect, share a meal, and build a sense of community. This weekly gathering fosters social interaction, combats isolation, and provides a vital resource for vulnerable members of our community.



Community BBQ Lunch

Without our volunteers the BBQ would not be possible. Each week we have 6 volunteers rostered to deliver the BBQ Lunch. Much gratitude goes to volunteers, past and present who have been on our roster over since its inception, and include:

John Goodship
Chris Hall
Liz Hall

Chris Batley
Pat Greenhalgh
Lynn Nock

Anthony Doherty
Andrew Lowien
Trevor Jones

Rosalinda Isorina
Ken Robilliard
Anthony Bloomer
Dan Wheelan



Community BBQ Lunch

Chris Hall

Christine (Chris) Hall has been a dedicated community volunteer, contributing her time and effort to numerous organisations over a long period of time. She has been with us at Picabeen for 4 years now. In recognition of her outstanding service, she received the Everton Volunteer Recognition Award in 2022.

“I’ve always had a volunteer job since I stopped working. I finished work when I was 60, and my husband and I did Meals on Wheels. It’s quite a while since I was 60!”

Chris plays a pivotal role in organising the community BBQ every Tuesday and has seen it grow into an inclusive, thriving community event.

Her ability to connect with people from all walks of life has made her a beloved figure among the regular attendees.

“Since I first came, it’s grown. It’s nice to see the same people coming back and talking to one another. It definitely has improved in that way and become more of a social group than just people coming for a feed.”



Community BBQ Lunch



Ken Robilliard

Ken has been volunteering with Picabeen since 2022 and has found through this, he has been able to assist in addressing the community issue of hunger at the Tuesday BBQ. Ken has built relationships with many individuals from the community, mentioning how he has “a good repartee with some of the older members.” Ken also enjoys assisting some of the international volunteers in building on their knowledge of Australia and their English language skills.

Ken became involved because he was wanting to volunteer somewhere and a friend in a walking group suggested Picabeen. Ken spoke on how the working behind the scenes at the BBQ “suits him” and how “Helping to prepare lunch for a couple of hours once or twice a month is hardly a huge ask for me.” Volunteering gives him an opportunity to use some of his skills to address the community needs.



Community BBQ Lunch

Rosalinda Isorina



Originally from the Philippines, Rosalinda held a degree in Political Science and worked as a politics lecturer before relocating to Australia for family reasons. Seeking more than an academic career, she has pursued various passions, jobs, and volunteering roles. Rosalinda is passionate about mental health, environmental conservation, geology, law, and politics, among other interests. In 2015, she met Jill during a Positive Parenting Program (PPP) class and later became a facilitator for the program at Picabeen. Despite her busy schedule, she now finds time to volunteer at the community BBQ.



“I’m a practical person. I don’t mind cutting, I don’t mind cleaning. I don’t mind serving people, because that’s when I really meet them... and (they) tell me a little bit about themselves. That is rewarding. And if someone remembers my name, that is great, they make me feel like I belong to them. But my only problem is that I can not remember everyone’s name, it’s difficult!”

“When they are happy, when they are thankful, that’s good. To me, listening and being helpful is something that gave me the idea ‘gee, this is beautiful, I feel great when I’m able to help.’ We just don’t appreciate that there are people who go hungry, really. The budget that they receive from the government, especially those who are not working or those who have disabilities, that is very limited. And working from the mental health environment, I am very aware.”

Community BBQ Lunch



Trevor Jones

Originally, Trevor hired out a space at Picabeen for his acting class. That eventually led him to start volunteering when positions became available. “I volunteer at the BBQ, usually twice a month. The reason I like doing it is because I was retired at the time, and I wanted to meet people in the community. I find I enjoy talking to clients. There are nice people there to have a chat to.”

Trevor enjoys talking to the students at Picabeen about their degrees and the projects they’re involved in. Trevor has also credited the staff with the laid-back and understanding nature they operate with. “It’s like a little family there. I enjoy going there. It’s not hard work, that’s the thing. And it’s not compulsory. If you can’t make it, that’s ok. Take your time and come back when you’re ready.”



Youth Activities

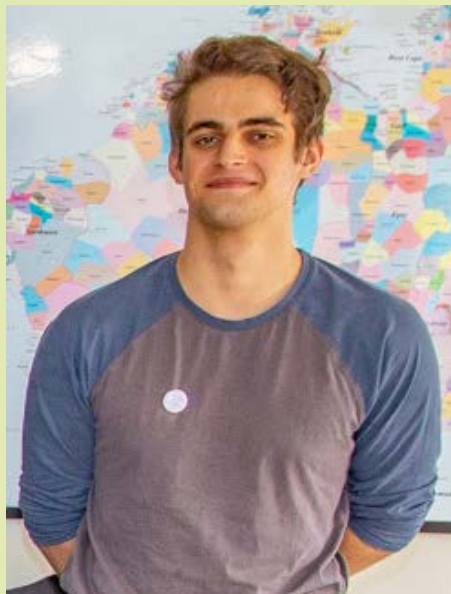
Picabeen's youth programmes are one of the oldest and most impactful services offered by the centre.

This youth team has been led by a series of dynamic, transparent and down-to-earth workers. With these workers at the wheel, the lives of hundreds of young people in our community have been affected to a greater or lesser extent. We have also had the participation of volunteers Harry, Jess and Alex who have been important in the development of these activities.



Youth Activities

Harry Marshall



Harry has been an enthusiastic and dedicated volunteer in our youth space. Initially joining through our student program while studying for a Certificate 4 in Youth Work, Harry decided to stay on with the Youth Team as a volunteer.

“It’s definitely very fulfilling. It’s quite enlightening to see different people and their perspectives. You meet so many different people, it broadens your horizons. People who are outside of your circle.”



Conversational English Class

Picabeen's conversational English classes have been running for over 25 years. Results like this would simply not be possible without the welcoming spirit, warmth and enthusiasm of our wonderful volunteer teachers.

Our original volunteers Ann Howie and Nola Atwood worked for fifteen years running these classes. Other English tutors over the years included Terry, Mark Graham and Isaac.

Today, the classes are led by Evelyn D'Vas, Anthony Bloomer and Hilary Hughes, teachers who bring a unique energy to each class. Barbara Shaw is a more recent volunteer who fills in when Evelyn is away.

The service of the English volunteers over the years have benefited the lives of dozens of students immeasurably.



Conversational English Class





Conversational English Class



Anthony Bloomer

Anthony has initiated a Tuesday Conversational English Class designed for beginners. He dedicates a significant amount of time and effort preparing for each class, demonstrating remarkable patience during his lessons. Anthony also strives to make each session enjoyable, saying, "I make the classes interesting. If I run across something that's an aside, I'll run with it."

Barbara Shaw

I really enjoy meeting the students and hearing their stories. They're so appreciative of the opportunity I think. The fact that it's free and easy for them to access. One of the things I really enjoy about it is some of the other volunteers come along as well just to help out. You feel supported. People travel quite a long way. One guy comes off his morning shift as a baker, which is so lovely because he often brings pastries. He's been up all night working, and then he comes to class. That's how motivated he is. It's easy in the sense that everyone who comes is so motivated and keen to learn. Everybody wants to be there.



Conversational English Class



Evelyn D'Vaz

Evelyn's journey as a volunteer at Picabeen began in 2019, and since then, she's been a pivotal part of the organisation's Friday English Conversational Class. Her dedication to this role stems from a multitude of motivators, her love for others and her religious background keeping her devoted.

"I care that what I do has benefitted a lot of the students who come in there. The improvement that they make, where they start timid and shy, and then come out of their shell. It gives me so much joy to see them improving. I love it so much."



Citizenship Test Practice Class

The initiative to host Citizenship Test Preparation Classes at Picabeen Community Centre is driven by a deep commitment to addressing the critical needs of the community, particularly the increasing number of refugee and migrant families settling in the Picabeen catchment area. This holds great significance as it provides a targeted and supportive solution to a pressing challenge.

In essence, this initiative not only addresses a crucial need within the community but also signifies the organisation's dedication to inclusivity, collaboration, and providing essential services to support the successful integration of CALD families into Australian society.

Volunteers:

Evelyn D'Vaz
Anthony Bloomer
Saras Narsey
Raquel Narca
Kimberley Cole
Barbara Shaw



Arts, Crafts & Sewing Classes

Picabeen has hosted arts, crafts and sewing classes for many years and has provided opportunities for people to be creative and make something wonderful or help with a group project while enjoying social chat and laughter.

Not only are the handmade and artistic objects very beautiful, but the community spirit of these collective projects is evident.

Picabeen has been fortunate to have Claire Maclaine and Deneice Watego who have been integral in the classes and although they have decided not to continue to officially volunteer, they both remain an important part of Picabeen and we see them regularly being involved in creative projects.



Arts, Crafts & Sewing Classes

Deneice Watego



Deneice has had a longstanding and significant relationship with Picabeen, particularly through her involvement with the ‘Sewing Circle Group’. Over the years, her contributions have been vital to the organisation, and she continues to play an important role in Picabeen’s community and history. Her enduring connection with Picabeen underscores her commitment and the positive impact she has had on the participants of the group.

“I found my time there enjoyable, they’re all very friendly people. Volunteering got me out of the house. Personally, to mix with other people positively impacted my life.”



Arts, Crafts & Sewing Classes



Claire Maclaine

Claire has been an integral part of Picabeen since 2009. Using her passion of art to bring people together, her involvement has included working in creative programs such as the Sewing Circle, Art and Crafts Classes, and the Brisbane Serenades Workshops as part of the Brisbane Festival events.

“I moved up to Brisbane from Tasmania, and I didn’t know anybody and thought I would find something to do”. Someone asked Claire whether she would be interested in volunteering at Picabeen, to which she thought “I want to give back to the community and bring people happiness! I got just as much out of it as I put into it.”

Through her work in the programs, Claire spoke about the impact Picabeen had on her, “I’ve always been a bit shy, because I was at Picabeen helping others through art, crafts, and sewing, I felt more capable I suppose”.



Arts, Crafts & Sewing Classes

Arts and crafts activities have been a big part of Picabeen's weekly fixtures since the start. There were a number of creative endeavours carried out, including painting, sketching, sewing, ceramics, mosaics, photography, scrapbooking, origami and more.

Picabeen owes a lot to the creative and enthusiastic volunteers who facilitated these classes, Pipa, Deneice, Mark, Chris and Claire. Without their contributions, these classes wouldn't have been able to happen.

Their artistic contributions are prominently displayed throughout Picabeen, showcasing a vibrant and diverse array of art forms that can be seen in and around the community centre.



Arts, Crafts & Sewing Classes



Tai Chi Classes

For more than 20 years, Picabeen's Tai Chi classes flourished under the guidance of Wen Gui and Yisheng Chen, esteemed instructors with extensive experience. Alongside Conversational English Class, Tai Chi became one of the centre's most cherished and enduring programs, welcoming individuals of all backgrounds and skill levels.

In 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Wen Gui and Yisheng Chen retired from their teaching roles, leaving behind a legacy of inclusivity and community.

Though their departure was felt deeply, their contributions will always be treasured, and they continue to hold a special place in the hearts of Picabeen community.

Their legacy stands as a testament to the profound impact of dedicated instructors and the lasting connections they cultivate.

Tai Chi Classes



Yoga Classes

Yoga at Picabeen commenced in 2015, swiftly evolving into one of the most loved and utilised classes offered at the centre.

Even when confronted with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Picabeen's Yoga teachers exhibited remarkable adaptability, ensuring the continuation of these tranquil opportunities for the community. Volunteer yoga teacher, Angie, played a pivotal role by transitioning to virtual instruction via Zoom, effectively maintaining the connection and support for the class attendees.

Additionally, in 2021 and 2022, the team welcomed Asta and Lexi, whose expertise and enthusiasm further enriched the yoga program, engaging an even broader audience. Whilst this program has taken a pause, it is our hope that we will be able to continue this program in future.



Testimonials from yoga volunteers

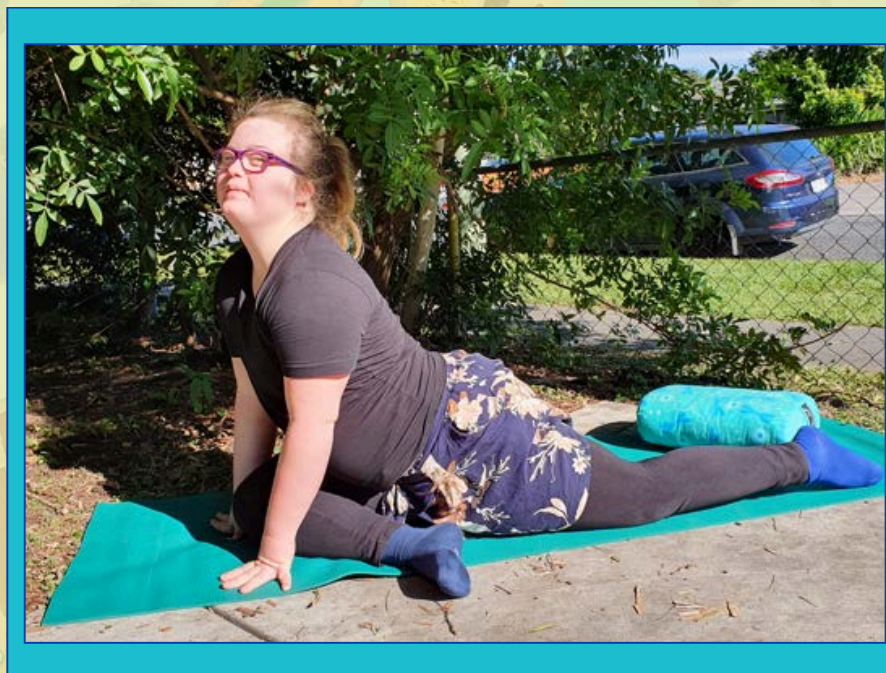
Lexi, volunteered with Picabeen in 2021 as a yoga teacher.

We asked Lexi to share a little about herself:

"I started yoga a few years ago with my yoga teacher, her name is Siobhan. I also did yoga with my sister and some friends, and I fell in love with it!

I like yoga because it makes me feel happy and confident. My favourite poses are child's pose and pigeon pose. I like everything about those poses and the feeling I get inside. My dream job is to teach yoga; it has been my life's dream. Now that I have finished my teacher training, I want to teach other people, including disabled people. I want to share the culture of yoga, teach people and bring joy to others".

Lexi believes that having Down syndrome is a special ability. This experience with Lexi was special and we learned a lot from her.



Yoga Classes

Annie Drury



♦ ♦ —————

I really love teaching yoga, especially at a community centre. I've seen people from all walks of life come to these classes, from young people to the elderly, and I think it has given them a beautiful space, just for themselves, where they can connect their mind, body and soul. It's so nice to see them blossom.

At Picabeen, it's all about tapping into the energy of the students in the room and conducting classes accordingly. And through these classes, I think students are able to tap into a place of healing themselves, a place of development, and a place where they can experiment with a new activity which may resonate with them and assist them in their journey.

♦ ♦

It gives me great pleasure to share my knowledge and to be able to see that benefit grow within other people."



The Future we Build Together

From the start, Picabeen has thrived on a spirit of volunteerism. This dedication to giving back is at the heart of our success, driving our growth and achievements. We actively cultivate a strong volunteer network, because we know it fuels our community-focused programs.

Picabeen Community Centre is a pillar of local solidarity. We foster connections, empower individuals, and provide a supportive environment where everyone can navigate their path with confidence.

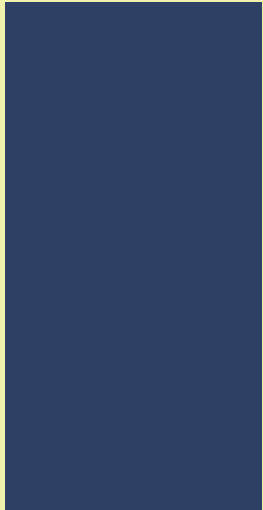
Becoming a Picabeen volunteer means joining a like-minded family. Together, we value mutual support, connection, and making a positive difference.

Our Gallery



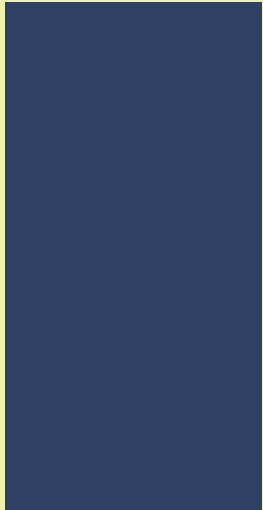






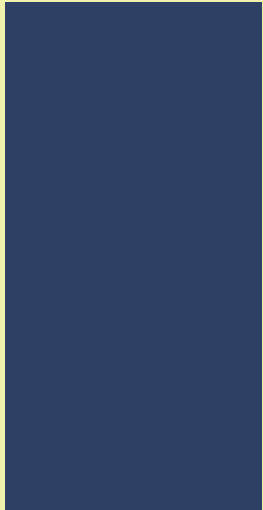






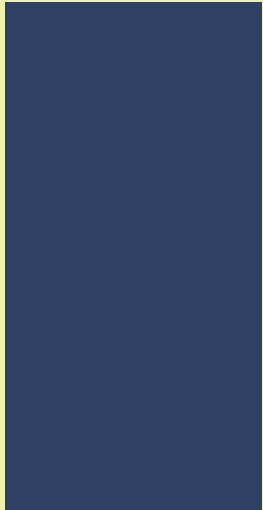






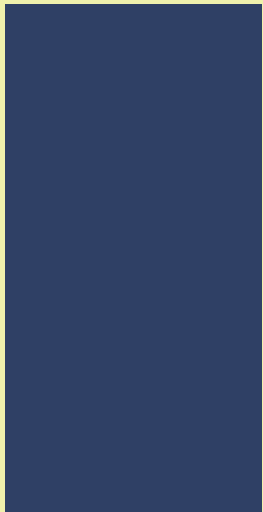






















Picabeen Community Centre

