

## RETTA DIXON HOME, DARWIN

*Christian training is the primary purpose of the RETTA DIXON HOME in DARWIN. What are the qualities required for good citizens? How can Aborigines successfully assimilate in to our way of life? The only satisfactory answer to these two questions is found in the Christian way of life as set forth in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*80 to 100 coloured children are being cared for in the Retta Dixon Home by staff called and dedicated to this particular task. No effort is spared to lovingly care for them and to train them in preparation to take their place in a worthy way in the community in their adult life.*

*We have proved that no better foundation can be laid than to give good sound Christian teaching, backed up by the love of Christ as demonstrated in the lives of the cottage parents.*

OBJECTIVES      Objectives of the Retta Dixon Home - to provide a home for children in need of love, care and training, particularly part-coloured boys and girls of any age up to eighteen years. To approximate a normal home life as far as possible for the children by grouping them in family units.

*Our motive stems first of all from the compassionate constraining love of Christ. His is love outpoured, which works for love's sake alone.*

*Our deep desire and constant prayer is that every child will come to accept Jesus Christ as Saviour, but even if he or she does not, we still care for them for His sake.*

HOME SITE      The Home is situated in Bagot Road, Nightcliff - about 7 miles from Darwin and 2 miles from the Nightcliff shopping centre. There are fifteen buildings on ten acres of land, made up of 8 cottages, Superintendent's cottage, Recreation hall, single workers' buildings, store, laundry and other outbuildings.

*On an average there are about 10 children in each cottage with the ages ranging from tiny tots to those in their early teens. It is different from ordinary family life in that the children come from different backgrounds - many of them being emotionally disturbed. They miss out on the vitally important love of their own mother and father.*

*The Government Department's description of these children is "deprived children". An apt term because they certainly have been deprived of parental love, a home where they really belong in a family unit and in many cases before coming to us were deprived of necessary food as well as love and care and were consequently in a very poor state of health. These are not children who have been through the courts for criminal offences.*

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STAFF The cottages are staffed by married couples or single workers; the men helping with the maintenance and upkeep of grounds and buildings etc. driving and caring for the vehicles attached to the Home.

The work in a cottage is constant and comparable to that of a private home... *teaching, training, advising, leading, guiding, correcting etc.* with all the regular detail that so often passes unnoticed, unheralded and unsung - *cleaning, washing, ironing, mending, tidying up, planning, pleasing, polishing, preparing, helping, catering, cooking* as well as *keeping the peace* (a very real item if you know children) etc. etc.!! You will agree that such a list of duties could keep one quite busy when caring for a family of ten or so. And all is so necessary.

COTTAGES Cottages are 'all electric'. Porta-gas is also available. There is a refrigerator in each, an electric stove and other appliances. The meals are prepared by the cottage parents for the children in their cottage. Food (including fruit and vegetables) and clothing are provided for the children by the Home, as is the food for the staff. Fresh bread and meat is delivered daily by local tradesmen. A good deal of the fruit and vegetables comes from the south.

Light washing is done in the cottage but sheets, towels and other heavy items are done in the laundry on the site by paid help.

House parents are expected to take full responsibility for their particular cottage on the principle that there must be a common working basis as laid down by the Superintendent.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE There are opportunities to participate in Christian service within and without the Home. Staff consider their work in the Home as a very definite Christian service. In addition there are regular prayer meetings, open air meetings, Religious Instruction classes at schools, children's and youth meetings. Workers are encouraged to participate in these as they are able.

EDUCATION Some of the older children attend the Nightcliff High School. The others are enrolled at five different schools in the neighbourhood so that no one large group goes to any one particular school. This to overcome their being called "the Home kids" as has happened when there was only the one school they could attend. The children are transported to and from school by buses from the Home. They leave for school about 8.30 a.m. and return about 3.45 p.m. The children take a cut lunch with them. This is prepared generally by the older children under the supervision of the cottage parent. A Library is set up in the Recreation Hall at the Home and special books are available to assist the children with their school work and projects.

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ACTIVITIES Activities include Boys Club, Girls' Brigade, YMCA (which is held at school), Christian Endeavour groups (Buds, Junior and Senior), Sunday School and other church activities.

Sunday is a fairly busy day, although work is kept to a minimum. There is Sunday School at 9.30, Church at 11.00, Junior C.E. at 2.45 and Church at night (for the older ones). For those who do not attend Junior C.E. the afternoon is spent resting or in quiet activities. Cottage parents are expected to go with the children from their cottage to the morning service at the A.I.M. Community Church in Nightcliff.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS The Home has two holiday centres. One at Coomalie Creek (near Rum Jungle) and the other at Lee Point by the sea. Most of the school holidays is taken up with camps. The younger children usually visit Lee Point, about 6 miles away. The older ones go to Coomalie Creek which is about 60 miles on the main highway south. At both these places there are the usual activities - swimming, walking, coping with set jobs, and just enjoying a little freedom (and catching "bush tucker" at Coomalie Creek!) The devotional times each day are different from those usually held at the Home. There are often times when the older ones decide for Christ at holiday camps.

RESULT *Over the years a number of children have come to know Jesus Christ as Saviour. Some of these have gone on to train at the Bible Training Institute and a few are now native missionaries of the A.I.M. Other young people have gone on to do nursing courses, etc. while others have simply gone out into the community to live for Christ and reflect the training and love given by the Mission, through the Retta Dixon Home.*

*The work at the Retta Dixon Home is a difficult work. Shortage of staff brings an added burden upon the workers. They are depending on us to pray for them. Can we enlist your help in this most important work?*

RETТА DIXON HOME  
P.O. Box 38, Darwin, N.T. 5794  
*Under the management of the*  
ABORIGINES INLAND MISSION OF AUSTRALIA  
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