

A Cup of Kindness



You may have heard the term 'random acts of kindness', which refers to performing small acts of kindness for others – usually strangers. If you sometimes struggle to think of what kindness you might do for a

complete stranger, the idea of "suspended coffee" could help you.

The concept of *caffé sospeso* began a century ago in Italy, and is simple: when customers visit a participating café, they pay for a coffee for someone who cannot afford it. The café puts the coffee "on hold". When a person going through tough times asks if there are any suspended coffees available, the restaurant provides the needy person with one of those prepaid coffees.

The suspended coffee program is rapidly spreading around the world, and began in Melbourne in March 2013. Mooroolbark mother Lisa Currie, who already runs a community and school program promoting kindness¹, felt inspired to support the project by visiting local cafés and asking them to take part. There are now around 15 participating cafés in the Yarra Ranges area. The owners of those cafés or bakeries place the suspended coffee logo in their window, and inside have a display showing the number of coffees on hold, so that needy people can easily see whether prepaid coffee is available.

The simple generosity of providing a coffee for someone in need can be much more than just giving someone a warm drink on a cold day. In tough times, the cost of a cup of coffee can be beyond the reach of many people. Being unable to afford this basic pleasure can further isolate people from the rest of society. With the help of suspended coffee, those less fortunate can order a coffee just like others around them.

When asked about the possibility that someone might misuse the scheme, Lisa says, "It's an honour system. I'm sure there are going to be times where a few coffees are given to people who could honestly afford to buy a coffee themselves ... but if they really don't need that coffee, they are coming in for something else. They are needy in some other way."

To participate, look for the 'suspended coffee supporter' logo when you visit your local café. And if your favourite café is not already involved, share the news about this wonderful project!

For a list of participating cafés, see www.suspendedcoffeemelbourne.com.au. Café owners are encouraged to become involved by emailing Lisa Currie: lisa@ripplekindness.org.

Janet Van Dijk

How they record
Suspended Coffees at

Bricey's Deli Cafe
Brice Avenue
Mooroolbark, Victoria



¹ Ripple Kindness Project for Schools is an ongoing kindness curriculum that promotes caring and compassion in primary schools to encourage positive school environments and reduce bullying. www.ripplekindness.org