Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0768

Dabrowski, Stasia

(1925 - 2020)

Born	19250101, Poland
Died	20200801, Canberra Australian Capital Territory Australia
Occupation	Charity worker

Summary

Stasia Dabrowski voluntarily ran a mobile soup kitchen from 1979, providing hot soup, bread, drinks, clothes and blankets to the homeless and needy of Canberra, and was dedicated to the welfare of young people. For nine years she raised the funds herself to purchase ingredients for the soup kitchen.

She was the 1996 Canberra Citizen of the Year, and the 1999 inaugural Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Senior Australian of the Year.

Stasia Dabrowski passed away at the age of 94 in August 2020.

Details

Stasia Dabrowski arrived in Canberra in 1964 and raised two children. Her second son became addicted to heroin and this led to her commitment to assisting young people in need. One of her son's friends, a recovered drug addict, asked her to help him set up a soup kitchen.

The mobile kitchen, run from the back of a van, was possibly the first of its kind in Australia. The friend married and left Canberra, and she continued to provide the service with the help of her son.

Every Friday night since 1979 she provided hot soup, bread, drinks, clothes and blankets to the homeless and needy of Canberra. On an average Friday night the soup kitchen provided several hundreds of loaves of bread and a similar quantity of soup to over 300 people in need. Dabrowski was particularly concerned with the welfare of young people and the lack of love and security many experience, but did not discriminate as to who she provided assistance to.

For nine years she raised the funds herself to purchase ingredients for the soup. In later years she received some Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Government funding and some businesses provided surplus food. The ACT Government 2000 Budget document, *Canberra: building social capital*, described Dabrowski as 'one particularly strong example' of 'many quiet achievers … volunteering their time and often their money to feed people who are homeless, unemployed or have drug problems'.

In 1996 Dabrowski was the Canberra Citizen of the Year and featured on the ABC's *Australian Story*. In 1999 she was honoured with the inaugural ACT Senior Australian of the Year, receiving the award for her twenty-year dedication to the homeless and needy on Canberra's streets. She was the 2017 ACT Local Hero of the Year, the same year that her likeness was captured in an artwork by Jenny Blake.

Stasia Dabrowski passed away in Canberra in August 2020. Her grandson is intent on keeping his grandmother's legacy alive, having taken over her soup kitchen in recent times. 'No matter what', he says, 'I want to continue on the legacy.'

Published resources

Book
Canberra : building social capital : Australian Capital Territory budget 2000, Australian Capital Territory Government, 2000

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Site Exhibition
From Lady Denman to Katy Gallagher: A Century of Women's Contributions to Canberra, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2013,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/ldkg

Author Details
Ros Russell

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