



Anglicare  
Victoria

# imagine

FAMILY • LOVE • HOPE

AUTUMN 1 2020

## Words from the CEO, Paul McDonald

Welcome to our Autumn edition of Imagine.

This year began with unusual intensity as the scale and impact of Victoria's bushfire season grew out of control in the regional communities. But to me, it was our generosity and sense of community that burnt the brightest.

From the heartfelt contributions to our Bushfire Appeal; to our Toy and Food Appeal; or Altitude Shift, our fundraiser for Foster Care; it seems the challenges we face as a community has ignited equal measures of compassion this season.

Against the backdrop of smoky sunrises, schooling has resumed. AV's many programs and activities, like the Homework Club in Corio, will also resume to support our young people re-engage with education and our appeal this season focuses on much-needed expansion of our TEACHaR program.

To all of our supporters and staff, thank you for all that you do. Together we have ensured that we will be there, supporting children, young people and families to overcome their challenges.



## special report



## Rebuilding, together

**"You couldn't sleep. You knew the fire was just down the road"**

**—AV Employee, Gippsland**

With many of our colleagues, carers, and clients of Gippsland and North-East Victoria in the path of this year's bushfires, AV has been active in delivering support to communities and fundraising for families under pressure. The contributions from donors and volunteers has been deeply heart-warming and reminds us that

hardship can be overcome when we face it together.

Despite the wide-ranging impacts and disruptions of these fires, AV was fortunate not to lose any buildings. Our staff in Gippsland were able to continue providing services to clients and carers, while also broadening this support to their effected colleagues and the wider community.

## this month's issues

**P2** • Rebuilding Together  
• TEACHaR

**P3** • TEACHaR (continued)  
• Homework Club  
• AV Toy and Food Appeal

In our initial emergency response, AV set up a senior coordination team to support the Gippsland team.

By the start of January, AV was on the ground re-directing the overflow of Christmas non-perishable foods to Bairnsdale. These supplies were allocated to members of the community who had been displaced which was warmly appreciated.

**The generosity of supporters new and long-standing was overwhelming with thousands of dollars raised in just 2 weeks. The funds raised will be used to provide unfunded services and support the community's longer term efforts in recovery, with a focus on supporting children, young people and families in their recovery, as well as helping to rebuild capacity and resilience in devastated communities.**

We are working closely with Bushfire Recovery Victoria, Government Departments and key stakeholders locally about utilising funds in responsive education programs for children and young people and their families who have been disrupted in their living situation and schooling. These programs help participants, young and old, to explore and respond to the impact of change, grief, and loss in everyday life.

Discussions with government have led to assessment, planning and long-term funding for appropriate assistance to our recovering communities. As part of a \$2 billion National Bushfire Recovery Fund, the Federal and State Government have announced funding for additional financial counselling services. This will allow AV to expand our services to meet increased demand for those affected by Bushfires. With extra staff and resources, AV can now deliver financial assistance for Victorians who have lost their homes or livelihoods.

AV's Gippsland Community Legal Service has also been actively collaborating with legal services across the state to coordinate support community members with legal matters as a result of the Bushfires. Across Victoria, over two hundred legal volunteers will contribute their time to bushfire-affected families.

**AV is dedicated in supporting our bushfire communities recover during this time of hardship. We would like to thank all donors, volunteers and supporters who have contributed to the cause.**



**As another school year begins, we hear from TEACHaR^ program worker Jo, who provides some helpful tips for our foster carers, and how they can ensure the transition into a new school year is seamless.**

**Be organised:**

"Make sure there is as little stress as possible every morning. Helpful tips include having the uniform laid out, bag packed, and lunchbox filled with food you know your child will like. Some carers write a little note to the child and leave it their lunchbox which is beautiful. This provides reassurance that the foster carer is thinking about them".

**Get comfortable with school surroundings:**

"If possible, let the child show you which classroom they will be in. Try the drink taps, make a meeting spot for the end of the day, and even have fun practicing to line up to go in to class. For primary age children, this will make the first day feel a bit more familiar.

For secondary age children, you would ensure that they know how to get their class, again, where to meet you, and if they need assistance on where to go".

**Make sure the foster child is familiar with their new teacher:**

"Ideally, foster children will have met their new teacher and have seen the class they will be in. This is something we insist for the clients we are working with. We then have a photo of the teacher



that the child puts somewhere – like the fridge – and it becomes a familiar face. If not, you can often find staff photos on their websites and you could have a look together.

If you haven't met the teacher before, you can email them with some tips on what supports your foster child the best".

### **Keep calm:**

"We have found foster children to be very aware of the emotional state of the adults around them. No matter how anxious we are feeling, we need to ensure that we appear calm and positive or else they may escalate to match your emotion".

^Transforming Education Achievement for Children and Young People in Home Based and Residential Care.

---

## **Homework Club**

**It's a place filled with youthful enthusiasm. A place buzzing with conversation. A place of teaching and learning. A room where smiles are frequent, and engagement is high.**

This is the Homework Club at St Andrew's Anglican Church, Corio.

Local Grade 5 – Year 12 students for whom English is an additional language, attend Homework Club after school once or twice a week, with the common purpose of improving their English literacy skills. Many are refugees, some born in refugee camps.

The Homework Club provides a safe space for students to achieve through positive engagement with others, and is a truly inspiring example of young people building strong relationships that will make a difference to the future of our community. The club is a local parish initiative which runs in partnership with Anglicare Victoria, Geelong Grammar and Kardinia International College. It has been operating since 2010 and still has a strong membership

*"It's inspirational seeing the energy between the young people learning and the confidence that grows between them." Jillian Eril Giddings is the Co-ordinator of the Homework Club.*  
*"We forget sometimes that these children are coming from traumatic circumstances, so their emotional well-being is our first priority, and the learning comes second."*

The most unique part of the club is the Mentorship element. High school students from either Geelong Grammar or Kardinia International College



voluntarily donate their time to assist in teaching English through literacy games, maths homework, and meaningful friendships. One Year 11 Kardinia student mentor has been coming along for over two years to support the club and explains that it is a learning journey for them as mentors too; "I've learnt so much about different learning styles. Everyone learns differently. I think that's what I'll take with me into my career beyond school from this experience."

Jillian says the key to the success of Homework Club is building confidence in the students. "Children's confidence levels grow when they form relationships, as it's then that they are able to open up. I can see that happening each week."

Written by Sarah Treacy, first published in [www.humansingeelong.com](http://www.humansingeelong.com) on 11th December 2019

---

## **AV's Annual Toy and Food Appeal**

AV's Toy and Food Appeal runs from October to December every year. The appeal promises every child in care a brand new toy for Christmas – a time that is most challenging for those who rely on organisations such as AV.

We would like to thank all the businesses, parishes, interest groups, school communities, allied health organisations, families and individuals who gave generously last year.

One mother explained that receiving a Christmas hamper meant she could put her money towards other things that the family needed. Elsewhere, a family and their friends donated 15 bikes, three of which were redistributed to a sibling group who needed them for the ride from home to town to catch the country school bus.

# Yes, I will help get children back to the classroom.

## Donation Option

**Please accept my single gift of:**

- ☐ **\$25** could cover the cost of school lunches for a week
- ☐ **\$50** could pay for textbooks for a student who is returning to school
- ☐ **\$80** could provide a school uniform for a child who has been out of formal education
- ☐ **\$125** could cover the cost of a TEACHaR session for a struggling young person
- ☐ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ as a donation of my choice

*Donations greater than \$2 are tax deductible.*

## Payment Details

**Cheque/Money Order enclosed**

(made payable to: ANGLICARE VICTORIA)

### My details are

Title:

Name:

Address:

Phone:

DOB:

Email:

My Parish:

**Please debit my credit card**

☐ VISA

☐ MASTERCARD

☐ AMEX

☐ DINERS

Card Number - - - - / - - - - / - - - - / - - - -

Expiry - - / - -

Card Holder's Name

Card Holder's Signature

- ☐ Please send me information about becoming a regular monthly giver
- ☐ Please send me information about leaving a Gift in my Will to Anglicare Victoria
- ☐ I have already left a Gift in my Will to Anglicare Victoria

**Please post to:**

Paul McDonald, CEO of Anglicare Victoria  
PO Box 45 Abbotsford VIC 3067

**Alternatively you can:**

Donate online at [www.anglicarevic.org.au](http://www.anglicarevic.org.au)  
Phone 1800 809 722 to donate

**THANK  
YOU**

We value your privacy. Please contact us on 03 9412 6136 to find out how we manage your personal information.



## Together, we can get children back to the classroom

We are urgently seeking donations for a remarkable program that can help vulnerable children return and stay in school.

The children we help have typically been traumatised from neglect, violence or abuse, and as a result, they struggle to cope at school.

The initiative your support will fund is called TEACHaR<sup>^</sup>. It is a proven and highly effective program where educators work directly with students to achieve better educational outcomes.

When he was just 18 months old, Jamie's\* biological mother was unable to care for him, so he and his siblings were placed in care. But things weren't easy in their house, and when Jamie was ten he was unable to remain in his foster placement and was ultimately placed in residential care. This unfortunately meant he could not live with his siblings. Jamie felt lost in uncertainty.

***This was a heart-breaking and unsettling event for a ten-year-old.***

Thankfully Andy\*, a TEACHaR educator, has been there with Jamie through the worst of it. He has been the one constant for Jamie as he transitioned between homes and schools.

*Jamie said "Andy has been the most helpful person along my journey. He helped me when I was most down and feeling very bad about myself. Without him I'd probably be down in 'who-knows-where'. I wouldn't have got this far without him."*

**TEACHaR is a proven initiative, but we still have long waiting lists of children just like Jamie, with insufficient funds to meet the urgent demand. Every additional day these children have to wait, is a further risk to their educational development.**

**Please donate today.**

<sup>^</sup>Transforming Education Achievement for Children and Young People in Home Based and Residential Care

\*This story is real, but names have been changed.