



# imagine

FAMILY • LOVE • HOPE

SPRING | 2020

COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

## Words from the CEO, Paul McDonald

Welcome to the 2020 Spring edition of *Imagine*.

It's been a memorable year. Memorable because of the COVID-19 pandemic our community finds ourselves in today, and the catastrophic bushfires that preceded it. However what makes this year truly remarkable are the incredible stories we have heard from our staff about the struggles, triumphs and courage of our families.

In this commemorative edition, we have put together a collection of how our clients have overcome the most profound challenges faced in many decades. I hope this edition provides an insight into the work of Anglicare Victoria each and every day.

I thank you for your ongoing support and encourage you to read our current appeal – we are raising funds for programs that support vulnerable families severely affected by the pandemic.



## We came to give

**At the request of the State Government, our response team bravely stepped up to support COVID-19 positive families in two of the public housing towers.**

One of our dedicated team members is Rodolfo, Program Manager for our Youth & Parish Partnerships program. Rodolfo grew up in the public housing around Kensington, so when he heard the towers were going into lockdown, he knew that he wanted to help right away.

## this month's issues

**P2** We came to give (cont.) • Breaking down the barriers to connection **P3** Mission House Donations • "That wasn't so scary"  
**P4** Providing a home • More than a quick fix **P5** Responding in the most difficult of times **P6** The right kind of care  
Close calls **P7** With her all the way **P8** Toy and Food Appeal • Christmas Cards

*"Some people looked really sick; some didn't understand they were positive, so we had to tell them which was challenging. One person was down to their last pill for psychiatric medicine; another was asthmatic and had run out of their Ventolin."*

*"Communities like this have helped shape me to become the person I am today. My family*

*came to Australia as asylum seekers. I was 4 when we arrived and lived in the public housing of Kensington till about age 25. I'm 34 now, and still connected to that community. The diverse people and culture that make up the communities of public housing have a lot to give to the wider community. They didn't come here to take. That's not what they want; they came to give back."*



## Breaking down the barriers to connection

**A 24-year-old named Antony\* was in the public housing towers with his younger brother and parents when they heard that they were going into immediate lockdown.**

*"Being told to stay at home, and not leave for two weeks was a shock for all of us."*

They usually do the shopping on a Sunday and it was Saturday, meaning they had little left on the shelf. Antony's parents didn't speak English and became very concerned. They kept asking, trying to understand what was going on. *"They were a little panicky, wondering what was going to happen."*

Antony speaks the best English in his family, so he took on the central role of communicating with service agencies. *"What helped the most was the daily check-ins from Anglicare Victoria & Co Health. To know that support structure was there if we needed something was helpful. If we were just in lockdown for two weeks with no communication, we would have become really frustrated."*

The family found it difficult receiving random grocery boxes with things they didn't need or know how to use. With the help of AV and other services, special dietary requests meant the grocery deliveries got better after the first couple of days. *"I'm still processing how we actually got through four weeks of isolation. I'm feeling very good; getting some sense of normality and control back in my life."*

\*Names have been changed to protect privacy





## Mission House donations

**Our emergency relief centre at Mission House on Napier Street in Fitzroy, continues to provide much needed food and other supports to vulnerable Victorians, during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

In lieu of food donations, you can donate online by visiting **[www.anglicarevic.org.au/donation](http://www.anglicarevic.org.au/donation)** and selecting 'Mission House' from the drop-down list, or by phoning 1800 809 722, and stating that you want your donation to go to Mission House. Thank you to those who have already contributed.

## “That wasn’t so scary”

**Each and every day, our remarkable staff worked hard during lockdown to ease the concerns of the more than 100 young people we care for in our residential units, to ensure they feel safe.**

When Jodie\*, an eight-year-old girl in Residential Care required a COVID-19 test, she went with two support staff to the drive-through testing centre. Jodie became deeply anxious as they waited in the car queue. The staff members offered to get the test done before her, and demonstrated that it was nothing to be afraid of – “It’s just a little tickle” – which was of great relief to her. Together, they listened to the nurse’s advice about isolation, and on the journey back home, they made a list of activities they could complete at home whilst awaiting the results.

\*Names have been changed to protect privacy





## Providing a home

Our young people in residential care sometimes go out for their birthday, but with restrictions in place, celebrations took place in the home. One residential care unit, celebrated three birthdays during the lockdowns. AV staff held 'iso-birthday parties' with balloons, banners and cakes. They also enjoyed their favourite food for lunch and dinner to mark the occasions. With all of the residents involved, our staff said "it brought the home closer together; it felt like a big family".



## More than a quick fix

**Theresa\*, a mother of two, enrolled at university to re-train for her dream career.**

When her husband became unwell, she had to take on a part-time job. When COVID-19 hit, both her work and the university closed. The household expenses began to pile up while the couple struggled with homeschooling. When Theresa arrived at AV's emergency relief centre, she asked for some groceries to support her family. What she didn't expect to find was financial support, referrals to mental health support, and the comfort of knowing that she was not alone.

\*Names have been changed to protect privacy





## Responding in the most difficult of times

When Karen\* could no longer remain in the family home, her partner Geoff\* had to step up and become the sole parent of their four children – all of whom were struggling with school attendance. Geoff didn't feel capable of parenting alone. AV's Rapid Response team was called in, but due to COVID-19, all support to Geoff had to be delivered via video and phone calls. He was provided with parent training

videos where he learnt about setting boundaries, communication and about what children may need. After weeks of support, the family is doing much better. Geoff is feeling more confident, and the children are feeling safer now that their home is less chaotic. Geoff continues to attend online support groups and training provided by AV.

\*Names have been changed to protect privacy





## The right kind of care

**Akifa\* and her four children arrived in Victoria as refugees from Africa.**

Her oldest son Kazim\* got into trouble and found himself referred to Anglicare Victoria from Youth Justice. During the pandemic, a number of the family members tested positive for COVID-19 making support particularly difficult.

The family were delivered urgent food supplies by an emergency relief agency, but they didn't know what it was or how to cook it. So as well as phone support and video calls, our team dropped off a selection of culturally appropriate groceries to help keep the family going while times were especially tough.

\*Names have been changed to protect privacy



## Close calls

**Connie\*, a foster parent, could not thank AV enough for their support when the fire almost took her home in North-Eastern Victoria during the bushfire season.**

She was required to remain in the house with the children as the threat was so severe it was too late to leave. An AV staff member supported Connie and the children in her care closely, with phone calls every hour. When the fires cleared, AV staff arranged delivery of necessary supplies. Connie expressed gratitude through her exhaustion, but the care didn't stop there. During the pandemic, AV staff delivered pizza, games and puzzles to the house to keep their spirits high and the children busy.

\*Names have been changed to protect privacy



## With her all the way

**For Janine\*, it has been a year of repeated trauma – first bushfires, then the pandemic.**

When the 17-year-old returned to her family home the day after the fires in January, everything she owned had been turned to ash. Stricken by fear and loss, and with her family thrown into turmoil, she began falling behind in her VCE school work.

Jenny, an Education Specialist with the AV TEACHaR<sup>^</sup> program, was a former principal with a strong connection with the community near Janine. The two met when Jenny was invited to meet some of the most affected students following the destruction of several schools in the area. They talked about what had been going on and agreed to meet up regularly to keep Janine on track with her English requirements.

The two worked for many weeks, using online resources and created a study plan.

Together they made sense of the course requirements – and what was happening in Janine's family. Janine started smiling a bit more.

Then the pandemic hit. Suddenly, education moved online. Again, Janine found herself thrown into uncertainty and confusion, but Jenny was still by her side as a teacher and mentor, helping her to stay grounded and focused.

One morning, Jenny picked up the phone and called Janine for one of their regular catch-ups. Before she could even begin the session, Janine interrupted, "I've got this, Jenny; I can do this on my own. I'm feeling pretty good now". In just six months, the two had journeyed through the trauma and confusion to find a place of independence and optimism.

\*Names have been changed to protect privacy

<sup>^</sup>Transforming Educational Achievement of Children At Risk





**This year, the Toy and Food appeal will be online. To contribute to our annual appeal please consider a financial donation. To give to this valuable cause, you can either donate online or call us directly on 1800 809 722.**

If you choose to donate online, you can do so at [www.anglicarevic.org.au/donation](http://www.anglicarevic.org.au/donation) and select either 'Toys' or 'Food/ER' from the drop-down list.

If you choose to call us to make a donation, please quote either 'Toys' or 'Food/ER' over the phone.

**Thank you for your support during these uncertain times.**

---

**It is with regret that we announce that there will not be any Christmas cards for sale this year.**

This is due to the COVID-19 pandemic and circumstances beyond our control. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.







## Please help Anglicare Victoria to assist vulnerable families get through this pandemic

As Victorians find themselves in a tighter lockdown, for many families there is no end in sight. Instead, they face a long road of uncertainty with the ever-present risks of homelessness, mental health issues, domestic violence and the breakdown of their family.

**With just an hour of notice *Rashida\**, a single mother, was in lockdown with her two young children. She could not leave the public housing complex for urgent supplies.**

**"We ran out of food and personal items in the first few days. My boys have specific dietary requirements, and I couldn't get the things we needed. Food was left outside at the door, but we couldn't use it – we only eat halal food. I kept calling all the numbers to get help, but most services only work until 5 pm".**

*"We had to work very quickly to assess and prioritise needs, establish connections with the various services on the ground and set up our processes to provide seamless support. In addition to responding to the practical needs of the residents, our teams provided emotional and psychological support, including helping some residents manage the anxiety and trauma-related responses to the lockdown"* – Yvette, AV's Team Leader, COVID-19 Towers Response Team.

**"I felt like we had a friend. These services sometimes lost the human connection, which is why the support that you provided has meant so much".**

**With your help, we can reach more people in our community to ensure they have adequate support for mental health, family violence, and education that they so urgently need. Please donate today.**

\* Name has been changed to protect privacy

# Yes, I will help Anglicare Victoria to assist vulnerable families get through this pandemic.

## Donation Option

**Please accept my single gift of:**

☐

\$20

☐

\$35

☐

\$50

☐

\$75

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ 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

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

Expiry - - / - -

Card Holder's Name

Card Holder's Signature

☐

Please send me information about becoming a regular 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.