

Inspire

quarterly newsletter for school community



AUTUMN | 2021

connecting our
community

Welcome to our Autumn edition of Inspire.

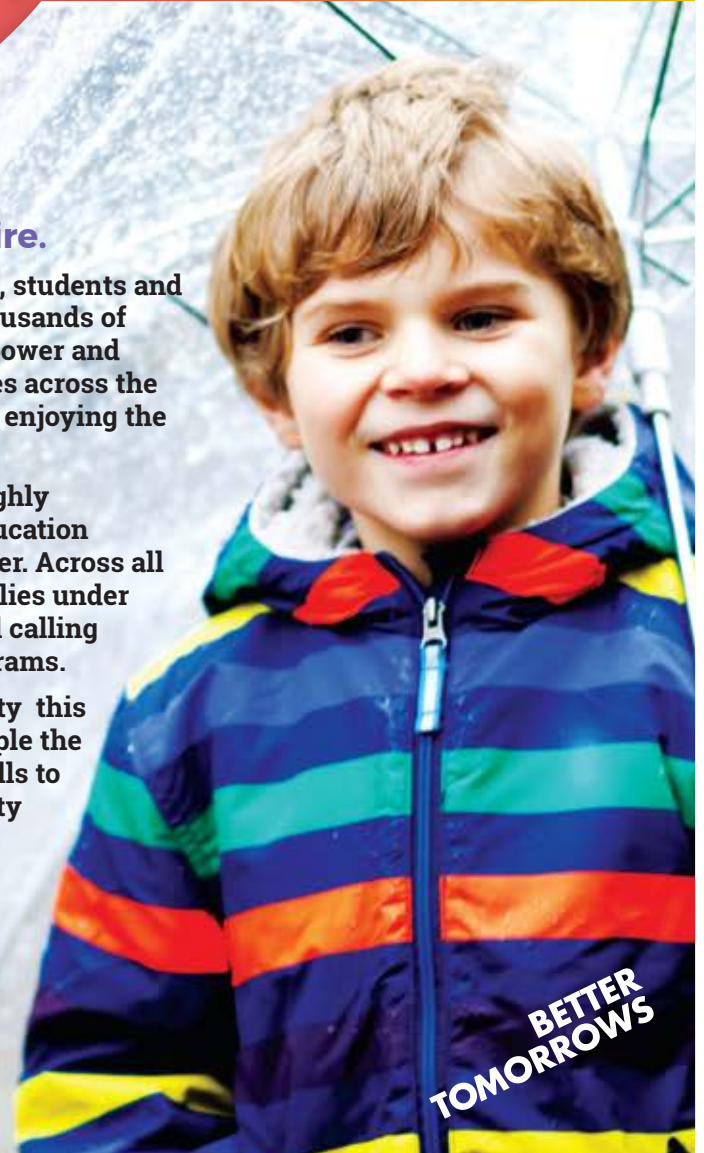
I hope your first school term has gone well as families, students and staff adjust to the return of relative normality. The thousands of Anglicare Victoria (AV) support staff who work to empower and support vulnerable children, young people and families across the state are now well and truly back on the front line and enjoying the return of face-to-face interactions.

Thanks to supporters of schools 2020 ended with a highly successful Toy and Food Appeal and our first-ever Education Awards. The impacts of 2020 are, however, far from over. Across all programs, our teams are reporting an increase in families under pressure. In response, we recently launched an appeal calling for urgent donations towards our family-centred programs.

We are delighted to be supporting Pens Against Poverty this year, a competition that gives children and young people the opportunity to use their voice and creative writing skills to heighten their awareness and understanding of poverty and social issues.

Thank you for your continued support as we make a real and lasting impact on the lives of Victoria's vulnerable children and families.

Paul McDonald
Chief Executive Officer
Anglicare Victoria



A REQUEST FOR SUPPORT

Help Victorian families who are at breaking point

Your support today will help them get back on their feet.

Some families lost their income, some have lost their businesses, and some families have buckled under the strain of COVID-19 and fallen apart. After a tough year, the financial and emotional pressure on these families is taking its toll.

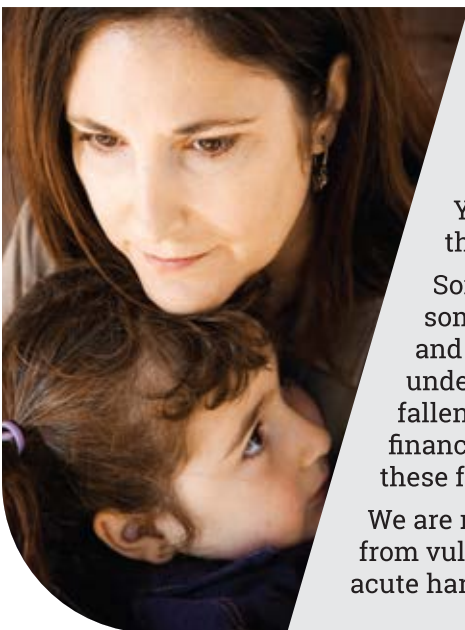
We are receiving more calls than ever from vulnerable people experiencing acute hardship and stress, and

JobKeeper and JobSeeker supplements have come to an end this March.

Your donation will ensure we are there to assist an unprecedented number of families and individuals in desperate need with financial counselling, budgeting, emergency grants and family support.

Read our heart-warming story of Isabelle* and how her family got back on track with the help of our financial counselling team.

* Names have been changed to protect privacy





Toy and Food Appeal

Anglicare Victoria's Annual Toy and Food Appeal was especially challenging this year, but the determination of our teams and donors to deliver Christmas joy to every child in care shone through. We thank all our schools and donors for their generosity, ensuring the year ended on a high.

Thanks to the Victorian Government's Working for Victoria initiative, extra community support workers were available to assist in the lengthy efforts to collect, sanitise, package and deliver hundreds of toys and hampers across vast distances while under the health restrictions. These additional staff members thoroughly enjoyed working on a project that contributes to making life a little brighter for children, parents and carers.

Kerri Miles, one of our community support workers, said, "They were so appreciative; some families acknowledged this would not have happened without the donations from some wonderful people and companies. It makes you realise there are so many caring, kind and thoughtful people in this world".

One young girl who received a Christmas present was particularly delighted when she found out her new toy – a doll – had the same long black ponytails, pretty pink outfit and skin colour as her. Her case manager Nic said, "She was over the moon. To see it was bizarre. She and the doll looked like twins!" Her family were very appreciative and said she now takes the doll to kinder, and it has supported her in interacting with other children and overcoming her social anxiety.

To register your school's interest in the 2021 Toy and Food Appeal, please contact Erin Hokin, **Schools Relationship Manager**, on (03) 9412 6182 or email erin.hokin@anglicarevic.org.au



Community Engagement Offering – Pen's Against Poverty

We are thrilled to announce that Anglicare Victoria is participating in the 2021 Pens Against Poverty schools writing competition involving six new partner organisations across Australia.

We would like to invite your school to participate in 2021 to help us empower young Australians to use their voice to create change.

Pens Against Poverty is a unique writing competition for school students that encourages students to use their creative writing skills to heighten their awareness and understanding of poverty, homelessness and other social issues in Australia. All school students from Years 3-10 are invited to write short stories and poems addressing the 2021 Pens Against Poverty theme, 'Time for Change'.

The competition is free, and the closing date is Friday, 3rd September, with the winners announced at an awards ceremony during Anti-Poverty Week (17-23 October 2021).

Winning writers will be published online and have a chance to win amazing prizes donated by our key sponsors. Competition entries are judged by award-winning Australian authors Jackie French OAM and John Foulcher.

Further information about the competition is available at the Pens Against Poverty website www.pensagainstpoverty.org, where entries can be uploaded directly.

If your school would like to participate, please contact Erin Hokin, **Schools Relationship Manager**, on (03) 9412 6182 or email erin.hokin@anglicarevic.org.au



Education AWARDS

Late into 2020, AV held our inaugural Education Awards. The annual event recognises students in our care from Prep to Year 12 who demonstrate sustained and exceptional educational outcomes, improved engagement in schooling and overcome significant personal challenges.

The event received 58 nominations for education achievement across residential units, foster care, kinship care, therapeutic care packages, and COMPASS. Held as an online event, it was wonderful to see all our primary, secondary school children and young people gather around the screen and celebrate their achievements.

Each of the children attending was delivered a gift pack to open during the event. Those shortlisted for awards, or winners of awards, received a certificate and the winners received a trophy to sit proudly in their room. The inaugural Stephen Newton Scholarship was also awarded to our young people in Out-of-Home Care going on to do Year 12. They each received \$2000.00 towards school costs. We were delighted to award 12 recipients in the first year of this scholarship and wish them well for the year.

EDUCATION AWARD ENTRY

Jason* had significant personal challenges with school engagement and learning. He experienced anxiety and found it difficult to focus in class. When AV staff first met Jason, he hadn't been in school for over a year.

Working with AV's Kinship foster program and TEACHaR (AV's one-on-one school support program), he has since demonstrated significant improvement in school engagement and is now fully immersed within the school community.

He is striving and working hard to finish school and thinking about his next steps.

It was an enormous effort for Jason to step back into school. His confidence in the way he began to express himself and speak fondly of being at school was a credit to him and his teachers as well as the measures put in place to support him. Support staff said that Jason is "a pleasure to teach, and he is always willing to work". He has shown his resilience in a very tough year and continues to work on overcoming his anxiety.

* Names have been changed to protect privacy



THANK YOU TO CAREY GRAMMAR STUDENTS

Thank you to the primary school students of Carey Grammar. The students made a heart shape of non-perishable food on their basketball court at Easter time. Contributions by the students were kindly donated to Homeless Support Program at St Marks.

Student Experiences with Anglicare Victoria

Partner with AV and foster community contribution and a sense of citizenship amongst students.

With our services covering foster and residential care, homelessness, parenting and family services, financial and legal services, social welfare and many others, we work with schools to develop rich developmental opportunities in social justice.

AV can deliver social justice presentations, partner with schools on third party events, provide volunteering opportunities and more. We are also happy to tailor opportunities for individual schools to meet Victorian curriculum requirements post-COVID-19.

Please contact Erin Hokin who is Anglicare Victoria' **Schools Relationship Manager on (03) 9412 6182 or email erin.hokin@anglicarevic.org.au** for further information on any of the stories featured in this newsletter or to discuss ideas or opportunities that you may have for your school.