

Our People, Our Stories

Autumn 2024



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Welcome

to the latest edition of
Our People, Our Stories.

Over the festive period we saw firsthand that miracles can happen when people come together to help those in need, with the fantastic donations of toys, cash and food we received here at Anglicare Victoria to our annual Toy Appeal. Santa was really happy with what he had to distribute across our families!

Now that we are in the new year we have new challenges, and new opportunities, to make a positive impact on the lives of the children, young people and families we look after here at Anglicare Victoria.

In this issue of Our People, Our Stories, we again share with you some incredible stories of hope, courage, and perseverance from our staff, our volunteers and the wonderful people in our community.

Stories about our foster care work, our family work and a new project brought about by donor and philanthropist Mary Toniolo with 'Fun in the Sun'!

You'll read how Melbourne Grammar School is encouraging students to give back to the community by volunteering with our homeless support team.

And we're shining the spotlight on Nassou, a remarkable young woman from very challenging beginnings who has thrived in her education after receiving support from our Anglicare Victoria TEACHaR program, and who continues to excel in all areas of her life.

You'll also learn about the fantastic work that volunteers from Parishes are doing on the front line across Victoria in our emergency relief centres. These services are a testament to the enduring commitment of parishes to support those in need.

I hope you enjoy reading about the wonderful outcomes you have helped us achieve over the last few months.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P McDonald". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Paul McDonald
CEO Anglicare Victoria



The key to a brighter future

18-year-old Nassou spent her high school years living in foster care and moved into independent housing halfway through Year 12. She joined Anglicare Victoria's TEACHaR program because bullying at school was affecting her self-confidence.

"Nassou is a lovely, warm, and intelligent girl," said Annie, her case worker. "She had fond childhood memories of her grandparent's farm in the Ivory Coast and told me her dream was to have a farm of her own someday."

With support from her TEACHaR education specialist, Julia, Nassou excelled at school despite the challenges she faced. In October 2023, she was recognised at our Education Awards for her achievements in her VCAL Agriculture studies. She's now studying mechanics at TAFE so that in the future she'll be able to repair the equipment on her farm.

"Nassou is a truly spectacular young woman," said Annie. "Despite facing great obstacles, she continues to develop and grow, and her success is a testament to her perseverance and determination to do well."

Last year, 35 TEACHaR education specialists worked with 327 remarkable young people. With their support, 80 per cent of these students improved their reading and writing, and 82 per cent improved in maths – putting them on the path to a bright and successful future.

The generosity of our donors has enabled Anglicare Victoria to bring innovative programs like TEACHaR to life, so young people like Nassou can achieve their dreams.

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"As a teenager you go through a lot of stuff and it's easy to give up. I wish more kids could get support from a program like TEACHaR." – Nassou, TEACHaR participant
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**Watch
Nassou's
video here**

Service & Contribution



Melbourne Grammar School's dedication to meaningful service

Melbourne Grammar School (MGS) prioritises "Service & Contribution" as a core value, encouraging students to seek a fulfilling life through meaning, purpose, kindness, and achievement.

Mark Horsford, Head of Service Learning, has been closely collaborating with Anglicare Victoria since assuming his role in 2018. His vision for the school is grounded in the belief that "we flourish as individuals when we're using our gifts for the benefit of others".

A few years ago, Mark, alongside Anthony Taranto (Head of Bruce House at MGS) set up a rotation of eager student volunteers at our breakfast program in Melbourne's inner city, to help feed the homeless.

In 2023, Ali McWhirter (Head of Ross House) wished to expand the school's involvement to include Ross House students for the first time.

Working closely with Anglicare Victoria's Homeless Support Team, Ali wanted students to have a holistic philanthropic approach: giving of time (serving the breakfast), provisions (bringing fresh food) and actively fundraising at the school, helping ensure the program's longevity.

Additionally, Bruce House donated an impressive 400 toys and 1,600 food and household items to our Toy Appeal last year. This multi-faceted, year-round engagement showcases Melbourne Grammar School's generosity and dedication to meaningful service.

Is your school wanting to plan for our next generation of philanthropists?

We can arrange presentations and hands-on experiences to learn about food insecurity and homelessness. Penny Mitchell, our Relationship Manager - Partnerships, can be contacted on 0447 174 261 or via email at partnerships@anglicarevic.org.au.



Helping change Harry's life

Emergency Relief

When Harry* first visited Anglicare Victoria's Mission House he was in severe financial hardship and struggling to even put food on the table. He had cut back on his working hours due to illness, and as a result had lost most of his income.

After paying his rent and covering the rising costs of living, Harry was in the red each fortnight - before he could even think about making a start on repaying his debts. His bills were piling up and the stress was contributing to his poor health.

At Mission House, Harry was able to access food and vouchers as well as an appointment with one of our financial counsellors, James.

James helped Harry go through his budget and list his debts and expenses. He also advocated on Harry's behalf with his creditors and was able to have more than \$18,000 in debts waived, which lifted a huge amount of stress from Harry's shoulders.

Thanks to donations of cash, food, and toys from our supporters, Anglicare Victoria's 17 emergency relief centres were able to support more than 7500 clients last year. From food hampers and pharmacy vouchers to birthday and Christmas gifts for the kids, your donations put a smile on the face of vulnerable Victorians in their time of need.

*Names have been changed to protect privacy.

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"Thank you for all your support, it has been life changer."

- Harry, Emergency Relief client





A partnership in caring

Last year, Anglicare Victoria's Resource Management Specialist Paul Rigg, initiated discussions between iCare Staffing and Penny Mitchell, our Relationship Manager - Partnerships, to explore ways in which the two organisations might further collaborate.

While iCare Staffing already partner with us to provide experienced, passionate, and hard-working youth workers for our out-of-home care services, iCare's General Manager, Lauren Jansink, wanted to do more. Lauren's vision was to involve iCare's office support team and senior management by giving them the chance to also engage and contribute meaningfully to Anglicare Victoria's community.

The collaboration swiftly materialised! Led by Lauren, staff volunteered at our homeless breakfast program, demonstrating an ongoing commitment throughout the year which has continued in 2024.

iCare also became our first major sponsor to help provide much needed funds for our annual Toy Appeal, and the team volunteered in our Toy Store, taking inventory, sorting donated gifts and stacking shelves ready for distribution across Victoria. iCare's team earned the highest praise from our Volunteer Coordinator as the most hard-working, efficient and dedicated group, setting a very high standard for others to follow!

Would your business like to partner with Anglicare Victoria?

Penny Mitchell, our Relationship Manager - Partnerships, would love to hear from you and develop a plan with your team to collaborate with Anglicare Victoria throughout the year.



Volunteer



Workplace Giving



Sponsor



Donate

NB: Volunteering opportunities are available every week of the year but can only accommodate small numbers of people at any one time. Talk to Penny about all ways you can support our programs. Penny can be contacted on 0447 174 261 or via email at partnerships@anglicarevic.org.au.

Building solid foundations

Fostering Better Tomorrows



In 2022-23, Anglicare Victoria supported more than 1600 children in out-of-home care, providing safe and loving homes for vulnerable children – children like Jordan*.

Jordan was just 10 weeks old when he joined Amy, her husband John and their three biological children, aged 15, 12, and nine, in their Bendigo home.

For primary school teacher Amy, becoming a foster carer was a way to make an impact outside of the classroom.

“As a teacher, you see kids who have a lot going on at home,” she said. “We thought we could help a child build that solid foundation by providing a safe place to stay.”

Amy’s older children help with giving Jordan his bottles and getting him dressed. And of course, they all love to give him cuddles!

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“It’s really opened our kids’ eyes to the importance of helping other people and how lucky we are in our family. Not all kids have the start like they have.” – Amy, foster carer

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“It’s really fulfilling for us to know that we’ve given them all the love and support to reach their milestones, such as rolling over, starting solids, and all these things that build those positive pathways in their brain,” she said.

“One of the most amazing things you’ll ever do is to bring up this little person, and it’s wonderful for us to be able to be a safe place while that work is occurring,” said Amy.



Learn more about foster care here



*Names have been changed to protect privacy.

Meet Leonie Bird

Gift in Wills Ambassador

Leonie Bird's Anglican faith is important to her. It is the foundation that influences how she chooses to live her life, ever mindful of those for whom we should care. "My faith guides me to leave a legacy for children and families in need," she says.

As Leonie knows, Anglicare Victoria cares for children and families who are at risk. Children who are traumatised by domestic violence and the families who live in the margins need support. "That mission resonates very strongly with me. My way of ensuring Anglicare Victoria's work in the future is assured is to leave a bequest to Anglicare Victoria in my Will."



"I reflected upon and clearly expressed my personal wishes and let my family know of those wishes. A bequest to Anglicare Victoria in my will, ensures that my faith journey continues as a legacy that continues into the future."

Leonie's role as Gift in Wills Ambassador is one of service. Her heartfelt intention is to encourage others to consider including Anglicare Victoria in their own estate plans.

"Including a charitable gift in your Will is one of the ultimate expressions of generosity." – Leonie Bird, Gift in Wills Ambassador

If you have already or are considering including Anglicare Victoria in your estate plans, we'd love to have an opportunity to thank you for your commitment and kindness.

Please visit our website OR call our Gift in Wills team on 03 9412 6020.



Scan the QR code to see highlights of our most recent Friends of AV event.



Parenting with positivity

Empowering Families

When our family services team met Jack*, he'd recently been released from prison and had been granted custody of his two-year-old daughter, Emily*. The pair were living in a small rural town in a converted garden shed, and Jack hadn't any experience parenting a child.

Jack had experienced a traumatic childhood himself and was reluctant to accept support, but Renee*, an experienced case worker, was able to build up a positive relationship with him. Renee gained Jack's trust and began working with him to develop an action plan to keep Emily in his care.

She advocated for support from a housing service, which meant Jack and Emily were able to move out of the shed and into a more suitable property. As they became settled in their new home, Renee worked with Jack to implement good routines and supported him to enrol Emily into a local preschool.

Jack has come a long way on his parenting journey. He's now a confident and capable parent, and Emily is happy and healthy. The family has developed strong connections to their local community and they no longer need intensive support from family services.

Last year, Anglicare Victoria's family services teams worked with 3470 families, helping them navigate the toughest time of their lives. With our support, 95 per cent of children at risk were able to continue living safely with their family.

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"It's been great to see how far Jack has come and how well he is managing Emily's needs after taking her into his care." – Renee, family services case worker
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*Names have been changed to protect privacy.

Faith in action

An enduring commitment

Parish Partnerships are at the heart and soul of 17 Anglicare Victoria Emergency Relief programs across Victoria. We are proud to work alongside parishes, continuing the valued work of parishioners who historically supported those in need for well over a century.

Traditionally, those in need have been families where the main source of income is government payments or pensions and are living on the poverty line relying on us to help make ends meet. Now, due to the cost-of-living more families, including those with employment, are coming to us for help to put food on the table.

Over 300 volunteers work on the frontline in our Emergency Relief programs, and most of these wonderful people are linked directly to Anglican parishes. Chris de Paiva, Program Manager, Diocese and Parish Partnerships says ‘volunteers involved in supporting our relief programs have a deep and valuable understanding of the needs of their local community. Every day, they demonstrate faith in action, doing the hard work on the ground to support vulnerable people. One of the hardest things to do is to reach out and ask for help. The volunteers make it a little easier for people to do that’.

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“It is our honour to continue the commitment of those parishes who began this type of service to the community. Without these longstanding Parish Partnerships, many in the community would not get the support they need it when they need it most”.

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Image - Chris de Paiva, Program Manager Diocesan and Parish Partnerships and Denis Long, volunteer receiving Parish donations for Mission House

Emergency Relief is one example of Parish Partnerships programs where people can get involved and support vulnerable members of our community. If you would like to find out more about these programs and volunteering opportunities, please contact www.anglicarevic.org.au or call 1800 809 722

Community in action

Fun in the Sun



Image - Councillor Sarah Race, Mornington Peninsula Shire, Sue Sealey, Anglicare Victoria, Mary Toniolo, Fun in the Sun and Kirsty Simpson, Anglicare Victoria

Mary Toniolo approached Anglicare Victoria last year with the aim of helping us provide holiday accommodation to children and families during the summer period.

Mary, a Melbourne philanthropist and passionate supporter of vulnerable children, wanted to enable children and families to experience a beachside holiday to provide much needed respite and break from some of the challenges our families face.

With the support of local businesses and friends in the Mornington Peninsula area, Mary raised enough funds to provide holiday accommodation to eight families – many of whom had not experienced a beachside holiday in the past.

Families have truly appreciated the opportunity to bond and enjoy a break, provided by the generosity of Mary and her group 'Fun in the Sun'.

"This place is sensational! So close to the beach, it's so beautiful and the boys are having the best time ever," said Mandy*, who stayed with her family over the holidays. "The house and the fact that everything is here, including toiletries to pots and pans, this place is the best!"

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"We have made some fabulous memories together and really consolidated our family connection. We feel very fortunate and are just so grateful for all of this. Thank you just doesn't seem enough but, thank you, from the bottom of our hearts."

– Vanessa* Brian* Isabella* Jaxon* Ari* and Brendon*

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We look forward to working with 'Fun in the Sun' in the future. www.funinthesun.au

*Names have been changed to protect privacy.

Get Involved for Better Tomorrows

In order to provide a range of support services to help disadvantaged Victorians to rise above their difficulties, we rely on the generosity of compassionate Victorians..

Thanks to the various skills, efforts and donations of our volunteers and supporters, we're able to make significant change in the lives of vulnerable Victorians.

Your support can really make a difference.



Scan the QR code to find out how you can get involved and lend your support.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIALS



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