

# Our People, Our Stories

Spring 2024





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## Welcome to the latest edition of **Our People, Our Stories.**

Welcome to the latest edition of Our People, Our Stories – a magazine dedicated to showcasing the strength and resilience of the children, young people, and families we work with here at Anglicare Victoria.

In this issue you'll read about the unique challenges – and rewards – that come with fostering teenagers, and how student Archer\* gained the confidence to succeed at school thanks to the TEACHaR team.

You'll hear about single mum Lisa\* and her boys, who are healing from the trauma of family violence with the help of our family services staff, as well as 80-year-old Rosie\*, a retired teacher who came to us for emergency relief when she ran out of food.

You'll also meet the newest member of our fundraising team, Loretta Mannix-Fell, and learn about one of our remarkable supporters, Rosemary Homewood, and her passion for women's rights.

The good news stories in this magazine wouldn't be possible without your kindness and generosity. Every time you make a donation, drop off food to one of our emergency relief pantries, or spread the word about our work on social media, or to family and friends, you're ensuring the positive outcomes you read in this edition will continue.

Thank you for helping us 'work for better' for your children, young people and families at Anglicare Victoria.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P McDonald".

Paul McDonald  
CEO Anglicare Victoria

\*Names have been changed to protect privacy

# TEACHaR

## Giving Archer the confidence to kick goals at school

When Archer\* joined Anglicare Victoria's TEACHaR program he was struggling with his handwriting, maths and frequently refused to go to school. When he did attend he often misbehaved and wouldn't participate in activities.

Archer and his mum had been through a lot. They were experiencing ongoing housing insecurity and had been exposed to family violence. Archer had been diagnosed with ASD, ADHD, depression, and anxiety.

Archer's TEACHaR Education Specialist, Bridgette, developed a personalised education plan for him using learning activities that incorporated his love of video games, keeping him engaged and motivated. She also helped Archer's mum learn strategies to encourage his attendance and support his mental health.



With Bridgette's help Archer set himself some fantastic goals such as, "I will improve my learning" and "I will work on becoming smarter".

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**"I will try my best! I will feel proud to give it a go!" – TEACHaR participant, Archer**

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Now, Archer has a positive attitude towards his tasks and has developed resilience. When he's feeling stuck or confused, he reminds himself: "I am going to give this a go!"

Last year, our 35 TEACHaR Education Specialists supported 327 young people like Archer to engage with their education, improving their confidence and learning abilities – and putting them on the path to better tomorrows.

Archer has now moved to a new primary school in a town where he and his mum have stable accommodation. He attends school regularly and is making strong connections in his community.

"Archer is a valued member of our school and we're very happy that he's here with us," said his new school principal.



**TEACHaR**  
TRANSFORMING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF CHILDREN AT RISK





# Our quiet heroes

## Old Orchard Primary School

We're thrilled to shine a spotlight on Old Orchard Primary School in Blackburn North who, once again, have stepped up to support kids and families in our care this winter. The whole school came together to do their bit to take hunger off the table for vulnerable Victorians, collecting canned goods and non-perishable food items as part of our FoodBoost initiative.

Old Orchard Primary School is well known for its caring, community-minded approach, welcoming about 460 students from all walks of life to offer a rich and varied curriculum. One of the things we love most about Old Orchard is that "students are encouraged to develop a broad social conscience and a sense of community," helping them grow into confident, well-rounded, and respectful young people. They are the changemakers of our future!

Last year, Old Orchard students blew us away by donating 175 gifts and toys at Christmas. Considering the size of the school, that's a huge effort! Their generosity brought so much joy to so many kids in out-of-home care – another example of their commitment to giving back to the community and making a positive impact.

We're incredibly grateful to the students, dedicated staff, and supportive parents at Old Orchard Primary School. You're awesome. A special shout out also to Sheree Knight and the administration team for their ever-quick action to spread the word and share our appeals in their weekly newsletters. More often than not, it's those behind the scenes in our school offices that are the quiet heroes of our stories. Your hard work and kindness has been truly inspiring. Together, we're making a big difference.

**Keep up the fantastic work!**





## Relief for Rosie when she needed it most

Retired teacher Rosie\* had been drinking milk for dinner because she couldn't afford food before she came to one of Anglicare Victoria's emergency relief centres.

After paying her mortgage, the 80-year-old had just \$160 a fortnight left over for bills, food, and other expenses. It simply wasn't enough. Then, Rosie's hot water system broke, and she couldn't afford to fix it. By the time we met her, she'd had no hot water for over a month.

"It's very stressful," Rosie said. "I try to manage as good as I can. I take it step-by-step."

Thankfully, our emergency relief team was able to help Rosie with food parcels, vouchers, and assistance with her medication. They also introduced her to one of our financial counsellors to help negotiate a hardship arrangement and reduce the payments on her mortgage.

Every day, vulnerable people just like Rosie attend our 16 emergency relief centres. Some need help with bills or come to collect a food parcel.

Others have run out of nappies or formula, or are struggling to afford birthday gifts for their kids.

Last year, we assisted almost 8,000 people with food, medication, and vouchers, and as the cost of living continues to soar this number is expected to increase. Anglicare Victoria relies on the generosity of our donors to keep our food pantries stocked, so people like Rosie can rely on us in their time of need.

For Rosie, the relief she feels knowing there is food in her cupboard is priceless.

"I become myself again," she said.

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**"I have to juggle to pay one thing but not another. It's such a weight that sits on your shoulder."**

**– Emergency relief client, Rosie**

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# Joining the race towards better tomorrows



The Melbourne Racing Club (MRC) Foundation supports diverse programs and initiatives, creating a positive, meaningful and lasting impact within local communities. The Foundation aims to “make the world a better place”, sharing our vision of better tomorrows.

Our relationship began when Sarah Townsend, MRC’s General Manager of Organisational Development, reached out in a heartfelt enquiry about our Toy Appeal, wanting to check which age group and types of gifts were most needed. Their generous donation of near 100 toys focused on our older kids who often miss out at Christmas time and was hand-delivered by MRC Foundation staff, who took to their role of ‘AV Elves’ with fun and sincerity.

In addition to toys and gifts, MRC Foundation Manager Daniel Clohesy, pictured above, with Penny Mitchell, Partnerships Relationship Manager surprised us with a very generous donation to the Toy Appeal - the icing on our Christmas cake!

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**“It was overwhelming to think how many kids ... would now get to wake on Christmas Day with a gift that would bring them joy and a sense that someone out there cares.**

**- Daniel Clohesy, MRC Foundation Manager**

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## Would your business like to partner with Anglicare Victoria?

Penny Mitchell, our Partnerships Relationship Manager, 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](mailto:partnerships@anglicarevic.org.au).

# Supporting teens in need

## Fostering better tomorrows



As a dad of three sons, and the assistant principal of his local high school, Dan Sullivan knows kids – especially teenagers – need the right support to thrive.

Dan and his wife Kim became foster carers in 2020. Since then, they've been offering emergency and respite placements to young people in need. Teenager Tom\* stays with them every third or fourth weekend. Dan says he's easily slipped into the flow of every day life in their household.

"The boys all have a fair bit in common and Tom feels like family. They'll wrestle, play basketball, climb things, and they all like computer games," Dan said.

"What you see when you work in schools is that some kids don't have a lot of solid adult connections in their life," said Dan. "We're privileged to be a part of a web of supports Tom can ask for advice or go to for help."

Anglicare Victoria's foster carers welcomed more than 880 young people into their homes and hearts last year.

The generosity of our donors means that carers like Dan and Kim can receive funding to help them provide activities and experiences for their foster kids, through our Better Tomorrows program, so they can make precious memories together and build strong, lasting relationships that transform all their lives.

"For us, it really does feel like Tom is going to be part of our family for his whole life. Just like you stay in touch with your brothers and sisters, I'm sure that's what it's going to be like for Tom and my boys," Dan said.

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**"Fostering is this simple thing that you can do which has a big impact on someone's life." - Dan, foster carer**  
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\*Names have been changed to protect privacy



**Learn more  
about foster  
care here**



# Supporting a cause close to Rosemary's heart

Rosemary Homewood and her late husband John settled just north of Melbourne in 1982 after travelling the world because of John's military career.

Rosemary has always been passionate about women's rights and has a particular interest in the plight of refugees and asylum seekers. When she heard about our Women's Community House in Broadmeadows, providing a safe, nurturing environment for isolated and marginalised women and children, she jumped at the chance to get involved.

Rosemary has held luncheons and raffles, raising funds to support this program over many years. Shortly before John's passing, they made a generous donation to improve the garden, so women can enjoy a cup of tea and a chat outside while their children play in a safe environment.

Rosemary has also chosen to include Anglicare Victoria in her Will to support women and children feeling domestic violence - a cause that has always been close to her heart.



Rosemary Homewood

Rosemary believes in being prepared, and her estate plans are no different. She has advised her loved ones of her charitable wishes, documented her wishes for her funeral including her chosen readings and hymns as well as having Dancing Queen as her farewell song.

It's the kindness of supporters like Rosemary that allows Anglicare Victoria to continue helping the most vulnerable people in our community look forward to better tomorrows.

**"You come into this world with nothing. You go out with nothing. It's what you do in between time that matters. And I wanted to do something for the asylum seekers and refugees, especially women and children." - Rosemary**

If you have already included Anglicare Victoria in your estate plans, we'd love to thank you for your commitment. Or, if you'd like more information about leaving a gift in your Will, please visit our website or call us on **03 9412 6020**.

## A Legacy for Better Tomorrows

A gift to Anglicare Victoria in your Will can help transform the future for generations of vulnerable children and families.



# From surviving to thriving

## Empowering families

Lisa\* was referred to Anglicare Victoria's family services when the father of her two young sons took his own life. The family were struggling financially and had a traumatic history of family violence.

Slowly but surely, Lisa built up a trusting relationship with her case workers, Sonia and Therese. They worked together to create a plan that would allow the family to begin to heal.

"Sonia made sure all our needs were met – food, fuel, anything the boys needed for school," Lisa said. "She organised presents for us at Christmas, so the boys had something to open."

Sonia also introduced the boys to an after-school youth group, which helped them build their social skills.

Therese arranged for Lisa and her boys to begin attending family violence

counselling and equine therapy to help them process what they had been through.

"Therese got funding to help me cope with everyday expenses, and I was able to get the reading glasses I so desperately needed but couldn't afford," said Lisa.

Last year we supported over 3,400 vulnerable families like Lisa's through our Better Tomorrows program, where our family services staff can access funding for care packages, baby essentials, and Christmas and birthday gifts – to give these families something to smile about during their toughest times.

"I can honestly say that I don't know where my boys and I would be today without the help and support we received," Lisa said.

\*Names have been changed to protect privacy.

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**"No words could ever express my gratitude and appreciation."  
– Family services client, Lisa\***



# Faith in action

## Get out for good



When staff at our Warrnambool drop-in centre noticed many of their regular visitors seemed to be stuck in a cycle of reoffending, they decided to develop an outreach program to support them to stay out of prison

Rev Rob Ferguson and Fr Philip Gill got behind the idea and, in 2014, Get Out For Good (G4G) was born.

Volunteers help participants adjust back to life on the outside by assisting with day-to-day activities and providing a friendly face at court hearings.

“Seeing someone achieve and succeed makes all the hard yards worthwhile,” said G4G volunteer Robert\*.

“It’s not your average volunteer role, but the unwavering dedication and professionalism of the team have made the program a great success,” program coordinator Louise Serra.

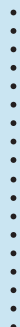
If you’re interested in volunteering with G4G, get in touch with Louise on 0458 750 351.

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**“My life has become a wonderful place to be. Thank you for all your sincere assistance and concern. I truly appreciate it.” G4G participant, Trevor\***

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**Look out for our annual Supporter Survey, arriving in September by post or email.**



**Scan here to ensure you’re included.**

**We’d love to hear from you.**



# Introducing Loretta Mannix-Fell

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Anglicare Victoria recently welcomed Loretta Mannix-Fell to our fundraising team, in the role of Major Donor Manager. Loretta's vast experience across community services, including education, arts and the welfare sector gives her incredible grounding to connect with our key donors and support their relationship with Anglicare Victoria.



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## Get to know Loretta in six quick questions:

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### **What brings you in a good mood?**

Good food, wine and company; family and friends. And always chocolate.

### **What are three words that describe you best?**

Fun, authentic and energetic.

### **How do you contribute to a better society?**

By trying to be a good person – kind and thoughtful to others. I treat people with the respect I like for myself.

### **Describe to a six year old what do you do in life?**

I am a daughter, mother, wife, grandparent and friend, who likes doing fun things like hiking and travelling. I work for a great organisation that helps children and families who are doing it tough by raising money to help them with food, housing and education.

### **What are you famously good at?**

Whilst I don't cook (thanks to my husband), I do make a magnificent sponge cake!

### **Who would you like to have dinner with tonight?**

Beyonce. I am loving her latest release Cowboy Carter.

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Want to chat with Loretta about the work of Anglicare Victoria?

You can contact her directly on **0457 371 200** or via email at **[loretta.mannix-fell@anglicarevic.org.au](mailto:loretta.mannix-fell@anglicarevic.org.au)**

# 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 donors like you.

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 really makes a difference.



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

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