



Sisters of Charity
Foundation

Heart of the Foundation

Bringing you closer to the lives you help change

Newsletter Autumn 2021

“You helped me when I needed help most”

Despite a difficult childhood, dedicated student Andre is looking forward to an impressive career. Please welcome our new scholarship student!

“For virtually my entire life I lived in a household that resulted in disruption to my education,” says Andre. “Severe family difficulties – including forms of abuse and where drugs and alcohol were present, along with criminal and mental health issues – regularly impacted our household.

“Constantly moving in and out of dwellings, I accepted these unstable circumstances and dysfunction as the norm. It was all I knew...

“Yet something told me there had to be more than this. I knew that if I could make progress towards bettering myself then things wouldn't forever be as they were.”

Dreams as big as the skies

Andre threw himself into studying for his HSC, despite police removing him from his home and placing him in the care of extended family. His good marks eventually secured his place in

a Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) at Western Sydney University.

“Growing up I always had a passion for cars... I've always looked at the world through the lens of mathematics and seen things in a methodical way,” Andre explains.

“It's early days but right now I'm interested in aeronautical engineering – planes, aerodynamics – I'm hoping that as I finish my degree an internship will lead me into the next phase of my career.”

A vote of confidence

Andre learned about the Foundation's scholarship for young

people from an out-of-home care background and was quick to apply, even though he thought he probably wouldn't get it.

Then an email arrived announcing he'd won the scholarship.

“I read that – I had to read it twice – and I thought wow! I was speechless,” says Andre. “Immediately I jumped up and told my granddad, then told my grandma when she got back from the beach. She was over the moon about it. She said, ‘Oh Andre, that's amazing!’”

We couldn't picture a more deserving young man and look forward to following his career. Join us in wishing Andre the best of luck in his studies.

“My sincere thanks to you for this scholarship opportunity. Thank you!”



Andre was warmly congratulated by Sr Suzette Clark, Sr Anthea Groves and Sr Cate O'Brien.

BECAUSE OF YOU...

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Andre's university dream is coming true

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Disadvantaged teens are helping farmers in need

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Sarah has a wonderful new opportunity

“Thank you for making this amazing trip possible!”

From Sydney to Gunnedah, Goondiwindi, Toowoomba, Moonie and Moree – RuffTRACK’s recent trip helped at-risk teenagers make meaningful changes through new experiences.

“For me it was about getting the lads out of their heads, out of their troubled home life and 1000km away from what they knew to be their world,” explains RuffTRACK co-founder Dave Graham. “I wanted their minds to be expanded through the cultural experiences of the bush people, Aboriginal communities, driving a tractor or discovering bush tucker.”

Nine teenagers and five support adults went on the 10-day trip, which was funded with a \$15K Community Grant.

A helping hand for farmers

A major focus of the trip was helping elderly or isolated farmers with difficult physical tasks, such as clearing out large grain storage bins and repairing fences. Not only did the boys learn new skills – they were treated to a ride on one farmer’s quad bikes as thanks!

The activities were numerous: from night bushwalks, lessons in Aboriginal painting and tours of regional towns to group counselling sessions and house cleaning... the boys were kept busy day and night.

What the boys had to say

The boys thoroughly enjoyed the trip and took advantage of every opportunity:

“It was cool getting around the bush towns, everyone is really friendly and you don’t get looked at like you are stealing stuff,” said Ajay.

“I can honestly say I love Dave and what he has done for me,” Rory

enthused. “I’m not the best kid but he makes me feel like I am and makes me want to be better. It’s almost like he refuses to believe that I’ll be anything but a good person.”

While Blain was making plans for the future: “Metal fabrication is an area I want to work in, I really enjoy it... you can just do so much with metal and the job opportunities are awesome. Now all I want to do is build stuff. I can’t wait to get involved in a traineeship around this.”

The boys learnt to catch and release native animals on the trip: here’s Bryson with a new scaly friend. ►



“There was a total sense of brotherhood among the lads, with them relying on each other during both physical and mental challenges,” says Dave.

Taking the RuffTRACK

The RuffTRACK youth program takes on young people aged 13 to 17 who have disengaged from school and the community to give them skills, education, and a sense of self-worth. The kids learn dog training and sports, horticulture, landscaping, welding, animal husbandry, woodwork, driving, mechanics, bushcraft, domestic skills, nutrition and physical education, conflict resolution, building healthy relationships... and lots more!



Look at the size of those tyres... Everything is bigger in the outback!

Your generosity changed Sarah's life

Sarah was desperate to work and be independent, but experienced dozens and dozens of rejections. She had almost given up hope when she learnt about Jigsaw.

"Being different isn't easy, and I was bullied at school – teenage girls, in particular, can be cruel. I hung out in the library or the computer lab," says Sarah, who has autism.



"There comes a point when you want to stand on your own feet and pay your own bills." Sarah is delighted with her new role as Office Assistant at Fighting Chance.

When it came time to find a job after school Sarah, like many other people with a disability, faced an impossible challenge.

"I wrote my own applications and expressions of interest to positions in everything from hospitality work to dog walking to retail, and no one was biting – absolutely no one was biting," Sarah recalls.

"I was pounding the concrete, emailing every company I could think of, putting out resumes left, right and centre, and nothing solid came of it."

Sarah's stepping stone

Finally, Sarah learnt about Jigsaw, a social enterprise that gives people with disability the opportunity to develop work skills in a real business, join the workforce for the first time, and use those experiences to transition into other roles.

"I learnt a lot and did a lot of growing up at Jigsaw," Sarah says fondly. "I gained experience in digitisation, file management and managing my emotions and reactions – I can be a stress head! I am so much more confident now and able to advocate for myself."

Looking to the future

The day came when Sarah was ready for her next challenge.

"When the chance came to interview for a role at Fighting Chance, I felt that this was the opportunity I'd been waiting for, to move on to somewhere supportive where I could make a difference," Sarah explains.

Her newfound skills, employment history and confidence meant she aced the interview, landing the position of Office Assistant. She was thrilled.

Congratulations on the new job Sarah!

"I'd like to say the biggest, most heartfelt thank you for everything the Foundation and its supporters have done for us over the years."

Fighting Chance/Jigsaw
Co-founder Laura O'Reilly



Giving people a Fighting Chance

Did you know? Your generosity has allowed our Foundation to support Fighting Chance and its sister organisations, Jigsaw and Avenue, since 2012. We wholeheartedly support their vision of an Australia in which people with disability are fully included in the workforce.

Image: 'People prepare best for work, through work.' Jigsaw was established by Fighting Chance in 2014.

A word from Louise

As COVID-19 restrictions relax we were so excited to hold our first event in a long time. Their Excellencies the Governor-General and Mrs Linda Hurley recently hosted a morning tea at Admiralty House to celebrate the Foundation's Tertiary Scholarship Program.

Joining the Foundation in the midst of a pandemic has meant I haven't been able to meet many of you in person – and thank you for your loyal support. Happily, I got the chance to celebrate our scholarship program and share its impact with several supporters during a small gathering at Admiralty House. Unfortunately numbers were rather restricted but I foresee a time – not too far away! – when we're able to have more of you join us.

We welcomed brand new scholarship students Andre (Bachelor of Engineering Honours) and Bridgette (Bachelor of Business), wished Faraz (Bachelor of Arts Screen: Production) good luck during her final year of studies, and were so pleased for Jasmine (Master of Social Work) who begins her masters this year.

Our Patron the Governor-General, and Mrs Linda Hurley were so generous with their time and encouragement for our students. They also thanked you, our supporters, for your commitment to education and the next generation of Australians.

Success for each of our students will be success for us all, as they go on to make their contributions to our nation's future.



From left: Jasmine, Faraz, Foundation CEO Louise Burton, the Governor-General David Hurley and Mrs Linda Hurley, Andre and Bridgette at Admiralty House.

“I want to thank all of you for believing in our scholarship program. We couldn't have got this far without your much-needed support.”

Louise M Burton, CEO

How will you be remembered?

Leaving a gift in your Will to the Sisters of Charity Foundation is a once in a lifetime chance to make sure those living in poverty or isolation have somewhere to turn to for help, even after you're gone.

No matter the size of your gift, you will be bringing comfort and hope to future generations. And for your kindness, we'll always remember you. To learn how easy it is to leave a gift in your Will, including assistance with the preparation of your Will free of charge, please phone Estelle Muller on (02) 9367 1262 or email e.muller@rscoffice.com.

