



Sisters of Charity  
Foundation

# Heart of the Foundation

Bringing you closer to the lives you help change

Newsletter Spring 2021

## How you helped a vulnerable family

Can you imagine the stress and fear of bringing brand new babies home to nothing? Thanks to your generosity Arya feels no fear, only gratitude.

The request was heartbreaking:

*'My client Arya recently gave birth to twin boys born extremely prematurely. They are due for discharge in approximately four weeks. Arya is on a student visa, her partner's work has been affected by COVID-19, and they are struggling financially. They have no family to support them and they are anxious about being able to provide for their children. Can you help?'*

"The families we support were struggling to make ends meet before the pandemic," says Cathy Nisbet from Dandelion Support Network, a grassroots not-for-profit in Sydney's Sutherland Shire that helps vulnerable families keep their babies safe and warm when sleeping, travelling and playing. "Lockdowns have intensified financial hardships, increased mental health stresses and restricted access to extended family and community support."

### Safety essentials

Every child should have access to the items essential for their safety, wellbeing and development.

"An unsafe cot or no cot increases the risk of SIDS, falls and suffocation through co-sleeping or sleeping in unsafe spaces," Cathy explains. "Whereas without a pram, families become socially isolated and find it hard to leave the house."

Last year Dandelion provided 627 car seats, 635 prams, 380 cots, 4,031 clothing packs, 1,153 linen packs and 1,953 toy packs to struggling families.

### What happened to Arya's family?

Your continued support meant we were able to provide a \$10,000 Community Grant to Dandelion late last year.

Dandelion used the grant to provide Arya's family with two car seat capsules, two bassinets, a double pram, clothing, toys and linen. Arya and her partner could then focus on the health of their new babies and look forward to bringing them home, knowing they had everything they needed.

Arya is just one mother who was helped by this grant.

**"We want parents to feel they are receiving a gift with love."**



Thanks to you Arya and her partner have what they need to look after their little boys.

### BECAUSE OF YOU...

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Twin baby boys have the best possible start at life

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Geoff found help with rent and groceries

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Jasmine can dedicate her life to helping the homeless

# Geoff says, “You were there for me”

**Geoff was struggling to get by – but found help and friendship among a community of compassionate volunteers.**

Geoff had always been a hard worker. Prior to COVID-19 he held three part time jobs, one as a bus driver. Like many other Australians, Geoff lost all his work when the pandemic hit. As if that wasn't bad enough, not long after becoming unemployed his car broke down completely, and he was forced to dip into super to replace it.

All through 2020 he struggled to make ends meet. Rent and other bills piled up; groceries became unaffordable. His mental health suffered.

## **A light on the horizon**

“Geoff first came to our door last Christmas in need of help,” relates Kate Killick from CareWorks SunRanges, a charity that provides food and assistance with bills to the people of Sunbury, Victoria. “We gave him food vouchers, and went on to help him pay his rent.

“He told me the best thing about coming to us was the friendly welcome he received. We listened to him tell his story when he had no one else to tell.”

The CareWorks ethos is that listening, openly and with compassion, allows people seeking support to feel heard and have their feelings validated. All volunteers are selected with this in mind, and trained to become great listeners.

## **Paying it forward**

Geoff was very grateful for all the assistance he received from CareWorks and wanted to repay their kindness. “He asked if we needed any volunteers,” says Kate. “As it so happened we were in need of a driver for our delivery van, and with his experience as a bus driver Geoff was the perfect fit.” Now Geoff turns up every week to help with deliveries and picking up food donations.

“He greatly enjoys his time volunteering with us, having formed some lovely friendships with his fellow volunteers!”



At one of the worst times in his life Geoff made the decision to help others.

**“He has struggled with his mental health so just providing a friendly ear has made so much difference in his life.”**

## **Immediate help for those in need**



Like many regions across Australia, COVID-19 had a devastating impact on the people of Sunbury. The community is situated on the urban fringe of Melbourne, close to Tullamarine Airport. Many of its residents worked in the air travel industry, for example as ground staff, and are now unemployed.

Thanks to your generosity we were able to help with a Community Grant toward CareWorks' operational costs; including electricity for its commercial-size refrigerators and freezers; insurance; rent; water, gas and telephone bills; and delivery van running costs.

◀ More than 400 people rely on CareWorks for food support every week.



# "I will forever be grateful to you"

Our scholarship student Jasmine is following her dream to become a social worker, recently beginning her master's degree at the University of Sydney.

At only 16, Jasmine was forced to move out of home because of family dysfunction. Her mother suffers from bipolar disorder and experienced long periods of being very unwell. During the next few years Jasmine sought shelter at various refuges,



living in seven different places in all. The impact on her education and emotional security was devastating.

Despite these challenges, Jasmine dreamt of university. "I focused on studying a lot to occupy my mind," she explains. "I wanted a good degree that would allow me to help people like myself in the future." She was accepted into a Bachelor of Social Sciences, majoring in Criminology, at Macquarie University – but at first, she struggled to cope.

## Asking for help

"I decided to apply for the scholarship because I was under an extreme amount of stress and pressure – I was studying, living by myself and juggling three part time jobs," says Jasmine. "I honestly did not think I would get it, I thought there was always someone smarter or more capable or deserving.

"When I found out I received the scholarship I was filled with gratitude, it gave me much more than money. I was not constantly stressed by the worry of financial stability and was able to just be a

◀ "From the bottom of my heart, I cannot express how thankful I am because you have changed my life and given me the ultimate gift."

uni student. I was able to devote myself to my studies completely."

## A compassionate character

Jasmine's early experiences led her to develop a strong social conscience. After graduation in 2019 she worked part-time as a peer support worker for people experiencing homelessness at St Vincent's Hospital. Wanting the qualifications to do more for her clients, in 2021 she commenced a Master of Social Work at the University of Sydney.

"I am enjoying my course although the workload was certainly a shock!" she says. "Despite this my grades were good and I worked really hard during the semester."

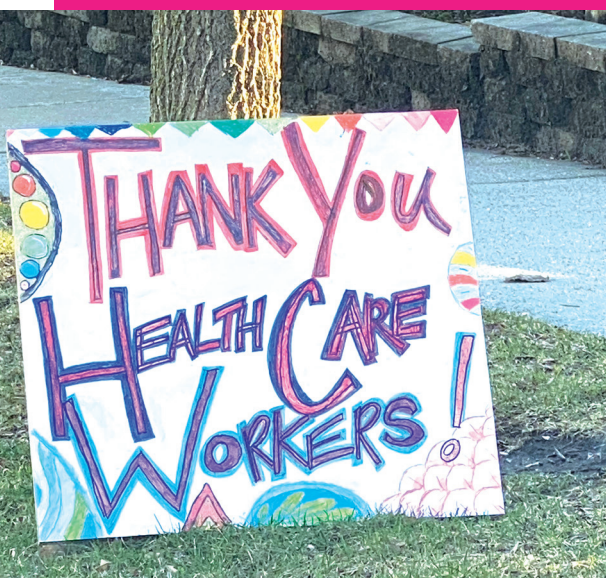
We cannot express how proud we are of Jasmine and wish her all the best with her master's.

**"I believe in really making a change and helping others who are in vulnerable positions, and that starts with me becoming a social worker."**

## Jasmine on the frontline

"Given the current COVID-19 situation, I have been helping at the St Vincent's Homeless Health vaccination clinic. Our goal is to vaccinate the homeless, those who are at-risk, or living in social housing. It's been very busy and intense at times, but I am glad we are working toward a good cause.

"I am hoping to become a social worker working in the hospital emergency department, as I very much like the hustle and bustle. I am also keen to keep working in homelessness, as I feel like my lived experience is very useful and meaningful to others I come across and help."



# A word from Louise

Please join us in congratulating our scholarship students Renee and Vickie, who have both graduated with degrees from Western Sydney University.

The recent Sydney lockdown means I'm even more grateful I had the chance to attend the joint graduation ceremony of two of our wonderful scholarship students:

Renee and Vickie. The June ceremony took place at Western Sydney University's Parramatta South campus, a beautiful spot with some lovely examples of historic architecture.

It was heartening to feel the excitement of the graduates, their families, partners, supporting friends and the academics – such a jubilant occasion for all.

Renee graduated with her Bachelor of Nursing to cheers from her husband and little girl. If

this year and last have taught us anything it is that we owe so much to our nurses. Their compassion and selflessness are keeping our community afloat – on behalf of our nursing Sisters I applaud Renee for gaining her qualifications. She is already working on the frontlines of this pandemic.

Vickie graduated with a Bachelor of Science, majoring in forensics, and I'm so pleased that she's found her calling. She is currently pursuing further studies in the field while working part time at the university's student services centre. 2021 saw another milestone achieved: Vickie moved into her own place for the very first time. It's wonderful to see her so excited.

I am overjoyed Renee and Vickie have completed their degrees, and I was able to pass on your congratulations in person.



Louise with Renee at the graduation ceremony in June.

**“Renee and Vickie send their deepest thanks to you for supporting and believing in them throughout their university journey.”**

*Louise Burton*

Louise M Burton, CEO

## How will you be remembered?

Leaving a gift in your Will is a beautiful way to continue your values, your aspirations – and your life story.

By supporting the work of the Sisters of Charity Foundation, you will bring compassion and practical assistance to people in Australia who are marginalised and disadvantaged. No matter the size of your gift, you will bring hope to future generations. 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](mailto:e.muller@rscoffice.com).

