

Heart of the Foundation

Bringing you closer to the lives you help change.

Newsletter Spring 2020



*Because
of you...*

Tasha had confidence
to succeed
Page 1

Anita found acceptance
and safety
Page 3

Grieving children have
love and support
Page 4

Tasha: "Your support inspired me"

**This impressive young lady
overcame a family tragedy
and difficult upbringing
to become the first in her
family to graduate from
university.**

Tasha Reynolds knows just how important it is to have people who believe in you. Most young adults lean on their parents for support as they pursue a tertiary education, but for Tasha that wasn't a possibility. Her father passed away when Tasha was only in Year 7, and she was sent to live with a family friend.

Although she dreamed of university, Tasha was riddled with doubts about her chances. Luckily, she made the decision to apply for a Sisters of Charity Foundation Tertiary Scholarship – and her whole mindset changed when she won it.

Finding her confidence

When Tasha learnt there were people who believed in her, a newfound confidence emerged. "I built a sense of purpose that I didn't know I had within me and my confidence to achieve greater things began to flourish," she says.

This new outlook served Tasha well as she began a Bachelor of Health Science in Paramedicine at Western Sydney University. "My key challenges included adjusting to the university lifestyle, organisation and time management reinforcement, finding a work-life-study balance – and the course content," she says.

But that was nothing compared to practising her newfound skills in real life. "I was able to bring two patients back to life using effective CPR!"

Graduation and next steps

In July 2020 Tasha graduated in absentia (via mail) due to COVID-19. "Receiving my certificate lit my soul up," she says. "I am still in disbelief that I am degree qualified and more importantly, I am a qualified paramedic!"

Tasha is currently job-hunting while working as a disability support practitioner with the Cerebral Palsy Alliance. She is also studying a Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability), and is considering doing a masters in the near future.

Tasha, all your supporters would like to say, "We'll always believe in you!"

"I'm forever grateful." Tasha with her graduation certificate.

"I have grown
resilient with your
support. I will
continue to grow,
knowing you have
faith in me to achieve
greater things."





Say hello to Louise!

Please join us in welcoming our new CEO Louise Burton. Louise is a highly respected leader in the philanthropic sector and has come to us from HammondCare, with previous roles at the Cancer Council and Philanthropy Australia. We're so excited to see our Foundation thrive under her guidance!

I am honoured to take up this challenge. I'm mindful of the long history of the Sisters of Charity of Australia, and their mission to support marginalised communities through hard times – just like those we face today. There's no doubt 2020 has been a terrible year for so many in our country; with your assistance, we must do whatever we can to help.

I have had the pleasure of speaking with a number of you since my arrival, and I'm humbled by your commitment to the Sisters and their Foundation. Your support over the years has meant so much to so many, from lunches and shoes for children living in poverty to hot meals and essentials for those

without a home, counselling for those who've survived domestic violence and therapy for those suffering PTSD – the list is long!

I particularly want to thank you for supporting our 2020 Winter Appeal. I recognise the current economic climate has impacted many of you, and yet you put your own worries aside and thought of others instead – your generosity and selflessness are so very appreciated.

Louise M Burton, CEO

"It's impossible to list how many wonders have resulted from your generosity, but please know the Sisters are gladdened beyond words."



How will you be remembered?

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

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 the Foundation office on (02) 9367 1211.

Thanks to you, Anita found safety

To speak with her today, you'd never guess Anita feared she'd be killed in her home country, and was forced to flee to Australia. The 35-year-old is happy, motivated, and full of gratitude for your kindness.

When Anita stepped off the plane in Sydney she was completely alone, and didn't know a single person in Australia. To cheer herself up she headed straight for Circular Quay, wanting to set eyes on the Opera House. "That first day I saw the symbol of Sydney," she remembers. "I really loved it, Australia is a really beautiful country."

Living at a backpackers hostel, Anita planned to get a job as soon as she could. She didn't know it was illegal for her to work without a visa, and when she found out she was terrified – her money had almost run out and she had nowhere to go.

Divine providence

Anita heard about the Asylum Seekers Centre (ASC) at church, and visited the very next day. She was soon found accommodation at Providence House. "I was so happy, so excited to get in," she says. "The house was so nice, it had a beautiful kitchen, and it's so clean, and it had aircon – unbelievable for me!"

While living there she applied for a protection visa, studied for a certificate in aged care nursing, and made friends with the other asylum seekers living in the building.

Giving something back

After a period of calm and stability, Anita was able to move out of Providence House and into her own

"You are angels. Because of you, lots of people with different problems from different countries found safety. Providence House has helped us a lot."

apartment in Lidcombe – and she's the one paying the rent now!

She completed her certificate and wants to do a community services diploma in the future. "I really want to do something for Australian citizens, because this country has helped me a lot," she explains. "Australia is the best country in this world. It's a part of my heart.

"This country has welcomed me, let me live here, get an education... it's all because of you Australian people."



"Moving into Providence House was the happiest moment in my life." Anita outside the ASC.



Anita with ASC CEO Frances Rush.

A safe place to call home

Our partnership with the Asylum Seekers Centre assists dozens of displaced people every year. Providence House, a four-apartment building in Sydney's Inner West, provides emergency and transitional housing for asylum seekers facing homelessness, along with support services including medical and legal assistance, education and training, and job search support.

How your gift can lift a child from the depths of grief

'A Friend's Place' supports bereaved children with group counselling sessions as they learn to live with the impact of grief and trauma following the death of a parent.

Children grieve significant losses in their lives just as intensely as adults. Sadly, one in 20 Australian children have experienced the death of a parent, leaving them at risk of negative long-term effects if left untreated.

Your donations helped fund 'A Friend's Place', an ongoing group counselling workshop run by the National Centre for Childhood Grief (NCCG).

Online therapy in 2020

Like many of our community grant recipients, the NCCG adapted quickly to social distancing requirements and, in April, began running its counselling sessions via Zoom.

"Many of our bereaved families are really struggling during this time as their grief has exacerbated due to COVID-19 and they are missing their loved ones even more intensely," explains NCCG Development Manager Annette Gurr. "Being able to provide them access to our services online during lockdown and ongoingly has been a massive support to them."

"Thank you for your support of this program!"



Kyle and his little girl found peace at 'A Friend's Place'.
Photo: Getty Images.

A grieving father's story

Reeling from the death of his beloved wife, Kyle and his little daughter turned to 'A Friend's Place' to help them cope.

"When my wife died at the age of 38, leaving me with a 3-year-old little girl, struggling to understand what had happened to her mother and why, I faced new challenges that I was ill-equipped to handle."

'A Friend's Place' was a godsend and the dedicated team of volunteer counsellors enabled me to help my daughter make some sense of her new life. There she found a place that was caring and accepting without question. A place where she could meet other children who had suffered a similar fate, and a place where she could be herself and express her feelings without judgement by others who did not understand what she was going through."

"Love you dad", "Stay positive!" and "From Taylah love you daddy"... Children write messages of love and encouragement during a group counselling session.

Children's voices

*"I am so sad all of my body hurts."
– Matthew, 5*

*"We don't talk about my mum at home much anymore because it makes us all cry. I only talk about her at 'A Friend's Place'."
– Milly, 7*

*"I spend more time on my own since dad died, or with friends. Mum is too busy to talk to me much. I'm scared she will die too because she gets so tired."
– Tim, 10*

