

Inspire

quarterly newsletter for schools



SPRING | 2020

connecting our
community

Words from the CEO

Welcome to Anglicare Victoria's (AV's) spring newsletter for schools.

Over a challenging year, Anglicare Victoria has led with innovation, technology and adaptability to ensure our young people maintain their engagement with education. In this newsletter, we reflect on our clients' journeys through COVID-19 and the bushfires.

We also take a look at one of our homework clubs at Corio, where students are helping other students learn, and we take time to celebrate the valued contribution of our foster carers for Foster Care Week.

As we look forward to summer with hopes of reconnection to our friends and family for Christmas, many children, regardless of the pandemic, won't be going home. This year's Toy and Food Appeal will again ensure that all of our children can be excited about Christmas. I invite you and your school to once again join us in bringing warmth to those who find Christmas a difficult time.

Paul McDonald



EDUCATION INNOVATION WHEN IT COUNTS

2020's bushfires and pandemic created extraordinary educational challenges for the young people in our care. The team behind Anglicare Victoria's TEACHaR[^] (Transforming Educational Achievement of Children at Risk) program addressed these challenges head-on, by rapidly adapting and evolving this program that helps children rediscover their joy for learning.

With her all the way

Janine* returned to her family home the day after the fires. Everything the 17-year-old

owned had been turned to ash. Traumatized by fear and loss, and with her family thrown into turmoil, she began falling behind in her VCE school work.

Jenny, our Education Specialist with the TEACHaR program, is a former principal with a strong connection with the community near Janine. The two met when Jenny was invited to meet some of the most affected students following the destruction of several schools in the area. They agreed to meet up regularly to keep Janine on track with her English study requirements. Over many months the two worked together and kept things on track.

* Names have been changed to protect privacy



When the pandemic hit and education were moved online, Jenny remained by her side as a teacher and mentor, helping her to stay grounded and focused. One morning, Jenny picked up the phone and called Janine for one of their regular catch-ups. Before she could even begin the session, Janine interrupted, "I've got this, Jenny; I can do this on my own. I'm feeling pretty good now." In just six months, the two had journeyed through trauma and confusion to find a place of independence and optimism.

Exceptional times call for exceptional action

The team behind TEACHaR moved quickly to innovate the program in line with the restrictions of COVID-19.

An online version of TEACHaR - "FLOAT" (Flexible Learning Online with Anglicare Teachers), – was created and hardware was distributed where needed. The service evolution meant one-on-one tutoring and the provision of educational resources could continue to all young people in our care. Our education specialists reported that young people responded

well to service innovation, especially those who experience heightened anxiety.

"I suffer from extreme anxiety and haven't been able to attend school for the past year and a half. I'm very eager to complete Year 10 next year. I couldn't imagine not having Leanne's (Education Specialist) support."

– Client from TEACHaR program

^AV's TEACHaR program helps our young and vulnerable people to re-engage with school by providing one-on-one sessions at school or in the home. Our highly experienced teachers are trained to work with students going through tough times.

* Names have been changed to protect privacy

Homework Club

It's a place filled with youthful enthusiasm. A place buzzing with conversation. A place of teaching and learning. A room where smiles are frequent and engagement is high.

This is the Homework Club at St Andrew's Anglican Church, Corio-Norlane. Local year 5-12 students for whom English is an additional language, attend Homework Club after school once or twice a week, with the common purpose of improving their English literacy skills. Many are refugees, some born in refugee camps.

The Homework Club provides a safe space for students to achieve through positive engagement with others. It is a truly inspiring example of young people building strong relationships that will make a difference to the future of our community. The club is a local parish initiative which runs in partnership with Anglicare Victoria, Geelong Grammar and Kardinia International College. It has been operating since 2010 and still has a strong membership.

"It's inspirational seeing the energy between the young people learning and the confidence that grows between them." Jillian is the Co-ordinator of the Homework Club; "We sometimes forget that these children are coming from traumatic

circumstances, so their emotional well-being is our priority, and the learning comes second."

The unique part of the club is the Mentorship element. High school students from either Geelong Grammar or Kardinia International College voluntarily donate their time to assist in teaching English through literacy games, maths homework, and meaningful friendships. One Year 11 Kardinia student mentor has been coming along for over two years to support the club and explains that it is a learning journey for them as mentors too; "I've learnt so much about different learning styles. Everyone learns differently. I think that's what I'll take with me into my career beyond school from this experience."

Jillian says the key to the success of Homework Club is building confidence in the students. "Children's confidence levels grow when they form relationships, as it's then that they are able to open up. I can see that happening each week."

Written by Sarah Treacy, first published in www.humansingeelong.com on 11th December 2019

Anglicare Victoria's specialised education program:

TEACHaR

TRANSFORMING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT of CHILDREN AT RISK

Anglicare Victoria's TEACHaR Program has made a huge difference to the education of vulnerable children and young people for almost a decade. While first developed for young people in out-of-home care, it has grown to support students, carers and professionals all across Victoria.

To access a service and for all enquiries email: TEACHaR@anglicarevic.org.au

CHRISTMAS

TOY & FOOD APPEAL

We all know that feeling in the lead up to Christmas. The decorations start to go up, carols are heard everywhere, and the anticipation for a special day with family builds. For most children, it all feels like one big count-down until Santa arrives and delivers the goods. But for the hundreds of vulnerable children that AV lovingly houses every night, Christmas can be challenging.

These young people deserve and need the same love, connection and sense of wonder that every child looks forward to on Christmas Day. We aim to extend that celebration to all children in our care, making sure that every child receives a gift of their own and a hot meal on Christmas day.

Join us again in 2020 for AV's Toy and Food Appeal, and you'll be a part of spreading Christmas cheer to vulnerable young children in our most inspiring appeal of the year.

Your donation to AV's 2020 Christmas Toy and Food Appeal is urgently needed to ensure that every one of the children in our care receives a new toy under the Christmas tree and a nutritious meal on Christmas Day.

This year, the Toy and Food Appeal will be online. To contribute to our annual appeal, please consider a financial donation. To give to this valuable cause, you can either donate online or call us directly on 1800 809 722. If you choose to donate online, you can do so at www.anglicarevic.org.au/donation and select either 'Toys' or 'Food/ER' from the drop-down list. If you choose to call us to make a donation, please quote either 'Toys' or 'Food/ER' over the phone.

To find out more about this year's appeal, please visit our dedicated appeal webpage www.anglicarevic.org.au/anglicare-victoria-toy-and-food-appeal-2020 or, contact our events team on (03) 9412 6182 or email events@anglicarevic.org.au

Thank you for your support during these uncertain times.

Please note: our 2020 Toy and Food Appeal will operate in line with Victoria's current social distancing regulations.





Foster Care Week

Foster Care Week raises awareness about foster care in the wider community. It celebrates the invaluable contribution foster carers make to the lives of vulnerable children, young people and the community as a whole.

Foster care is a way of offering children a safe, secure and nurturing place to stay while their family is unable to care for them. Having nurtured young people through compounding crises, it's never been more important to recognise the contribution of Victoria's foster carers.

Anglicare Victoria is dedicated to offering supportive environments for both children and carers alike. Our carers are trained, provided with access to comprehensive ongoing support, and reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses related to care. All our foster carers at Anglicare Victoria have access to a 24-hour support line and a dedicated case manager.

Foster carers can choose from several different types of care placements ranging from emergency care right through to respite and

longer-term care. People from all walks of life can become carers. It doesn't matter whether you are in a relationship, older, younger, with or without children, working or at home - everyone can make a positive difference in a child's life.

"I encourage anyone thinking about foster care to make an enquiry or go to an information session. We've been foster caring with Anglicare Victoria for three years and have been pleased with all the help and support that's offered."

- Rosemarie, Foster Carer

Anyone over 18 can be a foster carer, so if you've ever considered it, please get in touch with us or visit www.anglicarevic.org.au/foster-caring to find an information session near you.

Now more than ever, **foster carers** are needed for some of the most **vulnerable children & young people.**

To learn how, visit www.anglicarevic.org.au/foster-caring

