



connect

WINTER 2017

A NEWSLETTER FOR SUPPORTERS OF CATHOLICCARE

Building a sense of belonging in our community



Message from Fr Joe Caddy



Where do you feel your strongest sense of belonging? Is it at home, at work or in your local parish?

From friendship circles to parish groups, our connections within these groups help us to feel safe and supported, thus providing a sense of

community and unity.

In this issue of Connect we explore the idea of belonging through the eyes of volunteers who, through their work in CatholicCare's various programs, are creating a sense of belonging for the many people who access our services. In doing so, the volunteers themselves gain a sense of belonging - to the broader community and to the CatholicCare family.

I consider myself fortunate to have also had an opportunity to play a role in building these communities; a role that will soon come to an end. After twelve years at the helm of CatholicCare, I will be stepping down as CEO on 30 June 2017.

It has been a great privilege to work with clients, helping people live 'life to the full', and strengthening families and communities. I take immense pride in what CatholicCare has achieved during this time: our response to the Black Saturday bushfires which helped to develop a stronger community focus to our work; the building of our Dandenong programs which are proving to be an excellent blend of counselling and community services; working with the Diocese of Sale to extend our support to families in Gippsland, just to name a few. I have witnessed the considerable expansion of CatholicCare; in revenue, staffing and geographic footprint.

But as CatholicCare has grown, so too has community need. Family breakdown, domestic violence, alcohol

and other drugs, mental illness – the demand for our services is increasing and there is much work for CatholicCare to ensure that families do not fall through the gaps.

CatholicCare will continue to respond to these needs in our community because that is our Mission and we are well led with a highly skilled and dedicated staff. The Board will embark on a process to replace me as CEO. While this is happening, Sheree Limbrick, Deputy CEO, supported by the Board and our marvelous Executive team and broader management group, will continue to steer us in the right direction.

While I will no longer be CEO of CatholicCare, I am very pleased that through my role as Episcopal Vicar for Social Services in the Archdiocese, I will continue to play a part and have close involvement in the ongoing journey of CatholicCare.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to our donors, volunteers and supporters; your generosity over the years has been both humbling and inspiring. You are a much valued partner in our Mission and an integral part of the CatholicCare family that has provided me with a profound sense of belonging these last 12 years. Thank you!

With every blessing

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Caddy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr Joe Caddy

Thank you!

A big thank you to all our supporters who helped us raise over \$120,000 through our recent Christmas Appeal.

As an update on the three young people we wrote to you about... Sam and Zoe have separated but have built a positive co-parenting alliance for their daughter Lucy. Jay is still seeing out his time in a youth justice centre, but is being mentored and is feeling more positive about his future. And Matt has returned to University to study social work and hopes to work with the elderly.

It's because of your support that we can continue to offer programs and services to young people like Lucy, Jay and Matt. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

Sharing a place to belong

“Rana has amazing relationship-building skills. She has supported refugee women as a volunteer sewing assistant for almost two years. Her story is more remarkable for the fact that she came to CatholicCare as a refugee herself.”

Every year, over 400 refugees receive support through CatholicCare’s Refugee Settlement Program, where Community Groups for English conversation, cooking and sewing link refugees into the community they now call home.

When one such woman, Rana* was invited to our Sewing Group, the sense of belonging she gained from the group became something she wanted to share.

The journey to belong

Rana fled Afghanistan with her husband and seven children, spending six months in Pakistan and five years in Iran.

As part of a minority group, her family lived with dangerous levels of racism and inequality, on the outskirts of hostile communities, without education, employment and secure housing.

She was initially confident about the future, but her first few months here were heartbreaking. She felt lost and alone in foreign surroundings and crippled by the trauma she had experienced.

Settlement Support worker, Gula Bezhan explains what life was like for Rana when she was first referred to CatholicCare:

“With her husband ill and unable to work, almost all Rana’s time was spent together with her husband and their seven children in their three bedroom home.”

“Her English was excellent and she was motivated to engage with the community, but she was stuck at home and incredibly lonely,” says Gula.

When Rana joined CatholicCare’s Sewing Group, life got better. She was able to contribute to a sewing project immediately and attending each week increased her confidence both in and outside the group, where she began initiating conversations with neighbours in her street.

“I wanted to make friends, learn something and be active in the community. The group has made me so happy!” says Rana.

When belonging comes ‘full circle’

Before long, Rana enquired about volunteering with CatholicCare and was offered the role of Sewing Group Assistant for a new intake of refugee women wanting to join the community group.

“Rana has amazing relationship-building skills. She has supported refugee women as a volunteer sewing assistant for almost two years. Her story is more remarkable for the fact that she came to CatholicCare as a refugee herself,” says Gula.



Above: CatholicCare’s Sewing Group - Dandenong.

As a volunteer sewing assistant, Rana works alongside CatholicCare staff to provide the group’s participants with instruction and support. She has a special way of supporting refugees to settle into the community, because she too was once desperate to be accepted and “searching for a place to belong,” says Gula.

“I will start training to become a beauty therapist in May” says Rana. *“In one year, I want paid work. Will you come for a facial or a massage?!”*

To support the wonderful work of our sewing, homework support and English conversation groups - and help refugees like Rana to belong - please donate to CatholicCare’s June Appeal by calling Nevin on 03 9287 5517.

**Client name changed for privacy purposes.*

A builder of confidence

Retired builder, Ross Jackson (right) is a volunteer gardener and handyman who is helping to build the confidence of recently-arrived migrant families from multicultural backgrounds. He works on a community garden run by CatholicCare's Building Community Program in Pakenham, which connects newcomers to the local community.

Ross says, "When the project started late last year, the block was completely overgrown" but since then, "the land has been cleared, the fences have been rebuilt and the planter boxes are filled with soil".

"When I provide guidance to people in the garden, they are learning English at the same time. I thought it was good to set up something for migrants who needed help with English."

In addition to improving their language skills, participants get a great sense of satisfaction from completing a job after being shown what to do.

"In time, I'd like to teach them how to build boxes to plant herbs for sale. If I show them how to use hand tools, we could make bench seats for the garden."



"It's not only good for their skill sets; it's good for their self-esteem. They can say, 'I made that' and be proud of what they've learned."

When asked how building the confidence of people helps them journey towards feeling they belong, Ross says "For clients of our Pakenham office, it's like joining a group, and more importantly, I think people who may have problems with their confidence are enabled to step up and have a go."

"For me, volunteering keeps my interest and I get to see people; it's like belonging to a workplace."

A mentor for young people

Jason Zhu (below) recently graduated from university with honours in Psychology, and his volunteer work as a tutor for our Homework Support Group in Werribee has inspired him to work with children in the future.

"I've always enjoyed working with kids, and I wanted to work with kids from a different cultural background," says Jason.

The group has up to 80 students, mainly from Burmese backgrounds and Jason has built great relationships with the students over the last two years.



Motivated by a similar experience as a child, Jason provides academic support, but says it is also valuable to "get kids from a similar culture together to talk about what is happening at school."

"My Mum migrated from China and when I grew up, I was in a similar situation; my family culture was completely different from the culture at school. It would have been very beneficial to me if there was a program like this when I was at school. The ability to share my experiences and gain a sense of belonging would have helped me."

"One of the kids in the Homework Support Group recently had trouble with people at school. My advice to him was to try to be as kind as possible to other people and to not react to being bullied by bullying back," he said.

"My volunteer work is an extension of my study, and it's rewarding to see kids mature and increase their learning skills. I now belong to something larger than myself and I enjoy helping others. I hope that in time the kids are able to help others too."

An encourager of hard work

Grant Levy is a Partner in the law firm, Lander & Rogers and a volunteer Learning Partner with the Clemente Fitzroy program.

Delivered in partnership with Australian Catholic University, the program gives university education and support to people who have experienced significant social isolation and disadvantage.

“Clemente brings a human element into the University environment. What the framework does is create a community, where CatholicCare, ACU and the Learning Partners all work together to create a warm, welcoming and encouraging environment for the Clemente students,” says Grant.

“Walking into a university building can be daunting for people who have not engaged with the community for many years, and often had very unpleasant experiences with authority.”

“I vividly remember a student at his graduation ceremony saying that after twenty five years of alcohol and drug addiction and mental health issues, Clemente was the first and only thing in his life that he had ever completed,” says Grant.

Very quickly, the same man wanted to help others, and he has since used his music to advocate for better mental health awareness; something that Grant says is “proof of the transformative effects of the program.”

“Most people in my field went to good government or private schools and take for granted the opportunity to obtain a university degree. It is so rewarding to pass on some of my knowledge and experience to a student who has had major setbacks in life, but has shown great courage and persistence to get into the Clemente program,” he says.

“There have been students who were suffering and didn’t want to come to the program some days, but they came because they didn’t want to let their Learning Partner down. When I see people show that regard for others who are helping them, I feel a strong sense of community being created at Clemente.”

By going as far as helping CatholicCare to recruit a team of Learning Partners from Lander & Rogers, Grant has been a wonderful advocate for Clemente Fitzroy.

A listener with an open heart

Part of Dhaneeshya Dharmadheeran’s role at CatholicCare is to speak with people who call our East Melbourne office to enquire about our programs and services.

According to Dhaneeshya (below), the key to taking these calls is to “listen with an open heart.”

“Time is precious, so it’s special when you give your time to people,” she says.

Dhaneeshya migrated from India to Australia with her husband and five-year-old son. A year later, after completing a course in business administration, she began looking for volunteer opportunities.

“I wanted to learn more about the community, and when I applied for the volunteer administration position with CatholicCare, I was so excited to get a call back!” she says.

“Volunteering with CatholicCare gave me practical office experience and everyone here helped me to settle in.”

After five months of volunteer work, there was an opening for a paid position, by which time Dhaneeshya was confident about applying for the job.

“I was getting trained and ready to work, and I wanted to work here - I loved this place. And then I got the job! We have a great team and it’s a privilege to do work that supports people,” she says.



Meet our Deputy CEO

Sheree Limbrick (right) has worked at CatholicCare for six years. She commenced her career in Human Services in 1994.

Before joining CatholicCare in May 2011 as Director of Community Services, Sheree held several high-level positions within the Human Services environment. Her primary focus was on program design, delivery, service management and policy and service development.

In July 2012, Sheree assumed the role of Director of Operations across all of CatholicCare's services and, in September 2016 was appointed to the role of Deputy CEO.

Sheree has served on the Board of the Centre for Excellence in Child & Family Welfare since 2014 and is currently Deputy Chairperson and has recently joined the Council of Catholic Social Services Victoria.

Sheree has a Bachelor of Social Science (Family Studies) from Australian Catholic University (ACU), along with Diplomas in Project Management and Business.



"CatholicCare is a dynamic, responsive and hope-filled organisation. 'Walking the talk' is a phrase often bandied around, but every day I am privileged to experience this first-hand at CatholicCare, where every individual who contributes has the utmost regard for the dignity of those they encounter and support," says Sheree.

Welcome Emily Werner

A big hello and thank you to you all! I am so excited to throw myself into the role of Donor Relations Manager.

Over the past 10 years, I've built great relationships with donors, and I look forward to getting to know you as a supporter of CatholicCare.

You will hear more from me and the team as we get to know each other, and I hope from this to understand more deeply why CatholicCare is important to you.

Working with amazing organisations that change peoples' lives for the better is what gets me out of bed every day!

I chose to work in fundraising so I can play a part in making the lives of others easier in times of need. This is the warm fuzzy feeling that keeps me coming back day after day and I couldn't be happier to have joined CatholicCare.



I know that together we will strengthen families and communities so that everyone can live 'life to the full.'



CatholicCare is the social service agency of the Archdiocese of Melbourne and the Diocese of Sale. While we are a Catholic agency, our programs are offered to the whole community, regardless of religious belief or background.

Strengthening families and communities

www.ccam.org.au