

Summer 2014

Transformations



**Triple Care Farm
celebrates 25!**

**Recipes from
Charcoal Lane**

**A Christmas of
new beginnings**

CEO welcome **Summer newsletter**



For most of us, Christmas is a joyful time in Australia. It's a time when families travel many kilometres to see each other, anticipating a happy exchange of gifts, a visit from the cousins and hours of indulgent eating.

Of course, there are always the small niggles: whether to have a traditional Christmas dinner or a modern seafood barbeque. But they are a small price to pay for the feeling of coming together as a family; a sense of belonging, a past to be grateful for, and a year ahead full of hope.

But for families who are experiencing homelessness like the Gordon family who you'll read about in this newsletter, Christmas can bring added stress and suffering. It's a time to mourn the things they don't have: the homes and communities they've lost, the gifts they can't afford to buy for their children, and the Christmas meal they can't share with their loved ones.

Sadly in our work at Mission Australia, we meet families every day who have lost the security of their own home. These families are remarkably similar to yours or mine except that they've experienced an unexpected hardship – a rent increase, a sickness or unemployment – that has resulted in the loss of their family home.

You may not see these families sleeping rough. Many of them are hidden in our suburbs, moving from couch to couch as they rely on the kindness of friends or strangers to shelter them. But across Australia, a growing number of families urgently need your help this Christmas.

Like you, we want all Australians to experience the joy and hope of Christmas. With your support, we can reach out to vulnerable families, providing the food and shelter, counselling and case management, and employment and training opportunities they need to regain their independence. And we can help these families find safe, long-term accommodation where they can enjoy many happy Christmases together in the security of their own home.

"We are so grateful for the generosity of wonderful supporters like you who dig deep each year to help families just like yours to come together at Christmas."

Each of the stories you will read about in the following pages have a common thread—the joy of a new beginning. And I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for making this possible.

I wish you and your loved ones a wonderful summer and a very joyful Christmas.

Catherine Yeomans
CEO, Mission Australia

Founding Purpose Inspired by Jesus Christ, Mission Australia exists to meet human need and to spread the knowledge of the love of God.

Our Values Compassion, Integrity, Respect, Perseverance, Celebration.

Our Vision is to see a fairer Australia by enabling people in need to find pathways to a better life.

Connect with us



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Spirit matters

My mother had a Christmas tradition; a cultural carryover on the season's 'naughty or nice' theme that she brought from her childhood in Italy.

Like many children, I would wake up early on Christmas morning and rummage through my Christmas stocking. My mother would fill it with lovely lollies and gifts, but there would always be something else too. At the bottom of the stocking, there would be a piece of charcoal. Apparently the charcoal was put in there if I had been a naughty boy during the year. It was a bit of a joke in my family as I got it every year!

I used to think to myself, *"What a thing to always be reminded of every year— at a time that is meant to celebrate joy and happiness I have to be reminded of all the wrong things I have done."* Yet there was a lot to be grateful for too. At least we had a home and food to share with our extended families, often newly arrived relatives, recently migrated from the 'old country'. Some of them even lived in our home for short periods of time until they were set up. Mum would often say that our home 'was a house of refuge', with all of us crammed in together.

As Mission Australia's NSW Chaplain I have found myself visiting families who are crammed together like my family were when the relatives came; mum and dad with their three children all living in the same room but without a sense of hope that things will get better. I may bring them some food or clothing or offer a comforting word of prayer. But as I leave situations like this, I find myself thinking: *"This shouldn't be happening in a country like Australia which enjoys one of the highest standards of living in the world. This just isn't right!"*



Often things go wrong in a family and it may not take much for this to happen: an illness or an accident may lead to a disability; the loss of a job or the death of a spouse can send a family into unexpected and difficult circumstances. People in this situation don't need judgment or reminders of mistakes they might have made along the way – like the charcoal in my childhood Christmas stocking – they need compassion, understanding and an opportunity to get their family back on track.

This Christmas as we remember the birth of Christ, the greatest gift that God gave to us, may it also be a time where we can say, 'What can I do this year for those in need that can reflect the compassion and love God has shown to each of us?'

Robert Paino
NSW Chaplain, Mission Australia



A Christmas of new beginnings

Last Christmas was a hard one for Tina Gordon and her three kids. The family were weighed down by financial worry and caught up in a downward cycle of domestic violence. But one year on, with a lot of courage from Tina and the support of Mission Australia, the Gordon family is about to celebrate a Christmas of new beginnings, with a place to call home and a community to belong to.

Twenty-eight-year-old Tina Gordon* endured years of domestic violence during her ten-year relationship with her partner Wayne, but in May this year she got to the end of the road.

"Most of the time Wayne was kind, caring and a gentleman," says Tina. "But whenever he drank, it was like a switch flipped—he'd turn really nasty. He'd call me names and become aggressive."

Tina lived in the hope that Wayne would change his ways. He was always remorseful after a binge, promising to change his ways. And besides, she didn't want her children, Reeve, Michele and Lisa to grow up without their father.

But one evening in May this year, everything changed. After a night out of heavy drinking, Wayne came home, started an argument with Tina and beat her so badly that she could barely walk the next day. Two-year-old Lisa was in the room and the other children were woken up to shouting and violence.

Tina had to face up to the fact that the lives and wellbeing of her and her children were at stake. She made a decision. Packing all the belongings that they could fit in the car, Tina escaped with the children and stayed with friends for a few weeks until the family found a rental to live in.

Tina was hopeful that she and the kids could start a new life, a life with more stability and without fear. But things proved more difficult than she had imagined. She was really struggling and had little support from family. She had fallen out with her mother who believed Tina should have stayed with Wayne because domestic abuse was better than struggling to pay the bills.

Tina couldn't keep up with her rental payments and after a few months the family were evicted from their home. Again they stayed with family and friends but this was not sustainable for the long term.

Six-year-old Reeve was finding the change unsettling, making his behaviour difficult to manage. After a month of 'couch surfing' with various friends and constant rejections from the rental market because of the tenancy eviction, the family ended up in a tent in a caravan park. Tina felt like a failure. She'd never imagined it could get this bad and she had little hope for her children's future.

Support at last

Sometimes some good advice can make all the difference. In this case, a friend of Tina's had heard of Mission Australia and suggested that Tina get in touch.

Tina contacted Mission Australia Housing in Clarendon Vale in Tasmania. We were quickly able to secure them long-term accommodation in a quiet, family-friendly suburb.

We've also assisted Tina with financial and parenting support, and suggested community groups that she and the children could join.

Mission Australia has offered Tina financial advice so she can establish a budget and begin to pay off her debts. Her long-term goals are to finish her university degree and eventually purchase the house the family are currently renting.

Belonging somewhere has made all the difference. Tina now has a great support network and the family are happy together. Reeve is more settled and his behavioural issues have subsided. All three children are doing well and have made friends with neighbouring children.

Hope this Christmas

As the memories of last Christmas fade, the family are looking forward to their first Christmas in their new home. "Last Christmas was awful," Tina recalls. "It was very stressful, with financial issues and relationship problems.

Mission Australia has not only given us stability and security by providing us with somewhere to live, they have given us hope."

"Thanks to Mission Australia we can now look forward to a happy Christmas together."

Our partnership with Tina Gordon and her family is one of many we share with homeless women and their children. This Christmas season we're grateful for your support, because it gives us an opportunity to give vulnerable families a Christmas with new beginnings. Thank you.

*Names and images have been changed to protect the identities of those we help.



Triple Care Farm: a haven for youth for 25 years

Mission Australia takes a holistic approach when it comes to supporting young people whose lives have fallen through the cracks. This year, Mission Australia's Triple Care Farm is proudly celebrating its 25th Anniversary.

Set on more than 100 acres of farm land in the picturesque Southern Highlands, Triple Care Farm is an award-winning residential program. It gives young people aged 16-24 years who are experiencing homelessness, mental illness, substance abuse and acute behavioural problems, a second chance by supporting them in a safe, secure environment over a 12 week period.

In 2013, Triple Care Farm supported 172 young people with great results. At the time of intake, all residents were misusing drugs or alcohol, but six months after completing the program this percentage had dropped to just 23%.

Prior to enrolling at Triple Care Farm only 48% of residents were living in stable housing but by the completion of the program all of them were securely housed.

Triple Care Farm assists young people through a variety of programs and services, including counselling support, educational and visual arts programs, TAFE-accredited training, assistance with computer skills, reading and writing,

drama and music. There is an on-site gym and canoeing, hiking, mountain bike riding and caving activities. The young people also enjoy working with the farm's animals. Recognising that standing on your own two feet takes time, young people at Triple Care Farm are supported for an extended period after they have graduated.

Over the past 25 years Triple Care Farm has helped thousands of young people to make a positive change in their lives. We will be celebrating this exciting milestone at our annual graduation ceremony in December where we will also celebrate the achievement of our 2014 intake.

Aunt's letter of thanks

Every year Triple Care Farm helps young Australians struggling. One of these was sixteen-year-old John*.

The death of a parent affects us at any age, but for John and his family, it was devastating. Within a year of his mother's death, John came to Triple Care Farm in a terrible state. Suffering from an undiagnosed mental health condition combined with his addiction to drugs and alcohol, John was very unwell.

John's aunt tried her hardest to help him but was unable to reach him. After three months at Triple Care Farm, John is now participating in the Stepping Out aftercare program which supports students as they integrate back into the community.

John's aunt Sandra* recently wrote a letter of thanks to our staff.

"John is well and enjoying working on a farm in northern New South Wales. He looks healthier and is now much happier and has a lot more

confidence. The time at Triple Care Farm and all the people working there truly saved John's life. The love, care and unwavering support you all give to the kids on a daily basis is just incredible. John arrived at Triple Care Farm during his darkest days but now remembers his time there as some of the happiest in his life. As a family, we are now donating to Mission Australia's Triple Care Farm. It will never repay your kindness but we hope it shows you how grateful we are for your support. We owe you so much."

This story is just one of many examples of the amazing work we do to help young people in need through our Triple Care Farm service. To find out more about this service, please call 1800 88 88 68.



Rossmore Community Preschool

Research shows that intervening early in the life of developmentally vulnerable children can foster essential skills and literacies to help them make a successful transition to primary school.

Located in the grounds of Rossmore Public School in South West Sydney, Mission Australia's Rossmore Community Preschool provides quality education and care for up to 40 children, including children with disabilities and additional needs, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Through play-based learning, Rossmore's focus is on the complete nurturing of children's learning, and physical and emotional needs. Dedicated and passionate educators offer both individual and group-based programs, with additional support for children and families that need it.

Rossmore's aim is to make sure that parents have the skills and resources to support their children's early development so that they make a successful transition to school. Families are encouraged to develop close relationships with each other so that they have a strong support network around them.

Rossmore works collaboratively with parents and carers to provide each family with the help and support they need; when they need it; and at an early stage.

Ethan's Story

In February, three-year old Ethan* and his mum Julie* arrived at Rossmore Community Preschool. They were referred to us by a family member whose child also attends our preschool. Ethan had just been diagnosed with autism. No parent wants to hear that their child is anything other than happy and healthy and Julie was devastated by Ethan's diagnosis. She felt isolated and alone and didn't know what she could do to support him.



Ethan couldn't speak. He had limited social skills, no awareness of others around him and limited awareness of the outside world. He was prone to extreme emotional outbursts, which were difficult for Julie to deal with.

Our staff worked closely with Ethan and Julie to devise a program tailored to his individual needs. With the help of an occupational therapist and a speech therapist, we were able to give Ethan and his family the support they so desperately needed.

After seven months, Ethan's progress is amazing. He repeats words, allows other children in his personal space and is starting to make eye contact, which he'd never have done when he first arrived. He can recognise colours and some shapes and he loves to count. Best of all, regular reinforcement has meant that his problematic behaviours have reduced.

"Rossmore is fantastic. The educators at Rossmore are so helpful, I feel that I can speak with anyone about Ethan"

Julie is extremely grateful for the help she and Ethan have received through Rossmore and is looking forward to another great year in 2015.

Julie tells us, *"I don't know where both my son and I would be if we did not come here. Even my extended family has noticed a difference. He likes to be with them and he greets them when they come to Rossmore. It's so nice."*

*Names and images have been changed to protect the identities of those we help.

Our little students at Rossmore Community Preschool are very creative. One of the students recently created the above artwork for this newsletter and the students are also planning to make Christmas wreaths for their classrooms and homes this year too. See page 11 to see how you can also make a Christmas wreath for your home.



Celebrating the members of our Benjamin Short Society

When our supporters leave a bequest to Mission Australia in their Will they are invited to become an honorary member of a very special group of people, the Benjamin Short Society. Benjamin Short was the founder of the Sydney City Mission and for more than 150 years his life, Christian faith and legacy has shaped the critical work that Mission Australia does today.

Members of the Benjamin Short Society are people who share the vision, generosity and commitment of Benjamin Short. We invite these members to special events and, with their permission, add their name to a commemorative plaque in Mission Australia's National Office as recognition of their generosity.

In July, Mission Australia held an afternoon tea to unveil two such commemorative plaques. More than 40 guests attended the ceremony, including some direct descendants of Benjamin Short. Barbara McKay, one of Benjamin Short's great grand-daughters, recently left a bequest to Mission Australia in her Will.

Byron Campbell a loyal Mission Australia supporter and Benjamin Short Society member attended the morning tea. Byron has also left a bequest to Mission Australia in his Will. He spent much of his childhood living in an orphanage and has fond memories of a Mission Australia camp he attended as a child. He is passionate about the work Mission Australia does to help Australians in need.



"I've got to help those who can't help themselves", he said. "Many people in these refuges are trying to escape a dreadful life. It is their last resort. They're not bludging. They're there because of circumstances."



Our CEO, Catherine Yeomans attended the morning tea, along with our chairman Ewen Crouch. She gave a short speech to thank our supporters and acknowledge the importance of making a bequest to Mission Australia.

"Our founder, Benjamin Short, had a strong desire to strengthen families, something that continues to be at the core of Mission Australia's work today. By choosing to leave a bequest

to Mission Australia, you will leave an extraordinary imprint on future generations."

"Leaving a legacy in a Will is a very special act of generosity and foresight, because it allows Mission Australia to plan for the future with confidence, invest in long-term programs and services that transforms lives, and seek solutions to the critical social challenges facing vulnerable communities across Australia," she said.

We appreciate and value the support of generous and thoughtful people like our benefactors.

For information about leaving a bequest to Mission Australia in your Will, please call our Bequest Coordinator Pat Brennan on (02) 9217 1064.

Daphne's story

Daphne Myrtle, aged 93 years, has been a valued Mission Australia supporter since the late 1930s. Recently she told us her story about how she came to support Mission Australia.

"I come from a large family of five brothers and two sisters, one of whom had passed away before I was born. We grew up during the Depression which was very hard for my family. My father did a lot of relief work to try and feed us. My elder sister moved away from home for work and would send money home to help us.

"I can remember what it was like to be hungry; what it was like to be cold. I was just a little girl but it was a very tough time."

My brothers and I were all fairly undernourished and I remember how thin our little legs and arms were. At school, the mother of another girl who was in the same class as me would pack a lunch for me as well as her own daughter.

One day my mother went to the City Mission as it was called then and they provided her with food to support us through those very difficult days. When things improved financially and we grew up, my mother continued to visit 'the Mission' and give what she could to thank them for the wonderful help we received, and to help other families that were in the same position as we were.

For almost 40 years I was a nursing Sister and for 16 years I worked at the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane where I saw a lot of families in difficult situations, much like my family were in. I am so grateful for how I was helped as a little girl so I've continued to do what I can to help and support Mission Australia."

We're so grateful for the generous support we've received from Daphne Myrtle and her family over the years. We couldn't continue our critical work without the support of these kind and thoughtful people.

We would love to hear why you support Mission Australia. Tell us what motivates you to give and you may feature in our next newsletter. Email supporter@missionaustralia.com.au or send a letter to Mission Australia Supporter Administration, L7, 580 George St, Sydney NSW 2000.

City2Surf 2015

Registrations are now open for The Sun-Herald 2015 City2Surf fun run, based in Sydney.

Whether you're a seasoned City2Surf competitor out to beat your PB, or a first-time who has always wanted to give it a go, we'd love for you to select Mission Australia as your charity of choice and help us fundraise to help Australians in need.

The Sun-Herald City2Surf is not only Sydney's favourite sporting event but also the world's largest fun run, with over 80,000 participants- a larger number than the New York and London Marathons combined!

The City2Surf course runs for 14km from Sydney's Hyde Park to beautiful Bondi Beach and participants can choose to either walk or run the course.

This year Mission Australia is aiming to raise \$40,000 to help Australians in need- but we need YOUR help! Get involved by either running on your own and striving to achieve your goal time, or creating a team and motivating each other. Set a fundraising total and track your progress! What better way

to get fit, enjoy the outdoors and help Australians in need?

Keep an eye on your email inbox for more information, or visit city2surf.com.au, follow the registration prompts and select 'Team Mission Australia' as the charity of your choice.



Recipes from Charcoal Lane

Greg Hampton, head chef at Mission Australia's Charcoal Lane has provided two delicious festive recipes for our supporters to try at home this summer.



Berry semifreddo

Ingredients:

3 eggs, separated
½ cup caster sugar
375ml cream
1 cup chopped berries* (strawberries, raspberries, cranberries or even cherries)
1tbs ground cinnamon*
Fresh seasonal fruit such as kiwifruit and passion fruit

Method:

- In a large bowl place the egg yolks and half the sugar and whip until thick and pale.
- In a separate bowl whip the cream until soft peaks form.

- In a third bowl whip the egg whites until stiff peak forms, then add the remaining sugar and whip for a further 2 mins.
- Add the berries and cinnamon to the yolk mix and fold in.
- Add the cream to the yolk mix and fold in.
- Finally add the egg white to the mix and gently fold through. Pour into a cling wrap lined loaf tin container and cover.
- Freeze for at least 3-4 hours then remove and cut into slices. Decorate with fresh seasonal fruit and serve immediately.

*Feeling creative? Take a leaf out of Charcoal Lane's book and use muntrie berries and substitute the cinnamon with aniseed myrtle.

Macadamia nut, sage and bacon stuffing

Ingredients:

2 brown onions, diced
1tbs olive oil
200g bacon, roughly diced
1 bunch of sage, finely chopped
500ml red wine
1 kg sausage meat
100g macadamia nuts*, sliced
20 g ground black pepper*

Method:

- Brown the onions in the olive oil then add the bacon and caramelise. Add the sage and deglaze with red wine.
- Reduce the wine until almost dry and allow to cool. Place sausage meat in a large bowl, add the onion mixture, macadamia nuts and pepper.
- Mix thoroughly and use to fill the cavity of your Christmas turkey.

*For a native Australian flavour substitute the macadamia nuts for bunya nuts and the black pepper for ground native pepperleaf.

Located in Melbourne's Fitzroy, Mission Australia's Charcoal Lane is a modern Australian restaurant offering seasonally inspired cuisine infused with native ingredients.

However, the Australian blend of produce, flavours and textures is not all that makes the restaurant unique. Charcoal Lane also operates as a Mission Australia social enterprise program, which provides on-the-job hospitality industry skills, training and experience for Aboriginal youth.

The social enterprise training program is seamlessly integrating into the restaurant – ultimately resulting in a focused and attentive dining experience with a social conscience.

Come and enjoy our professional service in a relaxed and social environment where conversation, curiosity and sharing are encouraged. For bookings please call 03 9418 3400.

 facebook.com/CharcoalLane

Christmas craft

Feeling a little creative? Follow these directions to make a Christmas wreath for your front door so guests will be welcomed festively to your home this summer. Our little students at Rossmore Community Preschool will be making these wreaths for their classrooms and homes leading up to Christmas.

You will need:

- Access to a backyard or local park
- A pair of scissors
- Twine
- Thicker red ribbon
- A 3M hook for your front door

Optional decorations:

- Flowers (we used Bottle Brush for a Christmas feel)
- Pinecones or gumnuts (these could also be painted gold or silver beforehand)
- Additional ribbon, tied in to bows
- Candy canes

Step 1

Scour your backyard or local park for branches that can be used for your wreath. It's best to use a mix of different branches; some finer and more malleable and others sturdier and more visually appealing.

Step 2

Use your thinnest branches to make a circular shape and either secure by intertwining the branches together, or by securing with the twine.

We used Potato Vine as the base of our wreath as it allows you to easily bend it in to a circular wreath shape. If you are struggling you could purchase a wreath foam or wreath wire (available at craft stores) and wrap the branches around this.

Step 3

Intertwine your remaining heavier branches around the bottom of the wreath. You may need to trim leaves and move branches and twigs around to keep the weight even.

Step 4

If using flowers poke these through the wreath now or secure with twine, if required.

Step 5

Fix a 3M hook to your front door (if it doesn't already have a hook that you can use). Tie the red ribbon in a bow at the top of the wreath and hang on your front door.



We would love to see the Christmas wreaths made by our supporters. Please post a picture of your wreath to our Facebook page and we'll share a few of our favourites over the next few months.

 [facebook.com/MissionAust](https://www.facebook.com/MissionAust)



A simple wish together at Christmas



More than
62,287

families are homeless*

*11,972 two parent families + 50,315 single parent families, AIHW 2013.

Help bring families
together this Christmas
Please donate today

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missionaustralia.com.au/christmasappeal



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