



STORIES

EDUCATION	01
HOMELESSNESS	02
PALLIATIVE CARE	04
DISABILITY	05
EARLY YEARS	05
SAYING THANKS	06
COMMUNITY	07

John* came to MCM earlier this year desperate for support. He had just been made the sole guardian of his four sons, but he was living in a rooming house at the time, which meant his children were dispersed among other family and friends.

Full story page 02



A WELCOME RETURN TO SPRING

Even with the challenges we've all faced this year, it's important to celebrate the beautiful parts of life and there's no better time for that than spring. Whether it's stopping to quite literally smell the flowers or shrugging off those heavy winter jackets in favour of something a bit lighter, life's little pleasures are more apparent in spring. And that's our theme for this edition of the newsletter — the joys that have shone through in the darkness. I hope you enjoy reading it, because it's only possible thanks to you.

Vicki Sutton
CEO

EDUCATION IN THE VIRTUAL WORLD



Like most universities and schools in Victoria, students attending MCM's educational facility, The Hester Hornbrook Academy, have been encouraged to learn from home during lockdown. However we are doing everything we can to make the transition as seamless as possible.

We delivered laptops and internet dongles to students who don't have their own devices and provide regular food vouchers and food parcels to families in need. Our students meet with their teachers online first thing every day and then have 1-on-1 "focus sessions" with teachers to assist in completing their work. Of course, there are some students who aren't able to work from home, so they continue to attend the campus under strict hygiene and social distancing rules. We've also discovered that some students have thrived in a remote learning environment!

Youth workers are checking in with our students daily to check on their mental health. We are very pleased to report that we've seen an increase in the number of students accessing food and material aid through our Wellbeing Program. This would not be possible, however, without your continued support. So on behalf of the students and staff of The Hester Hornbrook Academy, thank you!

THE
HESTER HORNBOOK
ACADEMY

mcm.
melbourne city mission





CREATING A HOME FOR A FATHER AND HIS SONS



John* came to MCM earlier this year desperate for support. He had just been made the sole guardian of his four sons, but he was living in a rooming house at the time, which meant his children were dispersed among other family and friends. John was desperate to find a place to live and bring them all back together.

We managed to find John a suitable private rental property, and assisted him to access the Private Rental Assistance Program to help with rent in advance and bond payments. However, as he had been living in a rooming house, he had absolutely no furniture or household goods — nor did he have anything to stock the pantry with. Anyone with sons will know how

concerning that is, and John has four of them!

The coronavirus lockdown has meant that most of the low-cost furniture places we normally call upon are closed. But because we have the incredible support of people like you, we were able to access enough money to provide this family with all the essential household furniture:

- five beds
- two couches
- a kitchen table and chairs
- coffee table
- television
- bedding and towels
- kitchen goods (pots and pans, crockery, cutlery etc).
- fridge
- washing machine
- food vouchers to stock the fridge and pantry.

John said he is completely blown away at the support he's received and that his sons are also settling in

happily to their new home. We regularly keep in touch with John, to make sure he is coping and we have referred him and the boys to ongoing family support. From John, from the boys and from us, thank you so much for helping this family stay together and be set up for a bright future.



A VERY WELCOME HAMPER

One of the challenges many people experiencing homelessness are facing right now is access to food and other essential items — particularly during the first lockdown, when many people were hoarding toilet paper and groceries. So in late March, MCM paired up with Foodbank to plan, put together and distribute food hampers for families and single adults who reside in MCM refuges, crisis accommodation, in motels, or sharing with people they know. All up, we were able to provide 87 households with vital food supplies. Well done everyone!

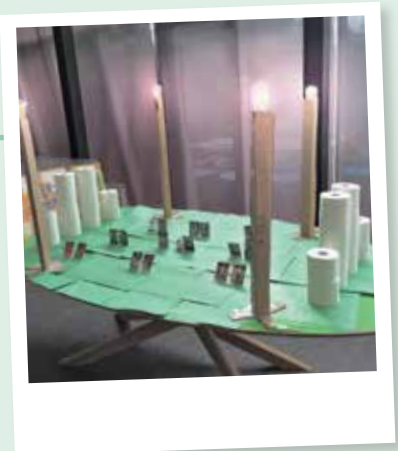


NO SLEEPING AT THE 'G THIS YEAR BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP YOU!

As you know, Sleep At The 'G is MCM's biggest fundraiser of the year. But two months before the planned event, in line with Federal and State Government advice regarding COVID-19, MCM made the hard decision to cancel our much-loved flagship fundraising event.

However, we know our supporters don't give up that easily! So we reached out and asked our passionate supporters to run their own virtual fundraising activities — and they responded in droves. They wore their PJs to work, they camped out in their backyards, and they auctioned off their special skills and services.

Together, including several matching company donations, we raised over \$160,000 to help build the West Refuge for young people experiencing homelessness in western Melbourne.



“Like hospitals, visiting times in all palliative care units across the country have been reduced to the bare minimum. One visitor per day for one hour — it’s heartbreaking.”

IT'S INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE NURSE AND WITH GOOD REASON

While so many of us are protecting our elderly and vulnerable people by keeping our distance, nurses like Anne Myers are on the frontline, ensuring those in palliative care receive the dignity and care they deserve.

Having been a palliative care nurse with Melbourne City Mission for 14 years, Anne has been there to support many families through their most

devastating moments. But she said coronavirus has made an already heartbreaking situation even more difficult.

“It is bringing in extra ethical and moral decisions for people — what’s the best thing to do for a loved one?”

“Like hospitals, visiting times in all palliative care units across the country have been reduced to the bare minimum. One visitor per day for one hour ... [it’s] heartbreaking.”

Still, Anne and her colleagues do everything they can to make sure people receiving palliative care always experience warmth and connection. Whether it’s reading out messages from their family members, reading a book aloud or simply listening to their stories, Anne isn’t just a nurse providing critical medical care — she is a friend too.

“Anne is just the greatest. Her company keeps me going each day”.

DAISY FINDS HER GROOVE

Another program that is seeing positive results in response to our programs being conducted via video chat is our Early Childhood Intervention Service (ECIS). Sally Moore is the manager of the program, which is run by a team of allied health and specialist teachers who provide children with disabilities or developmental delays with the building blocks they need in order to develop skills and build their confidence. The program is also about coaching parents in assisting their child's development.

Sally says what her team have noticed since moving all group sessions over to online video calls is higher engagement amongst the children.

“For a lot of children, it has actually worked better because

they are seeing their therapist or specialist teacher through their favourite medium — screens! Lots of children have actually engaged a lot more and have been prepared to do more work so we've been able to keep their attention for longer and practice skills more frequently.”

One such child is five-year-old Daisy*, who was born with a significant physical disability. Since joining the ECIS's virtual Song Time group, they've noticed her willingness to practice her fine motor skills and coordination skills.

“What we've heard from her mum is that she's absolutely loving it. Because while all of the songs and activities that are planned come from a therapeutic basis, it doesn't

feel like therapy to her. So she's able to participate like any other little girl would and just enjoy doing the movements.”

Another benefit of holding the group sessions virtually is the flexibility it gives families to participate, no matter where they are. Daisy was recently admitted to hospital but her mum said they are still planning on joining in on their weekly Song Time.

“She loves music, so she's always engaged, she's always laughing and participating... and when one is missing from the group, all the other kids notice so it's great she can do it from wherever she is.”

Good onya Daisy! We can't wait to see the moves you bust out next!

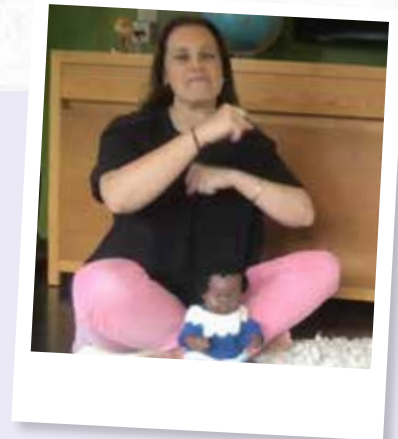
MOTHER GOOSE GOES ONLINE!

In this strange new world, we're all finding ourselves working and adapting our lives in different ways. For our MCM program coordinators, this involves rethinking how they interact with the people they work with so that our important services can still be accessed by our clients.

Back in March, two of our Family Support Workers, Julie and Kirsty, were trying to think of ways to provide resources to families who weren't able to physically attend their Parent-Child Mother Goose program, which is a parenting program for families with young children across a range of MCM programs.

Julie and Kirsty didn't want these families to have to miss out on this vital parenting group — so they decided to become YouTube stars! They got together to film themselves singing, performing sign language and interacting with dolls in order to demonstrate to parents how they can engage their children in important developmental and playtime activities.

Initially filmed as a trial, the video has spread throughout MCM and has been very well received by parents throughout the program. Kirsty and Julie plan on continuing to produce their videos, albeit from separate locations for the time being, and they will be available on the MCM YouTube channel for the use of all MCM clients. Thank you so much ladies — we love your work!



WE'RE IN THE BUSINESS OF SAYING THANKS

We are incredibly lucky to have the support of so many big businesses who are willing to lend a hand or donate to MCM during one of the most difficult times in our history. We want to take a moment to acknowledge and say thank you to these generous people.

RACV

MCM was one of the recipients of RACV's emergency goods and assist service, which delivered more than 18,000 meals to vulnerable communities across Victoria affected by coronavirus.

Parliament House

The Victorian Parliament House kitchen has also been providing meals for vulnerable members of the community — over 175,000 meals have been donated to organisations experiencing higher demand during the coronavirus health crisis, including MCM.

Uniqlo

We received an incredible donation of 166,000 face masks from Uniqlo. It was so generous that MCM was able to share and distribute masks to 27 other not-for-profit organisations, supporting the wider sector in helping to keep us all safe.

ANZ

We were blown away to receive 60 laptops and 50 mobiles to assist young people experiencing homelessness through isolation.

IKEA

The furniture superstore donated 500 pillows, plus furniture, bedding and linen to our youth refuges, keeping young people nice and cosy during winter.

Rosbert International

Christmas came early when Rosbert International arrived with a van full of brand-new, warm winter clothing for people experiencing homelessness.

IAG, ANZ, IDP Education, PwC

We are so grateful you matched donations for us and ran your own workplace giving programs amongst your generous staff.

Tetra Laval, Newcrest Mining, RACV, Bunnings, RCR International, Officeworks, K2LD

We received significant financial donations from these businesses, which will go so far in helping us plan for what the future may hold. We are so grateful.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Apparently ... not much! In our last newsletter, we asked you all to send in some ideas for a new title of the bi-annual publication — and apparently you all love the name Impact and don't want us to change it! There were, of course, some cheeky ideas that we dare not print, as well as some lovely inspiring titles that we've filed away for later. But hey, you're the boss! This newsletter will remain Impact for another day!





IN GOOD COMPANY

We have been incredibly touched at the number of volunteers who have enquired about joining our Community Visitors Scheme, which is all about providing company for people in the community and aged care facilities who may not have any other visitors. We have seen 15 new matches made since lockdown began; 11 people in residential care and four in private homes.

This program has been running for years and it brings immense joy to both the residents and volunteers. Of course, with restrictions now in place, and

all aged care homes in total lockdown many of our long-running volunteers are finding new and innovative ways to interact with residents.

Pre-coronavirus, a volunteer named Fatima* would visit her home client Sandy* every three days, in order to walk Sandy's dog for her and then enjoy a cup of tea together. Since going into lockdown, Fatima has purchased her own dog leash and now waits at the back fence for Sandy's dog. After taking him for a walk, Fatima returns him home and she and Sandy have a chat on either side of the fence.

Another volunteer, Lee*, who is the only person who visits Margaret*, now takes her lunch over to the aged care facility

and they have a "lawn picnic"! Margaret sits inside her hallway with the screen door shut and Lee sits on the lawn, each enjoying their own lunch, a cuppa and a catch up on the weekly news.

If you are interested in joining this rewarding and wonderful program, we are recruiting via virtual methods! You can keep in touch with your matched resident via letters, emails, phone, video chats or, like Lee and Fatima, by doing "window" visits.

Visit mcm.org.au/get-involved or call 03 9486 8436 to find out more.

*Names have been changed to protect people's privacy

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Donate online at mcm.org.au/makeanimpact or call 1300 364 507