

Crossway LifeCare Annual Report 2016



helping people in tough places

flourish



Senior Pastor's Message

In the pages of this annual report you will read of the extraordinary efforts of the LifeCare team, both paid and volunteers. This is a high impact ministry designed to see people in tough places flourish. LifeCare offers a suite of ministries which all have a personal touch and are designed to give a hand-up rather than a hand-out. Ultimately we want to see people get off the merry-go-round of hardship so that they are empowered to live a happier and more productive life. In contrast to so many care agencies, LifeCare is very much local and personal. People are treated with dignity and services are accessible.

As you press further into this report you will read of changed lives too. People who have needed the subsidised services of the Counselling Centre or have survived domestic abuse and are finding support and community through the Women's Centre, are being transformed by the love and compassion of this amazing team.

Some have needed the services of our Financial Care program as they have worked their way through budgeting issues, and reaped the benefits of the Community Store as they sorted things through. Or it may be those who have been supported through COACH and have received Community Mentoring for their young person, child or for the whole family. This friend with purpose has helped them to set and meet life goals and is often the best thing that has ever happened in their lives.

For some, transformation has come through being part of our Community Meals program which has given them a sense of dignity in community with a meal, fun and building up a network of relationships which may have dwindled through some of life's hardships.

LifeCare is an outstanding example of what can happen when a dedicated team give themselves to the goal of seeing people in tough places flourish. Be encouraged as you read.

Dale Stephenson
Senior Pastor

Executive Director's Message



Dear Friends,

Each day I am touched by the stories of lives transformed because of the dedication of the LifeCare staff and volunteers, a team who care deeply for those struggling in our community. I'm moved by the passion and sacrifices made to see people in tough places flourish emotionally, socially, economically and spiritually. It is an amazing privilege to be a part of the LifeCare team as we witness breakthrough from the trauma and anguish of abuse, relationship breakdown, mental health issues and other challenging life situations.

I'm also inspired by the dedication of those who have journeyed with LifeCare, our supporters. We have seen amazing results in 2016 as a result of the incredible generosity of those who support our work.

Because of you, our supporters, in 2016 nearly 800 people who were struggling in our community are now flourishing and 37 people have new found faith. Because of you, we have an amazing new building, making it possible to see even more people in our community flourish.

I'm moved each time I see our new LifeCare Centre because it came about as the result of the generosity and sacrificial giving of those members of the Crossway community who share our heart for helping people in tough places flourish. It stands as a representation of Crossway's heart response to those struggling, those in need.

When I look at the new LifeCare Centre I'm also filled with gratitude to you, our supporters. You are the cornerstone of all we do for those in need. Your compassion has made

it possible for those suffering in our community to have hope for the future. I am truly thankful that you have chosen to partner with LifeCare to make a real difference in our community.

I'm also thankful to Sam, who shared his story of transformation at our 2016 Gala Ball. Sam went from gang culture and brokenness to a life of faith and healing, and is today the proud father of a daughter who is now attending a top girl's school on full scholarship! Sam represents one of many whose lives have been transformed by the care they have received at LifeCare.

2016 was an eventful year:

- 794 people's lives transformed through Care, Healing and Hope
- 54 new volunteers
- Gala 'Classic Hollywood' Ball raised \$75,000
- Team LifeCare in the Melbourne Marathon - top fundraising team for the fourth year in a row
- Visit by Senator, the Honorable Michaelia Cash, Minister for Women, Minister for Employment
- Visit by Julia Banks, Federal Member for Chisholm in

the Australian House of Representatives; Julia also acknowledged LifeCare twice in the House of Representatives

- Neil Angus, State Member for Forest Hill, visited on several occasions and continues to work closely with us in the community

Thank you to our incredible staff and volunteers who give selflessly of themselves to serve. And thank you to all of you who support us prayerfully and financially. We couldn't do what we do without all of you!

In this annual report you will see evidence of the tremendous good you have done.

May God continue to bless you as you are a blessing others!

Gail Cameron
Executive Director

“
Because of you, our supporters, in 2016 nearly 800 people who were struggling in our community are now flourishing.
”



Grace's Story

28 year old Grace* is a single mum and domestic violence survivor. There were a lot of unhappy childhood memories for her but despite her difficult upbringing, Grace has turned out to be an amazing mum to her son, Dylan.* Here is her story:

"I was struggling to survive in all aspects of my life, financially and emotionally. I was alone and was going through a dark phase. I had no housing and my son wasn't with me. I had lost my inner will power and who I was as a person."

After years of physical and emotional abuse by her partner of four years, Grace decided to leave the relationship in search of a safer place. She spent nights on various friends' couches and because she couldn't find a stable place to stay, she had to leave her baby boy behind with her ex. Without Dylan by her side and struggling to find money to rent a place, Grace became stressed and anxious.

Then one day, she met a lady, Sarah, who brought her to Crossway Church and LifeCare. Grace was surprised to meet extremely generous people within the community that welcomed her with no judgement.

"They invited me to their homes, made meals for me, gave me basic necessities such as clothes but most importantly, they gave me hope for a better life."

With LifeCare's help and support, Grace was determined

to rebuild her life and be a role model for Dylan. Through counselling, LifeCare helped Grace address her anxiety issues and improve her confidence. A financial coach also supported her with her financial problems by setting goals and working out her priorities.

"LifeCare provided counselling and financial coaching to help me with my emotional and financial problems. They were there to walk with me on my journey. It has been a priceless privilege for me to meet such a pure hearted community that holds only good intentions to help you without making you feel disadvantaged. In my 28 years, I have never met such great people - loving, open, with so much care in their hearts."

Grace's life may have spiralled out of control and isolation from the community may have been inevitable. Instead, Grace has managed to get her life back on track.

"Without LifeCare's help, I would still be stuck in that dark place. I now have a beautiful home, my little boy is reunited with me and my sense of belonging, individuality and peace is returning. Crossway Church, LifeCare and the beautiful people are a part of our journey and are bettering our lives."

**Grace and Dylan's names have been changed to protect their identities.*

“

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”

LifeCare Services - Celebrating life transformation

In 2016, nearly 800 individuals and families accessed our services at LifeCare. 80% of those we helped this year successfully achieved their goals and we have seen an average of 22% improvement in the resilience and mental wellbeing of our clients. 37 people also found new faith in their journey and were transformed spiritually. It was a privilege to witness the many lives transformed through the integrated team effort across our core services.



Christina Lim
Head of Services



Financial Care

Financial Care provides free, personalized support to people facing financial challenges. Our financial coaching program, B-Empowered, provides ten sessions of one-to-one tailored support to help people gain control of their financial situations. It is followed up by monthly coaching support as needed. We also provide financial relief in the form of food parcels and occasional financial assistance where needed.

A two-year evaluation project on B-Empowered, funded by a Financial Literacy Australia grant, commenced early this year. The first interim evaluation report was released in November and the preliminary results are very positive.

The Financial Care team continues to help participants achieve their goals, such as clearing debts, achieving savings goals and reducing financial stress as they become more confident in managing their budgets.



“
I am now in better control of my bills, am debt free, and am no longer ruled by financial stress.
”

Counselling

Our team of professional psychologists and counsellors provide generalist counselling, as well as specialised counselling for issues such as relationship breakdown, domestic violence, mental health issues and addiction. Several of our counsellors and psychologists are bilingual (English and Chinese). They are well positioned to serve the local culturally-diverse community.

The team undertook special training in domestic violence in response to the increasing number of women and families seeking help in this area. Some counsellors also undertook play therapy to increase their effectiveness in trauma-related work.



“
I learnt things about myself that I didn't know before; it gives me a renewed confidence.
”

Mentoring

LifeCare runs a community mentoring program, COACH (Creating Opportunities and Casting Hope) to help children, youth and families who are in need achieve their life goals. A COACH mentor is a friend with purpose, offering practical help and mentoring to build resilience and empower individuals and families.

COACH mentors are volunteers recruited and trained to walk alongside those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged in the community. All volunteers undergo a rigorous screening process before being engaged as mentors. They are personally supported and supervised by LifeCare's professional social and community workers.

The program has a proven track record of bringing about transformation and aims to break the cycle of generational poverty and family breakdown. It works to prevent family violence and strengthens families, young people and communities.

“
My mentor has literally been the best thing to ever happen to me. I highly recommend this program to other people.”



Thirty-two new mentors were successfully recruited and added to the LifeCare COACH team, giving a total of over 100 mentors. The dedicated and caring team mentored many and helped participants to achieve life-changing outcomes such as gaining employment, better parenting, mental health improvements and connecting to community.

COACH National

In late 2015, LifeCare began leading the national deployment of COACH, having negotiated a joint venture with the previous owners, Mission Australia. Under LifeCare's leadership, we have seen almost 100% growth in licensed programs from 21 to 39. The program was also extended in 2016 to include a stream for children so that parents, youth and children can all be empowered and supported in achieving goals. We are thrilled to be sharing our mentoring model so that we can see people right across Australia, who would otherwise struggle, flourish. COACH began supporting new partners in Western Australia and now has programs operating in five states, with the majority in Victoria.

Nationally, after 12 months of mentoring, outcomes in 2016 included:

- Life goals - over 80% of graduates achieved a significant goal such as employment or training; and
- Greater resilience - improved by at least 25% on average.



LifeCare Women's Centre

The focus of the LifeCare Women's Centre (LWC) is to help single mums and their children who have been affected by domestic violence. LWC is a safe place for healing, peer support and growth emotionally, socially, economically and spiritually through therapeutic group work and activities. We care deeply for the women and their children, providing specialised care as they heal, grow, learn life skills and form community. The children's program is specialised to meet the complex needs. The women and children are also supported by our broader services (counselling, mentoring and financial care) as they recover from traumatic experiences and develop emotional resilience and life skills.

A participant met with Senator Michaela Cash and MP Julia Bank. She shared her personal story as an abused victim and how the Women's Centre helped transform her life and that of many other women who attend the Centre.

“
I've made so many positive changes in my life... I'm a better mum to my kids.”



Communities groups & meals

Social Isolation is at the core of many of the modern social issues. The monthly B-Together dinner is our key community space. We offer a nutritious meal, fun activities, opportunities to meet new friends and a short message on values. B-Together aims to break the cycle of social isolation experienced by many disadvantaged people in the community. The connection and mutual support help improve the holistic wellbeing of individuals and families.

“
Everyone is so nice here. Why is everyone so nice? Most people aren't nice to me but here everyone is nice.”



Around 200 people attended the Christmas B-Together. There were lots of fun activities for everyone, Christmas dinner was served and a Christmas message shared. One little boy said to a volunteer after the puppet show, “Everyone is so nice here. Why is everyone so nice? Most people aren't nice to me but here everyone is nice.” The volunteer then took the opportunity to explain the Christmas message of love that had been shared in the context of his situation.

B-Together gives hope, love and joy to many who seldom experience this.

Programs and Services	Target	Achieved
Number of new participation	760	794 ↑
Number of new volunteers	47	54 ↑
Wellbeing Increased*	19%	22% ↑
Achieved goals*	76%	80% ↑

*Percentage based on those who graduated by the end of 2016

Operations

2016 was a strong year financially, with revenue increasing by 25% from the previous year. This was due to a rise in community awareness of the positive life transforming impact that LifeCare is having in our community. Hearts were stirred as stories of transformation were shared, leading to more people joining with us to help people in tough places flourish. Fundraising outcomes went up as a result and, more importantly, we were able to help even more people move beyond their challenging circumstances into healing and new life!

Our rise in revenue made it possible to increase our investment in operational expenditure in 2016. This enabled us to achieve greater results in the community across all of our service areas, reaching nearly 800 people in need locally. A main area of investment was our COACH

mentoring program, which LifeCare now supports to make COACH available across Australia. COACH now has a stream for children as well as youth, adults and families.

One of the highlights of our financial year was the completion of the construction of our new LifeCare Centre, as building donations of \$970,822 allowed the building to be completed. We now have a bright, uplifting and welcoming space for our clients, with additional counselling rooms, a large 'grocery store' style pantry, specialised therapeutic rooms for play therapy, family therapy and group work, and space for our ever increasing volunteer teams.

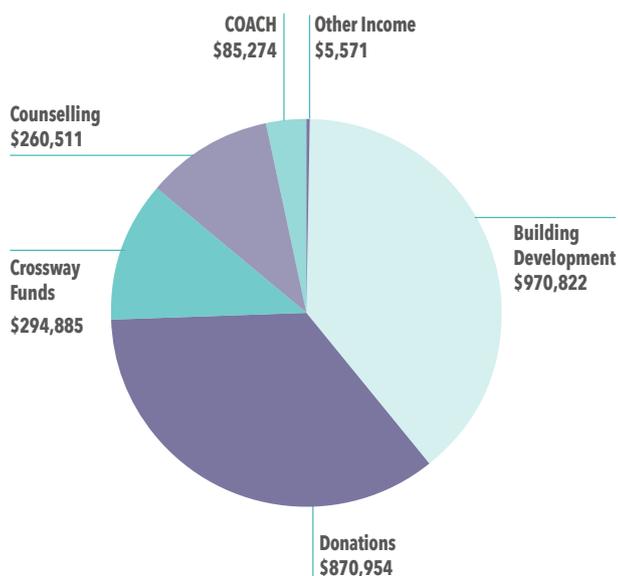
We are thankful for our strong financial position that is a direct result of the

generosity of many. These figures represent people's lives healed, empowered and changed for the better. LifeCare has impacted so many individuals and their families and helped them to find a way forward and flourish, often out of desperate situations.

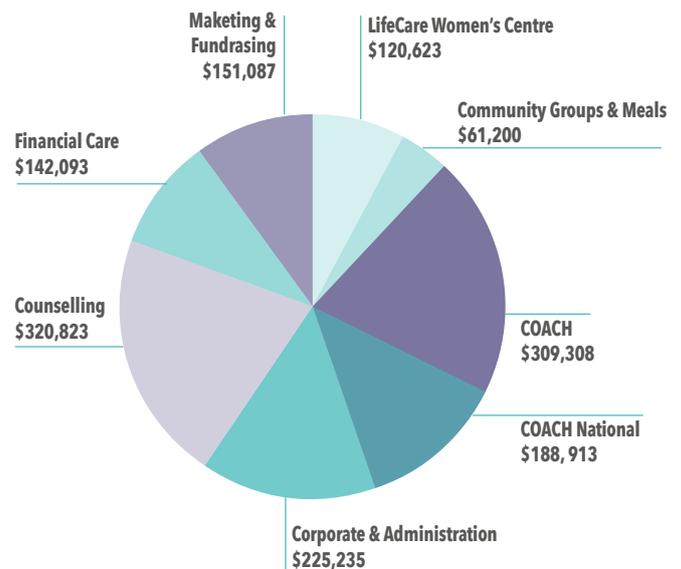
We are grateful to many supporters who continue to support the work of LifeCare with generous donations and grants.

Your donations are used wisely and strategically, and always for the utmost benefit of the community we serve.

Revenue



Expenditure



	2016	2015	Difference
Revenue	\$2,488,017	\$1,996,814	25% ↑
Expenditure	\$1,519,282	\$1,300,649	17% ↑



Care
Healing
Hope

“

The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these. Mark 12:31

”

LifeCare’s vision is to see people in tough places flourish. At the heart of everything we do, you’ll find our passion to walk alongside individuals, children and families who are struggling in our community.

We believe God cares deeply for the marginalized and these are the people we seek to serve.

Though we are faith-based, we are not faith-biased as we seek to benefit people no matter their religion, race, disability or sexual orientation. Being non-judgmental is core to our values.

Through our holistic model of care and community, we help people overcome their day-to-day emotional or financial challenges, we provide on-going support for women and children recovering from domestic violence, we walk alongside young people and help them overcome barriers at home or in school. Most importantly, we help everyone that walks through our doors find **care, healing and hope** for a better future.



LifeCare acknowledges and appreciates the valuable support of the following partners and sponsors:

Partners:



Sponsors:



To learn more about how you can help people in tough places flourish, visit crosswaylifecare.org.au or call **9886 3899**

