

Flourish

TCROSSWAY LIFECARE

Crossway LifeCare Newsletter

March 2022



A Word from Our CEO



Matt Jones

CEO Crossway LifeCare

It's an incredible privilege to have stepped into the CEO role at Crossway LifeCare at the beginning of this year. I first started working at LifeCare back around Easter 2019 with the responsibility of building community opportunities that primarily support and empower people already engaging in our LifeCare services. I have a background in pastoral ministry and have a deep passion to see people transformed through engaging in community. I believe God has called me to be in this role at this time. I am learning the ropes quickly and am looking forward to supporting our wonderful staff and helping to strategically navigate LifeCare into the future. I'm also grateful to Fiona Hall for her brilliant leadership over the previous season.

As we welcome in the year 2022, there's a powerful sense of hope at what God has in store for us as we tentatively step into a more open world again.

Our counselling team is working at capacity, while COACH Mentoring and Financial Care are gearing up to recruit more mentors and rebuild volunteer teams. Our Family Violence Programs have started back, with weekly sessions face to face. We are ready to meet clients and participants in person whenever possible and are recognising the blessing of being able to easily offer telehealth and online options.

Our Community Pantry continues to flourish and has helped us to develop a more integrated and holistic service across LifeCare. We have some great stories showing how participants are engaging across community activities and professional services. In particular those who access the Community Pantry or join the Community Pantry Team are utilising our other services.

We are excited to begin expanding LifeCare beyond Burwood East as we continue to explore opportunities with Crossway's South East Campus.

We are really grateful for all of our partners who continue to encourage us, work alongside us and resource us at this time. Your support has enabled LifeCare to thrive and grow amid these challenging and compelling times.

While the need remains huge, we are grateful at LifeCare to be making a positive impact in bringing healing and new strength to people's lives. This newsletter offers just a snapshot of all that is happening at LifeCare. We thank you again for your incredible support to help make it happen.

The End of a Season

We would like to share our gratitude and appreciation for our beloved friend and colleague Lal Joshua, who will shortly be concluding his time at Crossway LifeCare. He plans to retire from full time work.

Over the last 7 years Lal has worked in the COACH mentoring team at LifeCare in Burwood East. For many of those years he has been leading that team. Lal has given himself wholeheartedly to this work and his contribution will continue to be plain to see long after he has left us. Thanks so much Lal!

We have learnt a lot from Lal and his leadership. Lal's engineering background skilled him with excellent project managing skills. He has sharpened our COACH team's organisation, so that it works as a well-oiled machine. This has always been beautifully balanced by Lal's philosophy that work should always be fun. The lightness and good humour Lal has brought to his team and to the broader culture at LifeCare has helped to make it a vibrant work place and has helped to carry us through the more



difficult times. Also, most importantly, Lal's deep and careful commitment to supporting COACH participants has set a high standard for us all. Lal's wisdom, compassion and quality of care for people doing it tough, often in complex situations, has been a delight to witness and learn from.

We trust and pray that God will bless him and his wife and family as Lal moves into this new season in his life.



A Financial COACH Success Story

When Linda first started with Financial COACH she had difficulty managing her budget. She spent all her income from Centrelink each week and did not have any savings. She could not control her buying behaviour and would buy things she didn't need or even use.

With the help of her mentor, Linda has learned to distinguish between needs and wants and to think carefully before spending money on discretionary items. On many occasions, Linda will choose not to buy something which is not a necessity, which has helped her gain control of her finances.

After doing a budget with her mentor, Linda identified that she could reduce her spending on groceries and her mentor helped her explore some practical steps she could take. Linda realised she was buying extra or more expensive items because of the way they were presented in the supermarket. She decided to set herself a budget each week and now shops online, which helps her stay more disciplined in the items she selects and allows her to stay within her budget.

The changes Linda has made to her spending habits have allowed her to save some money to handle unexpected bills and to be able to buy Christmas presents for her children.

Linda said, "I have opened up a flexi-saver account and have saved \$280. It is in an account I don't touch. Thanks to your guidance and support, it has given me the confidence to make better choices with how and what I do with my money. I can't thank you enough for your time, patience and non-judgemental approach. I am finally at a stage in my life where I am comfortable with making better decisions with using my weekly budget and spending some time each week on the necessities and thinking twice on the wants (ie shopping). I highly recommend anyone that is in a position that I once was to seek the assistance of the Financial COACH program at LifeCare. It is life changing. Now I can focus on other things in my life."



Building Community Through Food Relief

In 2020, the LifeCare Community Pantry responded to the covid pandemic by delivering 2,200 food hampers to people's homes. With extended lockdowns, industry-wide shutdowns and movement restrictions, delivering food hampers was an appropriate response, even if it was more of a hand-out rather than a hand-up.

With increased freedoms in 2021, we changed our approach to providing food relief through the LifeCare pantry. We wound back the delivery of food hampers and asked participants to come in to the pantry to pick up food hampers in person. We created space for people to sit and have a coffee and a chat whilst their hamper is being prepared, allowing us to connect with people on a deeper level. As we hear their stories, we are able to provide a friendly listening ear, and referrals to LifeCare and other services when more professional help is required.

One of the highlights of the new approach to the pantry is that the majority of the team running the pantry are participants in various LifeCare services. It has been great to see the team growing closer to each other, getting to know other participants, growing in confidence, and providing support to each other during the week as well. We're looking forward to seeing the pantry continue to grow as a community in 2022, not just as a place to get food.



Anita's Story

Anita was born overseas and came to Australia to further her education and pursue a career. However, in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic led to severe lockdowns across Victoria, she found herself struggling to make ends meet. During this time, someone told her about a website where she could access support, and through this she came across Crossway LifeCare.

Struggling financially, Anita contacted LifeCare to request a grocery hamper. Along with the much-needed food items came a brochure describing all the services that LifeCare has to offer. It was the beginning of a beautiful relationship.

Anita saw that LifeCare provided Financial COACH and signed up for it. She was matched with a Financial Mentor who helped her with budgeting and started to link her in with other essential supports. Anita also found out that she could access the pantry more than once and received essential food items over several weeks. She was linked in with the Alpha course at Crossway Church which she shared helped her further her spiritual journey.

Anita recently said that going through the pandemic alone wasn't easy. She missed her family who were overseas, didn't have a job, and most days didn't have food or the money to care for her medical expenses. Anita reported that Crossway LifeCare was an essential support during this season.

After a short while, Anita started to volunteer at the food pantry regularly as a way of giving back. Anita said that this changed her life by providing a reason to get out of the isolating lockdowns, providing purpose as she gave back to the community, and providing connection as she made great friends with other team members.

Around this time, Anita was also experiencing family violence, perpetrated by her live-in partner. She shared that the pantry unknowingly became her safe haven. "Once a week for two hours, I felt safe," she said. After being involved in the pantry team for a little while, Anita felt safe to confide in one of the other team members that she was experiencing family violence. That team member was able to link her in with the team leader of Family Violence Programs at LifeCare, who began to journey with her through her experience of family violence. The Family Violence team supported Anita to reach out for important support and to eventually escape the family violence situation.

During this time, Anita received wrap-around support from Crossway LifeCare. The Community Engagement team assisted with retrieving and storing her belongings when she escaped. Someone that she had connected with through volunteering at the Food Pantry offered a safe place to stay in the short-term. Anita was linked in with a Counselor through LifeCare who provided therapeutic support, while the Family Violence team continued to check in around her practical needs.

Once Anita had a safe place to live and had started to recover from the impact of family violence, LifeCare linked her in with an external program

that supports women to find employment. After participating in this program for several months, she was able to secure full-time employment and move into safe, long-term housing.

Anita also joined Courage to Heal, a 12-month group therapy program for victim-survivors of family violence run by Crossway LifeCare. Through this group, she connected with other women who have experienced family violence and will continue to journey with them over the coming months.

Supporting Anita over the last two years has been an honour. We have seen her overcome many challenges during this time and she has grown immeasurably in confidence. Anita recently shared some reflections on her time at LifeCare:

"I thought I was alone in a foreign land, and for the most part, I was. But my life changed the moment I got acquainted with Crossway LifeCare. It helped me feel safe again. I have a community of people who are there to support and encourage. I don't feel as alone. The support I have reached from LifeCare has made me feel better. Even my family, who is overseas, also is at peace knowing that I have such beautiful people in my life.

I am very hopeful about the future, but I am not putting too much pressure on myself. I am taking life one day at a time, and I really feel happy about it. All in all, my experience at Crossway LifeCare was one I will cherish all my life."

Anita's story is just one example of how Crossway LifeCare's services work together to provide people with holistic, collaborative support. We are passionate about ensuring people in tough places receive tangible support so that they can overcome their challenges and flourish.

A Friend of Crossway LifeCare Offers Her Help

In 2020, Sarah, with some help from her mum, made over 500 cards to put into LifeCare food parcels to encourage people. After a bit of a break, she decided to break her own record, and is now on her way to making 600 new cards. The feedback we received in 2020 was so positive, telling of how the messages in the cards touched people, made them smile, and encouraged them. We thank Sarah and her mum for their thoughtfulness and generosity, which will surely touch many more people 2022.



Counselling

Hope • Healing • Care

Our counselling department has been using Survey Monkey to obtain feedback from our clients regarding their overall experience at LifeCare, and more specifically, how helpful they were finding their therapy. While the responses have made us aware of areas for improvement, they have also provided a lot of encouragement to our team. Here are some of the encouraging comments we have received.

"My fiancé and I participated in the LifeCare premarital counselling, and we learned so much. We are so appreciative of our counsellor. The time and attention she provided for us individually and as a couple provided us with a wider lens before entering into marriage and an understanding of how we should love each other more as we enter marriage. We would definitely recommend LifeCare to our friends as it was a great decision for us to join the premarital counselling."

"My counsellor is amazing. I have seen a number of counsellors over the years and I have finally found someone with a deep faith and excellent training and professionalism. I have been given tools to face life's challenges in a practical way and I feel very empowered."

"I am very happy with the services extended to me thus far as they have helped me regain my confidence, knowing there's a way out after years of negativity. Sincere thanks to my counsellor and the whole team at LifeCare."

"The staff at LifeCare are very compassionate, caring and encouraging. In counselling I get practical goals to work on at home. I don't think I would have coped as well as I have during the lockdown without this safety net."

"Thank you, LifeCare Team, for helping me navigate through the most difficult and emotional situation I've ever had to face."



LifeCare Community Mentoring - Chinese COACH

LifeCare Community Mentoring is about 'Creating Opportunities And Casting Hope' through one-to-one mentoring for children, young people, and families.

Kathy is a young adult from China who was suffering from depression. She struggled to manage her emotions and express her feelings, which led to constant conflict with other people and relationship breakdown. She was matched a Chinese mentor with whom she could comfortably share her life matters. Through discussions with her mentor, Kathy learned to see her issues from other perspectives. She discovered her own strength to handle challenging situations she encountered, and she learned how to express her thoughts and feelings to people around her. She made fantastic progress in reaching the goals that were set at the time she joined the program, enabling her to graduate earlier than expected. She was recently promoted at work because of her improved work performance and communication with her colleagues. Kathy has now filled her life with positivity, she has a clear goal of what she wants to achieve in life and most importantly, she has rebuilt her relationships with family and friends.



Fundraising for Crossway LifeCare

Melbourne Marathon 2022

If you can walk 3km, you can join Team LifeCare as we fundraise through this fun family day that's open to people of all ages and fitness levels! Sign up as a family or as a community group and raise vital funds to help people in tough places flourish.

The event date is to be announced soon, it is expected to be Sunday 2nd October.

You could get started with your fundraising by going to:
www.justgiving.com/campaign/MelbourneMarathon2022

Be an Everyday Hero

Using the fundraising platform Justgiving, you could do whatever you are passionate about to raise vital funds for Crossway LifeCare.

Simply register at www.justgiving.com/campaign/CrosswayLifeCare and then email us so that we are aware of what you are doing. Please email justin.tye@crossway.org.au.

Upcoming Opportunities

COACH Mentor Training - 19th March

A COACH mentor is a friend with purpose, offering practical help and mentoring towards life goals. Mentors are trained and then matched with a participant to walk alongside and help them identify two or three life goals they want to work towards, such as education, employment, parenting, increase in community connection, and improved physical and emotional wellbeing. Mentors commit to meet and support their participant for an hour a week over a one-year period. Our COACH Community Mentoring program supports three distinct groups of people: Families (both English and Chinese speaking), young people, and children.

This is a great way to serve in local community by spending an hour a week empowering a person who is doing it tough. There is a need for female mentors to work with females doing it tough, and for mentors to work with a child during primary school hours, or a teenager in the local community to empower them to achieve goals and bless them in a time of hardship.

For more information, please email coach@crosswaylifecare.org.au with your contact details.

Community pantry

We need extra help collecting food donations from various organisations and delivering them to be used in the LifeCare pantry. Pickup times and quantities vary with each organisation, but if you would like to help provide food for the pantry and have a large car or the ability to tow a trailer, please contact Matt Farmilo at matt.farmilo@crosswaylifecare.org.au or **9886 3899**.



How You Can Support LifeCare

Pray

Your prayers are powerful and important to sustain LifeCare. Please pray for our team, the community we serve, the lives we touch, and the good news we share.

Volunteer

We value each LifeCare volunteer for their selfless service in helping people in tough places flourish. They are integral to the mission of LifeCare. For more information, please call **9886 3899**.

Fundraise

Through Everyday Hero you could participate in any of these major events: Melbourne Marathon, Great Ocean Road, Stadium Stomp Melbourne, Tough Mudder Melbourne, Ironman Test Campaign. Or, be like Toby Baxter and start your own event to raise vital funds for Crossway LifeCare!

Go to www.justgiving.com/campaign/CrosswayLifeCare

Give

As a not-for-profit community organisation, we rely on donations from our generous supporters. Every donation makes a difference and LifeCare takes great care to use every dollar responsibly. Our services are provided free to the community, except for counselling fees, which are often subsidised or waived to accommodate our clients' needs. Your donation impacts the lives of people in our local community and beyond.

www.crosswaylifecare.org.au/give

Direct Debit

Account name: Crossway LifeCare Ltd.

BSB: 083 004

Account number: 19 226 3226



Crossway LifeCare is a not-for-profit community organisation funded by donations from our generous supporters. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible in Australia.

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