

Believe.

Barnardos Australia Newsletter
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Barnardos
Australia



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The importance of our foster carers

Children shouldn't go hungry

A large part of the work we do with your support is around prevention to stop abuse before it occurs by lending a helping hand to families.

As we remember from our own childhoods, eating nutritious meals is an important part of growing up healthy. Many of the children we work with do not get proper food at home. Their families may be experiencing severe poverty, or they may just not know how to prepare nourishing meals.

Children who don't get three substantial meals a day often have more trouble concentrating in school, display behavioural problems and have poorer overall health. That's why Barnardos is incorporating new ideas to make sure children in our programs

have healthy meals and learn about nutrition.

The staff at our Yalmambirra Breakfast Club in Western NSW are making sure disadvantaged children there get breakfast each day before school. Every morning, a bus picks them up at their homes and brings them into the centre, where they receive a healthy meal for breakfast. They also make their own sandwiches for lunch later. The bus then takes them straight on to school, which has drastically reduced issues of cutting class.

Right now there are 33 children in the club. It has been impacting their food choices positively and they're asking their parents to buy them new foods for home like yogurt and fruit. There are many more children on the waiting list,

so we drop off bread, milk, cereal and other breakfast foods directly to their homes once a week for them to eat with their families in the mornings.

In the Sydney area, our Yurungai Learning Centre children are learning how to cook healthful dinners as well. Several famous chefs from the area have volunteered to come in and teach them simple recipes, like spaghetti and meatballs. They make dinner in bulk alongside the chefs, so they can not only have a yummy meal then, but can take the rest home to share with their family. Many of the children have told us they taught their parents how to make the dishes, and have started to cook together on a regular basis! So next time you have a great meal, remember you've helped a child to have one too.



Anna's come a long way

You may remember the heartbreaking story of Anna we shared a few months ago.

This little girl grew up surrounded by violence, where her parents would beat each other before turning on her. Worst of all, she was sent to spend the night with paedophiles in exchange for drugs from the time she was just three years old.

She was overfed to keep her quiet and was dangerously unhealthy when she came to Barnardos at age seven.

Anna used to scream constantly, hurt herself, and lash out at anyone who came near. Her significant trauma was obvious to each person that met her. With your support, we were able to find special carers who could handle her needs, and after many months of different therapies tailored to her needs, she began to heal.

It was hard for Anna to play with other children at first, or to truly feel like she could be a part of the family. But her carers have shown her that they will love her

no matter what, so she's felt more comfortable learning to be a kid for the first time.

Now nine, Anna is a part of a close knit community and loves going to school. When she walks in the doors, everyone knows her and says "hi". It is touching to see that Anna always goes out of her way to stick up for other children who are bullied on the playground, because she says she knows how it feels to be hurt.

Outside of school, we are helping Anna to find activities she enjoys. Her favourites so far are swimming, tennis and calisthenics. Through healthy eating and lots of play, she has lost the excess weight. She pours her energy into creative pursuits like drawing, making entries in her journal and putting on interpretive dances for her carers and friends.

If Anna wants to discuss anything, she calls a family meeting. She is never afraid to tell them how she's feeling and believes they really were meant to be together. We couldn't be happier for Anna and her new family. Anna has made one of the most drastic transformations we've ever seen and it only happened thanks to your generous support.

Your legacy, a child's future

Gifts made in Wills hold a special place in the work of Barnardos; they make up more than one-third of all individual donations. These incredible gifts keep children safe through services that otherwise might be at risk of closing.

By including a gift to Barnardos as a part of your legacy, you can make sure that young people in Australia can have a safe future.

For more information about how gifts in Wills make a difference or what it means when you leave one, please contact Jessica Wood at jwood@barnardos.org.au or (02) 9218 2308. If you're ready to leave a bequest, just cut this out and post it back to us to receive more information.

I would like to leave a lasting legacy to Australian children.

Please call me on _____ to tell me more.

Name: _____

Address: _____



Case study: Amy

Your donation allows us to be flexible, because no two situations are ever exactly the same.

Amy is a young person who has been a part of Barnardos Youth services for several years, but this past year she needed our help more than ever.

It was her last year of High School, and her mother unexpectedly became seriously ill. When her mother was hospitalised for major surgery, Amy was left as the sole carer for her two younger siblings.

She came to one of our youth workers and told them she was worried about passing her HSC. Knowing how important this was, we supported her and her siblings, and helped her with studying and time management skills.

It was a very proud day when Amy became the first person ever in her family to successfully complete her exams.

Amy didn't want to stop her education there, so the youth team helped her in picking a career option. She was unable to attend TAFE courses on campus because of the demands at home, so the worker helped her to find a certificate she could complete online.

She didn't have regular access to a computer but the centre has a newly built "Learning Hub" with internet access. She attends weekly to complete her applications, have help with her assessment tasks and use information resources that wouldn't be available to her otherwise.



Isabella - Image courtesy of the Auburn Review

Foster carers are often the first step to a new life

When it isn't safe for children to live at home, they need to stay somewhere safe with people who care—whether it's for a couple days, a few months or many years. An all-time high number of children across Australia are unable to live with their birth parents, more than 43,000. This means that an already small number of carers is being stretched even thinner. With more children coming to Barnardos needing safety and security, we knew we needed to do something. In April 2016, all of our foster care programs joined in a carer recruitment campaign—"Count Yourself In".

Foster carers are so important to the children that we help, because they are the very first step in the healing process for those that experience abuse. Often, a child's foster carer is the first adult that they have ever been able to trust in their life. It gives them a sense of safety and security when their lives feel very unsettled.

We understand that not everyone is able to become a foster carer, which is why donor support is so important. It's thanks to you that we can find the most suitable carers and families for each child

who needs them. We were so thrilled when, as a result of this campaign, 465 inquiries were made for foster care, the most ever!

Isabella, who cares for our Auburn crisis care program, says "If you have time, love and you're healthy, then do it. There's nothing else I have to do and there's a lot of kids that need some love."

Our short-term crisis carers may only have children for a few days, while respite carers keep them for one set weekend each month. For those who want to commit to a longer term, we also look for foster carers who can provide for children for many years.

With our recent expansion, we currently have a severe shortage of carers in the ACT. Just call **1300 WEFOSTER** (1300 933 678) to find out more about the process.

So whether you've been a foster carer, are considering it, or have donated the funds that make our foster care programs possible—thank you! You are making sure each and every child who comes to Barnardos needing a home can find the best one.

HIPPY has a 100% success rate

Some children need extra help preparing for kindergarten, be it due to issues at home or developmental delays. We approach this issue with the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) for children age three or four who have one year left before they start school.

In this model, home tutors meet with parents/caregivers every second week to demonstrate learning activities. The child and their parent then spend 10 to 15 minutes each day, five days a week doing the activities together. Families who take part receive special activity packs and books designed to help with their child's learning, and are also invited to biweekly parent meetings to discuss topics with guest speakers and participate in fun games they can share with their child.

Our Western NSW staff have been refining the traditional HIPPY model to better suit the children and their families there, and with great results!

If we feel that the families need some extra support around their day to day lives at home to be able to best keep up with the program, our staff connect them to other Barnardos services.

Through this practice of being non-judgemental, persistent and flexible, and making our best effort to match tutors and families, we are happy to say that this has been the only program of its kind with a 100 percent retention rate across the sector.

Last year, 25 children graduated Western NSW HIPPY fully prepared to begin kindergarten! This meant that they had the same educational head start as peers from more advantaged backgrounds, and wouldn't start their first days behind the rest of the class.

We are so thankful that your donations can help us with educational support, on all the levels that our children might need it.



Case study: Ella

We first met 15 month old Ella when her mum contacted us. She felt overwhelmed and had nowhere else to turn. Ella's mum has epilepsy, which leaves her prone to unexpected seizures. Being a single parent with no other children, there was no one else around to know when Ella's mum had a seizure and would be unable to care for Ella. This could be very dangerous for such a young toddler and Ella's mum needed help finding a solution.

We knew the first step to keep Ella and her mum safe was to provide her with a mobile medical alert alarm system. This system had previously been unattainable to Ella's mum due to its cost, but with the support

of our donors, we helped her afford one. The new system brought Ella's mum a great deal of relief, knowing that when she suffered a seizure one of her family members nearby would be alerted and could make sure they were both safe.

When one of our case workers paid a visit to Ella's home, they noticed a number of other areas where her mum needed support. Ella and her mum were sharing an old mattress on the floor, but through your support we were able to purchase a new bed with linens for each of them so they could have their own places to sleep.

Ella's mum wanted to be healthy but was on a very restricted budget, so we are

teaching her how to buy inexpensive ingredients in bulk and prepare healthy meals all at once. Then she can freeze them and have them later when she is in a rush. This has given Ella's mum the chance to complete more chores around the house, and has even freed up her time to attend some parenting groups in the local area.

Now, Ella's mum tells us that with our help, she feels much more confident taking care of Ella on her own. She knows that there is help available whenever she needs it, especially during emergencies. Most of all she is proud that she can provide her daughter with a more comfortable home and nutritious meals.

Worker Spotlight : Samey Minkara

Samey Minkara was steered away from a life of homelessness and drugs as a teen by the Barnardos Streetwork team. Now, he has joined them, and is spreading hope to young people just like him in underprivileged communities.

Samey grew up in one of the poorest housing estates in NSW, known for poverty, crime and violence. "A lot of the people I grew up with were gang-affiliated: taking drugs, selling drugs. At first it was me trying to fit in because I felt isolated, then that issue evolved."

"I was on a bad path." Samey and his younger sister ended up homeless, sleeping behind the community centre, on benches, or wherever else they could take some refuge. He wanted to protect his sister, but didn't know where they could turn.

At the time, Barnardos Streetworkers were the only ones reaching out to youth like Samey in his area. They talked to the teens while they were out

on their own, to help them find a better way. "I trusted them, and there was no judgement." More and more of Samey's friends were ending up incarcerated or sadly, dead, and he feared the same would happen to him.

"People had told me that I was hopeless and I'd never make anything of myself. Barnardos believed in me and never gave up. A few times it got hard and I started to go down that bad path again but they were always there to catch me."

While troubled youth are so often written off as a lost cause, we know that it's likely they have suffered abuse, and have been exposed to violence and illegal behaviour. Barnardos Streetwork is the last step for many youth like Samey before they are faced with homelessness and the juvenile justice system. Without proper supports, these teens have a high rate of unemployment, poor health and suicide.

Samey says that donor funding is what really allows the Streetwork

program to go the extra mile and be truly cutting edge in its techniques. "Just to be there at 2am on a Saturday Morning. With almost a 30 year history on the streets in these communities, we know how our approach works."

Now, he works to help young people by offering them a safe place to go and ways to stay connected to their family, their education and their community. He shares his story to show the teens he helps that even when obstacles seem impossible, there is still a way out.

We work in some of the most disadvantaged areas, where many traditional welfare services haven't been able to meet these young people's needs. Government funding gives us the basics, but it is your support that allows us to be out on the streets at 2am and help young people who are about to fall through the cracks. We were there for Samey when he was struggling and now, he's a part of the team to help many more teens at risk.



Samey Minkara

