

Believe.

Barnardos Australia Newsletter

Breaking the cycle... at last

Chloe was 20 when her 2-year-old boy Adam was found wandering alone at night beside a busy highway. When the police finally located her the next day, she was found in a home, along with 13 other adults. Evidence of drug use was littered throughout the crammed 2-bedroom house.

She would later tell her Barnardos caseworker of the shame she felt when she realised her son was missing, and she had been so 'out of it', that she had no idea when he had gone missing.

Chloe's life had been spiralling out of control long before that shocking incident. She had been robbed of her own childhood through a series of traumatic experiences that continue to haunt her today. At age 2, she was removed from the care of her mother who had severe mental health issues and domestic violence was frequent in the family home.

For the next 9 years, she lived with a family member who sexually abused her until authorities once again intervened. When she was initially placed in foster care (not through Barnardos), Chloe dared to dream that this might be a happier, safer place to call home. Tragically, it wasn't to be.

During her 2 years in foster care, she was physically abused over and over. At the age of 13, she ran away. "I never felt safe when I was a kid," she recently confided to her Barnardos caseworker.

From the age of 13, Chloe was homeless. She often slept rough and would occasionally bed down in a homeless shelter, but more often, she would couch surf; staying with any friend, or even a stranger, who could offer a roof over her head.

At 16, she began a relationship with a man 15 years her senior. He was physically and emotionally controlling and when she fell pregnant with Adam, he refused to



allow her to see a doctor. It was only when Adam was born and hospital staff realised that Chloe had received no prenatal care, and had no fixed address, that authorities once again intervened in her life.

Desperate to prove to authorities that she could care for her little baby, she reconnected with a distant relative who agreed to house her and Adam. She split with her controlling partner and sadly, within 1 year, she moved out of the relative's home when that relationship also broke down.

Chloe and Adam had been homeless and couch surfing for 12 months before the little boy was found wandering the streets alone. That's when police intervened and authorities reached out to Barnardos to help the young family.

This traumatised girl, just 20 when she came to Barnardos, had been let down by so many people in her life. There was no way we could turn our backs on Chloe and little Adam.

Within weeks, mother and son were living in our transitional accommodation and enrolled in our Intensive Family Preservation Service. For the first time in his young life, Adam had a bed of his own and a safe place to call home. It was a first for Chloe, also.

There is a long road ahead for Chloe, but she has begun to embrace our parenting classes and other support services. She's determined to break the cycle of neglect that darkened her childhood, and she is determined to build a safe and happy home for her son. Chloe and Adam have people like you to thank for that life-changing opportunity.

Intensive support for the most at-risk kids



Chloe and Adam are just one of the many families currently being supported through our Intensive Family Preservation Service.

This in-demand service provides intensive and targeted support for children, young people and their families to help keep them together and avoid placement outside the family network.

Our Intensive Family Preservation Service, delivered through NSW Family & Community Services, provides an extensive range of support including: counselling, parenting skills, advice and advocacy, health, education, employment services, housing, and linking with other services.

Jodi Owen, Senior Manager of Barnardos Western NSW, explains that the service is informed by Homebuilders®, an evidence-based family preservation model that teaches families new problem-solving skills to prevent unnecessary placement of children into out-of-home care.

She says the service is based on a world's best-practice model.

"Under the Homebuilders' framework, we deliver intensive, on-site intervention and support services that teach families new problem-solving skills to prevent future crises."

The goal of the program, she says, is to remove the risk of harm to the child instead of removing the child.

"Our wraparound support services give families the chance to learn new behaviours and provide the support they need to make better choices for their children.

"The safety of our children always comes first, and we are on call, 24 hours a day, to support the families in this program."

Jodi says Barnardos' Intensive Family Preservation Service is focused on preventing the unnecessary separation of families.

Barnardos' vision is for all children and young people to have caring families in which they can grow safely and fulfil their potential. This is at the heart of everything we do. And it is caring people like you who help us to keep children safe from abuse and neglect.

To learn more about how we put your generosity to work to make this a safer and kinder world for vulnerable kids, visit our website at barnardos.org.au

Staying connected with children, young people and families

The need for social distancing during the pandemic has posed quite a few challenges in recent months. All Barnardos services have been impacted and our caring staff have employed innovative ways to ensure they remain connected with their clients in the community.

Auburn Temporary Family Care Manager, Leah, reports that her team have done a lot of work to connect carers, children and birth parents in a safe manner. Most birth parents, she says, are happy to have contact visits moved online for the duration of the pandemic as they understand the exposure risks. The team is working on a case-by-case basis to connect families via a range of platforms and they are also encouraging carers to regularly send photos to birth parents.

Over at our Penrith Centre, Manager Jodi says it's 'business-as-usual... just done a little differently'. Family Support staff have been conducting home visits via video calls and they are continuing to deliver food packages to low-risk clients. Where there are children with chronic illnesses, the elderly or anyone who is high-risk, staff wear face masks and of course, are extremely careful with their hygiene during deliveries.

Playgroup staff members are also contacting parents via video calls and supporting them with their parent-child interaction. The Youth team, too, is using video calls to connect with their clients. Various online group chats will be hosted in the coming weeks.

Keeping the offline connection: Video conferencing counselling support. Online mentoring. Technology has allowed us to remain connected with clients and each other throughout this pandemic. But many of the families we support cannot afford internet access, or don't have access to smart phones. And some of our services just can't be delivered online or over the phone.

Despite the challenges of lockdown and social distancing, our caring teams have come up with a range of creative solutions to support those unable to access our online services.

Kid's and youth activity packs: Youth Worker Tina and Homework Club Worker Travis have been putting together activity packs for Queanbeyan youth clients. The packs are tailor-made for each client (age-appropriate and targeted to their interests). These boredom-busting packs have a focus on mindfulness and keeping young people calm during these difficult times.



Food on the table: Many of our families have a large number of children, particularly those who are caring for extended family. In these homes, resources are often scarce; even in the best of times.

Since March, all our centres have been inundated with urgent requests for groceries and other essential items from parents desperate to put food on the table. Our teams have lost count of the number of requests for nappies, other baby-related items and bed linen. Many of our families only have one set of bed linen and struggle to keep up with the laundry, especially during bad weather.

The COVID-19 fallout continues...

Barnardos frontline staff remain stretched to the limit as many other agencies have either closed or are no longer accepting new clients. Similarly, our emergency accommodation properties are at full capacity, and we are struggling to keep up with demands for practical assistance, including necessities like food. Your donations will help to provide much needed practical support for families in the community. Thank you!

sass & bide: celebrating Barnardos' heart of gold

For more than 15 years, Australian fashion label sass & bide has proudly supported the life-changing work of Barnardos Australia.

To help raise funds to support our work with vulnerable children and families, each year sass & bide produce a limited-edition tee with 100% of profits donated directly to Barnardos.

This year's tee pays tribute to the children and families who turn to Barnardos for support, and to the Barnardos staff who are passionate about protecting vulnerable children and supporting struggling families. The 2020 limited-edition 'Heart of Gold' tee carries a very special message:

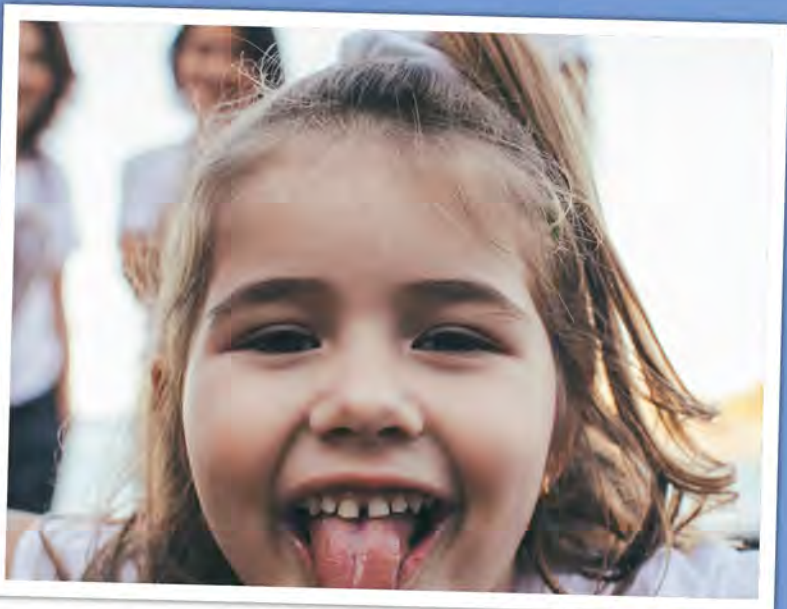
"To every vulnerable child and family who needs support, and to the dedicated Barnardos staff who work each day to provide just that – we see your 'heart of gold' and wear ours as a symbol of love and gratitude."

As part of the campaign, sass & bide commissioned a unique photo shoot, modelled by Barnardos frontline workers and kids. In a special twist, the campaign was photographed by the children.

This collaboration also aims to celebrate the incredibly special and unique bond between a child and their Barnardos carer, seen through the child's eyes.

Enjoy looking at the world through the perspective of our talented young photographers.

The limited-edition 'Heart of Gold' tees are now available in sass & bide boutiques, online at sassandbide.com and at participating Myer stores.



For more info on how your organisation can help Barnardos Australia with collaboration opportunities, please contact Mark McDaid on 02 9218 2340 or email mmcdaid@barnardos.org.au

Domestic violence escalates during pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic has seen a shocking spike in domestic violence. Sadly, this has come as no surprise to our frontline staff as research indicates that family violence can become more frequent and severe during periods of emergency.

The stress caused by the COVID-19 crisis is taking a heavy toll on many families. Financial pressures...job losses...health fears...home-schooling children while working from home...social isolation. In this pressure cooker environment, domestic violence has escalated and more and more families are at breaking point.

A recent report by the Australian Institute of Criminology found that for many women, the onset or escalation of violence and abuse coincided with the pandemic.

The report¹ is based on an online survey of 15,000 Australian women about their experiences of domestic violence during the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It found that in the 3 months prior to the survey, which was conducted in May 2020, many women reported

experiencing multiple forms of physical or sexual violence and emotionally abusive, harassing or controlling behaviour.

Alarming, among those women who reported that they had experienced physical or sexual violence during that time, 1 in 3 (33.1%) said that this was the first time their partner had been violent towards them. Similarly, 19.9% of women who had experienced coercive control said that this was the first time they had experienced emotionally abusive, harassing or controlling behaviour within their relationship.

Barnardos provides crisis accommodation and support across 16 accommodation sites for women and children escaping domestic violence.

We need your support now more than ever to ensure that we can be there for families and children experiencing, or fleeing, from family violence.

¹Boxall H, Morgan A & Brown R 2020. The prevalence of domestic violence among women during the COVID-19 pandemic. Statistical Bulletin no. 28. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.



Barnardos provides a safe haven for women and children fleeing domestic violence at 10 on-site units, 5 houses and 1 unit in the community (transitional). Accommodation is provided for 6 to 18 months with access to wraparound services while living in the accommodation to help the individual or family get back on their feet by the time they leave.

If you are experiencing domestic violence, or are concerned about someone who is, contact the National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service on 1800 737 732 for 24-hour confidential support.

Share the joy this Christmas

Barnardos Australia touches the lives of more than 10,000 disadvantaged Aussie kids and teens across our programs and services. Each Christmas, we make a simple commitment: that each of them will have a gift to unwrap on Christmas Day.

We need your help to make sure that happens this Christmas.

Our Gifts for Kids campaign, now in its 14th year, gives caring people like you the opportunity to share the true spirit of Christmas with abused and disadvantaged children. By donating gifts or cash to our Gifts for Kids Appeal, you will be joining other Secret Santas throughout the community to help bring a smile to the faces of vulnerable children on Christmas Day.

This year, more than ever, we know that an increasing number of families will be financially stretched to the limit. Sadly, many parents and carers will struggle to put food on the table, let alone afford Christmas gifts for their children.

How can you get involved? Donate directly and/or encourage your organisation, school or community group to hold a Gifts for Kids toy drive between now and November. You can donate cash or purchase gifts online at barnardos.org.au/gifts-for-kids

All gifts online have been pre-selected by our Centre Managers. They know our kids the best – and they will make sure that your gift reaches the child who needs it most.

Alternatively, if you would like to host a toy drive in your office or school, please contact our Special Events Manager, Marie Umbrazunas via email mumbrazunas@barnardos.org.au or call 02 9218 2417.

Every child deserves to wake up on Christmas morning and have at least one gift to unwrap. Please share the joy this festive season by giving generously to our Gifts for Kids Appeal.



"Managing Barnardos' Gifts for Kids campaign has always meant so much to me. Christmas for many families is tough, but we can bring some relief and happiness to these families during this time.

Providing the happiness of receiving something new on Christmas Day can lift the spirits of so many and take away from their everyday hardships and struggles. As a single mum, I understand how parents want to make sure that their children experience the joy of opening a surprise gift on Christmas morning. Each year when I collect donations, I often shed a tear. It's overwhelming to see the number of toys that have been donated by children and their families to support those in our care.

We know that for many, this is a busy time of year, so we have made donating easier, either by donating directly to the campaign or to purchase a gift online. My goal for 2020 is to raise more funds to support our families and to have more than 10,000 toys donated. We can achieve this with your generous and continued support."

Marie Umbrazunas
Special Events Manager

For more information
1800 663 441

For enquiries or donations
1800 061 000

barnardos.org.au/donatenow

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