

the Voice



Issue 4, 2016

joy & hope

Even in the shadow of tragedy, moments of hope and joy can be found – read how Emma found hers on pages 5 and 6.

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Going the extra mile for WMQ

On 28 August, three teams set out from Spring Hill in the annual Bridge to Brisbane event to raise important funds for three Wesley Mission Queensland services: Art From The Margins; OzHarvest; and Clear Breeze Apartments.

21 dedicated fundraisers managed to secure more than \$3,600 for these great initiatives, supporting the many residents, artists and charity food services relying on Wesley Mission Queensland. Thank you to everyone who participated or donated to this wonderful event!

If you'd like to support one of these initiatives, or any of our other great programs and services, respond with the enclosed form or visit wmq.org.au/donate



2016 has been a year of celebration for Wesley Mission Queensland, with our 80th anniversary of Queensland's first residential aged care community, and the beginning of some exciting new projects that will benefit Queenslanders for many years to come.

With support from friends like you, we opened three new communities: Asher House in Brisbane's Bayside, which involved residents and their families co-designing the building; John Wesley Gardens, an innovative design in aged care that represents a highly successful collaboration with our designers and architects; and Hummingbird House, Queensland's only children's hospice.

It's impossible to overstate the significance of these new communities for the families that have been waiting years for these services, and we're so grateful to everyone who has brought these wonderful buildings to life.

This year has seen some significant impacts on the aged care sector, including potential cuts to aged care funding, a growing ageing population and the high demand of residential aged care in the future. Although challenging, these aged care reforms will present us with opportunities to diversify and grow our organisation across all our services.

In October, we welcomed the opportunity to once again be one of the co-chairs for Queensland's Anti-Poverty Week, a national platform that raises awareness of people living in poverty. During this week, the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) released a report outlining some very alarming statistics. In Australia, 2.9 million people are living below the poverty line, almost 500,000 of those living in Queensland, and 731,300 are children under the age of 15. Reflecting on these statistics highlights the need to look for opportunities where we, as everyday Queenslanders, can connect with our local community and give to those who need it the most.

It's stories like Emma's, who you can read about on Page 6, that remind me so powerfully of the significance of your support, and what we can achieve together. This year, we are doubling our commitment to the Red Bag Christmas Appeal, and we plan to distribute 5,000+ Red Bags to families across South East Queensland, providing much needed support for people doing it tough. We want to offer hope and joy this Christmas, and I'd love you to help in any way you can.

As this year draws to a close, I want to thank you and all our friends and supporters who continue to make positive changes in our community. I wish you and your family a joyous and blessed Christmas, and I hope you can take time to reflect on what matters most – family, friends, faith, and the future. I look forward to working alongside you again in 2017.

Merry Christmas and God bless,

Geoff Batkin
CEO, Wesley Mission Queensland



Uniting communities against poverty

For the second year running, Wesley Mission Queensland co-chaired the State Facilitating Committee for Anti-Poverty Week, held from 16-21 October. In Queensland, the week served to highlight the almost half a million people who are living on or below the poverty line.

This year, Anti-Poverty Week kicked off with a Walk Against Poverty, officially started by Senator Murray Watt and attended by members of the community who took part in a 5km walk from QUT's Garden's Point campus.

On 17 October, our friends at Deloitte hosted a breakfast attended by the Honourable Shannon Fentiman who helped to officially launch our Red Bag Appeal and announce this year's Campaign for Change initiative. The breakfast brought together more than 50 corporate and non-government organisations to lend their support to these initiatives.

Thousands of commuters experienced the 'Wall of Kindness' installation

at Central Station during the week, thanks to Queensland Rail and were encouraged to take and fill a Red Bag for people in need.

Queensland Rail also promoted our Anti-Poverty Week Photojournalism Exhibition 'The Power of Community' at their Central, South Brisbane and Roma Street Stations. The exhibition displayed at the Maud Gallery in Newstead was the culmination of months of hard work by Griffith University Queensland College of Art Photojournalism students.

Thank you to everyone who helped raise awareness of poverty in our communities by hosting or taking part in an event throughout the week.



Dozens take to the streets in the Walk Against Poverty.



Left to right: Richard Wanstall (Deloitte), Hon. Shannon Fentiman MP, John Greig (Deloitte) and WMQ CEO Geoff Batkin join other corporate supporters at the Red Bag Appeal Breakfast.

The Power of Community



Photojournalists from Griffith University Queensland College of Art with their work at the launch of 'The Power of Community' exhibition. Students travelled across the state to capture images of everyday Queenslanders making a difference in their local communities. To see all the images visit wmq.org.au



Thousands of commuters experienced the Wall of Kindness at Central Station during Anti-Poverty Week, and were encouraged to take and fill a Red Bag for those in need.

Connecting cultures through art



If a picture paints a thousand words, the Youth Housing and Reintegration Service (YHARS) program in Inala has created a story about community connection, thanks to the talent of local Indigenous artist Uncle Peter Carlo.



Uncle Peter with the artwork he created for YHARS.

Uncle Peter was first introduced to the YHARS program when the team was looking for a way to connect with and represent their local Indigenous community.

“It was very important to us that we be engaging and respectful in our work with the community. We feel that these values very much reflect what we do and what we’re about at YHARS,” says Naomi Donohoe, YHARS Program Coordinator. “We wanted to honour the Indigenous peoples’ connection to the land and to culture, and what better way to showcase that than through art?”

“I started sketching with pen and paper when I was at school, and as I got older I began experimenting with paint and canvas,” says Uncle Peter. “I usually just paint whatever comes to mind, but if I’m representing a certain country, I always try to include an element or totem that relates to that country.”

He also paints on hollowed-out emu eggs, carving intricate shapes and faces on the surface of the egg with a Stanley knife. These are his most prized and unique pieces.

When it came to approaching the art piece for YHARS, Uncle Peter wanted to use colours and icons that symbolise not only the program and Wesley Mission Queensland, but also the program’s home – Yagara Country.

The artwork features a bright green background (Wesley Mission Queensland’s corporate colour) with the cross and the dove of the Uniting Church’s logo in the centre. Three journey lines intersect the logo, which symbolise the YHARS program as a meeting place.

The logo is also surrounded by a sand goanna, brown snake and green frog, which are the totem animals for the Yagara Country.

“It’s important to ask the elders for permission to show respect for their country and their culture,” Uncle Peter explains. “Totems are sacred to the Country they represent. I always ask permission whenever I am using a Country’s totems in my artwork.”

The YHARS painting now hangs pride-of-place in the entrance to the office, its vibrant colours and design striking everyone who comes in.

“We’ve had so many compliments on it,” says Naomi. “We’re so proud to have such an amazing piece of art that represents this community, painted by one of its most talented artists.”

To find out more about Uncle Peter and his artwork, visit our website: wmq.org.au

Why volunteering matters

Wesley Mission Queensland is a large and diverse organisation, and volunteers play a vital role in our work. Our volunteers have the chance to help improve the lives of the most vulnerable in our community, and they now make up one third of our workforce.

Among our many wonderful volunteers are a number of dedicated corporate supporters, who contribute both their staff time and funds to help support our services. One such organisation is RPS Project Management.

RPS Project Management took on the challenge of painting three different areas at Bethesda Caring Centre: the library, the main hallway, and a men’s shed.

The project would have cost around \$7,000 but the RPS Project Management team took up the challenge, and their staff fundraised to supply everything needed to do the job.

“We love our corporate volunteers!” says Mitch Witherington, Fundraising & Philanthropy Manager. “Sometimes projects like this are beyond our capacity, but a team of people can achieve so much working together. RPS Project Management did exceptional work at Bethesda, and their fundraising on our behalf went above and beyond what we could have hoped.

“Seeing the transformation from an unused space into a usable workshop and library was very rewarding for all



Corporate volunteers like the team from RPS Project Management provide valuable support.

involved,” says Michael Thompson, Senior Project Manager at RPS Project Management. “We are all construction project managers, so getting out of the office to lend a hand was a great way to spend a day together and help out a very worthwhile cause.

“We’re looking forward to our next charity day in 2017.”

If you’re interested in exploring corporate volunteering opportunities, or you would like to offer your own services to volunteer with Wesley Mission Queensland, please give us a call on 1800 448 448.

Hummingbird House opens its doors

On 7 October, we celebrated the official opening of Hummingbird House, Queensland’s only children’s hospice.

Hummingbird House is deeply grateful for the support of Queensland families, the Federal and State Government, and our generous philanthropic, corporate, and community supporters. Hummingbird House has truly been built by Queenslanders, for Queenslanders.

To officially open the building, families were invited to hang one of 37 hummingbirds at the front door, representing the 3,700 Queensland children living with life-limiting conditions.

“It’s a medically supported home away from home, where families can reconnect, kids can just be kids, and treasured moments can be made,” said Dr Fiona Hawthorne, General Manager of Hummingbird House.



Hummingbird House is a joint initiative of Hummingbird House Foundation and Wesley Mission Queensland. For more information, or if you would like to make a donation to support Hummingbird House, please visit www.hummingbirdhouse.org.au or call 07 3621 4366.

Give joy & hope this Christmas



Emma, Sam and Bonnie needed help to experience a real Christmas in the midst of incredible hardship. Now Emma wants to share that joy with others...

For most of us, Christmas is a wonderful time of year; a chance to celebrate, relax and enjoy time with our loved ones over a good meal as we pass around gifts and treats. But for almost 500,000 Queenslanders currently living on or below the poverty line, it can be a very different story.

This year, we hope to give 5,000 Red Bags to families in real need. \$38 covers the cost of a Red Bag, and every Red Bag will be full of Christmas groceries, puddings, cakes and decorations for families like Emma's.

Emma's first child, William, was born with very high special needs. He was wheelchair-bound his entire life, and endured between 15 and 30 seizures every single day.

Her second son, Sam, was born two years after William, and Bonnie came along five years later. From age two, Sam would give his big brother mouth-to-mouth resuscitation when William passed out.

To make matters worse, Emma's partner was abusive, and would often take out his anger and aggression on her and the children. For Emma, it was a constant struggle to provide for her kids.

Emma first connected with Wesley Mission Queensland three years ago. She heard about our Emergency Relief (ER) service, and went to see if she could get some food. While she was there, the ER team learned she couldn't afford to buy any presents for her children at Christmas, so she had been digging through piles of discarded odds and ends during the annual curbside collections. They immediately led her to a room full of toys, ready for families like hers who needed the Red Bags.

"It was one of the most amazing moments of my entire life," Emma says.

"When you're a mum, and you can't provide for your kids, it hurts – it really

does. Having toys and a Christmas lunch to give my kids on Christmas day... I was absolutely blown away, and the kids were so excited."

Two days after Christmas in 2013, at nine and a half years of age, William suffered a massive seizure in the night and passed away in his sleep.

"Will was in bed with me," Emma says, "and the other two kids were

"My house used to be filled with a family of five; three kids, a puppy dog, a partner. There was nothing left, absolutely nothing."

on a mattress on the floor beside us, because it was Christmas time, and they'd been playing with their toys. They woke up to me giving Will mouth-to-mouth. It was too late for Will – Will had gone to heaven, hours earlier.

"After Will passed, I turned my grief to drugs. I got addicted to speed to block out everything. It took me down a path where I never thought I'd go. I'm not proud of it. I wish I could take that decision back, but I can't."

"In December 2014, Child Safety Services came and they took my children away from me. I can't even describe how it felt. One's in heaven, the other two are gone. I didn't know how I got to that point. My house used to be filled with a family of five; three

kids, a puppy dog, a partner. There was nothing left, absolutely nothing."

It was a turning point for Emma. She began attending a counselling group at ER with others facing similar situations. She stopped using drugs, and separated from her abusive partner.

"I went to rehab. I did so much therapy – drug therapy, grief therapy – and on the 14th of December 2015, my kids came home. My kids came home, 11 months early."

Emma benefited from a Red Bag at Christmas for two years, but last year decided not to take one.

"I wanted to leave it for someone in real, desperate need," she says, "Every person should have that joy, that experience of a real Christmas, like we did. I want to give that to someone."

If you're looking for something practical and life-changing that you can do for those less fortunate this Christmas, the Red Bag Christmas Appeal is your chance.

Please complete the enclosed response form, or visit redbagappeal.org.au to donate or order a Red Bag to fill, and give joy and hope to a struggling family this Christmas.

There are three simple ways you can help:

- 1. Donate \$38** to cover the cost of a Red Bag full of Christmas groceries
- 2. Sign on as a regular supporter**
- 3. Fill a Red Bag** with Christmas groceries and return it to one of our various drop-off locations across South East Queensland by 5 December.

Asher House - a home like no other



Left to right: Asher House Manager Garry Buckton, resident Stephen (Paul) Le Pla, and Allied Health Assistant Neil English in front of the new Asher House van.

Since opening earlier this year, the team at Asher House have been hard at work turning this special house into a home.

Asher House is a unique community; 12 apartments custom-built in consultation with future residents and their families, as well as architects and specialists, to be a comfortable home for life for young people with an acquired brain injury.

“Before we moved in here, we spent a lot of time working with the residents and families to talk about what things were important to them, what they wanted from a service, what their environment should look and feel like,” says Helen Emery, Disability Accommodation Services Manager. “It’s important that our residents feel at home.”

“It’s unlike any place I’ve worked before,” says Asher House’s new Manager, Garry Buckton. “We don’t have to be regimented and overly structured here. Residents can make their own decisions about how to spend their days.”

Asher House employs a Leisure and Lifestyle Coordinator, Kelvin Emeka, who has worked hard to create a program to suit the needs of every resident.

“I’ve created a profile for each of our residents,” Kelvin says. “It takes about 15 days to build a profile, what we call a Lifestyle Assistance Plan for each resident. They have their own needs and interests, and we meet those needs wherever we can.

Based on their profile, we’re able to create a holistic program for them, which is not something we diversional coordinators have been used to.

“Some residents will go to a recreational centre. Some will do craft, some will go bowling, or to the movies, or the library. We’ll take people out to go do their own shopping. They have access to the community they live in, and that’s important.”

It isn’t just the residents who benefit from Asher House, but their families as well.

“The mother of one of our residents has said it’s such a huge weight off her shoulders,” Helen says. “They’re actually going on holidays soon, which they would never have done before. It’s the trust and respect we share, and the confidence they can have that their loved one will be OK in our care. That’s what makes this place special.”

Asher House relies on community support and volunteers. If you would like to give a gift, or offer your time as a volunteer, visit wmq.org.au or call us on 1800 448 448.

Community comes together Logan Homeless connect

In August, a variety of community organisations came together to give free services to people experiencing homelessness, or those at risk of homelessness, as part of Logan Homeless Connect.

Hosted by the Logan Housing and Homelessness Network, the event brought together over 500 people from the Logan area and offered people access to health care providers, housing services, hairdressers, food services, clothing donations, and family and wellbeing services. Attendees enjoyed a hot breakfast or lunch while listening to live music, were entertained by roving performers and took part in fun activities like face painting.

As part of the event, Wesley Mission Queensland had representatives from our STARH Project (Supporting Those At Risk of Homelessness) on hand to speak with people doing it tough.

Janet Maroney, Coordinator of the STARH Project, said the day surpassed all expectations.

“It was such a festive atmosphere – the entertainment was amazing, and the health services, haircuts and other free activities on the day really made it enjoyable for the attendees,” she said.

“Our volunteers were amazing; they really supported the ethos of the

Homeless Connect initiative, making people feel welcome and assisting them with their questions and needs on the day by linking them with the right services.

“Overall we were very proud of the outcome, there were over 45 different providers there on the day helping to make a difference,” said Janet.



If you or someone you know is in need of a hand, please contact our team on 1800 448 448 for information on how we can support you.

John Wesley Gardens: where anything is possible

In October, John Wesley Gardens opened its doors for the first time in four years, with a whole new team, a whole new facility and a whole new approach to aged care.

John Wesley Gardens’ Manager, Carmel Freeman says, “This is a 5-star, ‘anything is possible’ aged community. We have our chapel onsite. We have one private dining room, two dining rooms within each community, our lovely outdoor area, our own onsite chefs who are here around the clock. We even have our own hairdresser and beautician. We can provide whatever any resident wants at any time.”

“If you want to go to the beach, or fly to the moon, we’ll see how we can do that for you. We don’t know the word ‘no’ – we know the word ‘possibilities’.

“It’s really about building our community through our commitment to our values, and the Eden Philosophy which is very much at the forefront of all we do. We want to make sure that the culture we’re building here is captured by every person moving in. We really are an upside down model, with the resident on top of the tree. This place is truly unique.”



Along with John Wesley Gardens, Wesley Mission Queensland offers 13 aged care communities throughout Brisbane. If you are considering aged care for yourself or a loved one, contact our team on 1800 448 448 or visit wmq.org.au. We’d love to hear from you.

INSIDE OUTSIDE: where art meets life

In September, Art From The Margins (AFTM) hosted the 'INSIDE OUTSIDE' display at Brisbane City Hall, the largest visual art exhibition of the Brisbane Festival.

The exhibition showcased over 350 independent and group artworks by talented local artists, reflecting on the idea of living between inside and outside of the self. In response, artists created artworks that can open their audience to ideas of sharing lived experiences: communicating the joy, wonder, complexity, hardships, and personal experience of humanity; from the inside and from the outside.

AFTM supports the creative development of artists living with mental health issues, physical or intellectual disabilities, experiencing homelessness or facing personal adversity and social isolation.

Talented Brisbane artist Kathy Harwin's striking work, "Flourish" was this year's feature image for the exhibition; it symbolises the vision of AFTM.

"Flourish is the second in a series documenting my journey to wellness and recovery after a long term struggle with an eating disorder," says Kathy. "From this place of health and wholeness, I'm learning to fully embrace life and flourish in the midst of any circumstance."

You can support wonderful artists like Kathy by ordering your own copy of our 2017 calendar, 'Vibrant Reflections'. The calendar is \$10 and features some fantastic works from local artists. All proceeds go to AFTM to help us continue to support artists experiencing social isolation.



For more information, contact AFTM Manager, Tony Anderton on 07 3151 6656, or by email at t.anderton@wmq.org.au

News from the Pews of Albert Street

I find hope an elusive word to define, for it can be very fragile, like a candle flame in the wind.

Hope, though, moves us beyond wishful thinking to reflecting an optimistic attitude based on an expectation of positive outcomes related to events and circumstances in one's life or the world at large. Hope needs to be encouraged wherever people are finding the difficulties of life seemingly insurmountable. Hope needs to be shared as we journey with people.

Many years ago St. Francis of Assisi left us these words:

*Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope;
Where there is darkness, let me bring your light;
And where there's sadness, joy.*

As we approach Christmas I realise how appropriate these words are for this season of the year. The world in which we live is yearning for peace to come.

It almost seems impossible, but hope gives us the confidence in God who has sent His Son to bring His light into our darkness and His joy into our times of sorrow and pain. As the Christmas carol says...

*O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight*

Hope also needs to be celebrated! This Christmas, may you experience hopefulness for yourself and those you love, for those in our community and the wider world.

Grace and Peace

Lyn Burden

Reverend Lyn Burden,
Superintendent Minister



Upcoming Events at Albert Street Uniting Church

Christmas Tree Lighting Party
Friday 25 November
6.00pm

Sing It Yourself Messiah
Sunday 4 December
Singers rehearsal at 4.00pm, concert at 7.00pm

Service of Solace and Remembering
Sunday 24 December
6.00pm

Christmas Eve Family Service
Saturday 24 December,
11.00pm

Christmas Day Service
25 December, 9.00am

Christmas Day Lunch
25 December, 12.00noon



Leave it
to us

If you want to leave a legacy of kindness and compassion that will echo across the ages, consider leaving a gift to us in your Will.

Donate
Gift in Will
Volunteer



For more information, please contact us on 1800 448 448 or visit us at www.wmq.org.au

John, 96 years of age

Moments of Joy at Wesley Mission Queensland

Joy comes in many forms, both small and large. Happiness, pleasure, delight, contentment, enjoyment; it's something we strive to help people in our community find every day.

'Joy' is the theme of our 2016 annual report, and we invite you to read about our stories and achievements over the past year. The report is available for download from wmq.org.au

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