



wesley impact!

news

Winter 2020

After a dark time, Katie is smiling again



Katie's house in Sydney burned down because of faulty wiring. After her family's applications to rent another property were knocked back time after time, they were forced to move into a friend's tumbledown garage with no running water or power. Katie is scared of the dark and the long nights were so difficult for her.

Winter was very hard too. They felt like they could never get warm. On his part-time labourer's wage, her dad Glenn says they may not have been able to move on from where they were. But thanks to support like yours, we could help this family with groceries and temporary accommodation. This gave Glenn

the breathing space he needed to find a new job. With Wesley Mission providing references and contributing to their bond, they're so grateful to be back renting their own place again.

"It's fantastic to be providing for my family again, especially as it comes into winter," Glenn says. "Looking back on where we've been, I just can't believe how far we've come. We have hope now. Every day I thank Wesley Mission and the people who give to their work and make it possible."

Lack of affordable housing, especially in cities, is one reason people become homeless. It's particularly difficult for families living on one income. And with unemployment now rising because of COVID-19, more people than ever are at risk of losing their homes. Coinciding with the coldest season, this will make the next few months especially tough.

Thank you for helping families like Katie's into safe and warm accommodation that is giving them hope this winter.

* Names, photos and identifying details changed for privacy.

Family playgroup connects online



On a regular Thursday morning at the Wesley Family Centre Westlakes, on the Central Coast, the sounds of happy children fill the playground. Friendships form during craft sessions while parents bond over a cup of coffee. But with COVID-19 keeping families at home, playgroup coordinator and director Louise has had to find a new way for families to connect.

Using Zoom video chat, Louise has brought two playgroups together in an online space. "Staying connected is so important when there are families who are already isolated. That's what the playgroup is there for," Louise said.

Many families who attend are either new parents or vulnerable Australians facing hardship and access support from Wesley Mission's community services. Louise says online playgroups are keeping the conversation lines open with parents, so they can access further help such as emotional support and financial assistance through Wesley Mission where needed.

Each Zoom meeting involves storytelling, songs, craft and a time for parents to connect over a cuppa. Beforehand, Louise prepares and personally delivers activity and craft packs for each child to complete during the session.



One playgroup mum, Chloe, sent this heartfelt message of appreciation to Louise: "William has been busy today with the art pack you brought out for him. He loves it so much. Thank you so much for the pack."

Your giving has supported this playgroup and we are so grateful.

Main: Louise making the activity packs. Inset: William, a playgroup participant, with his beautiful artwork.

Right: Sirikan says her daughter Alicia has loved painting and decorating with the kits. "Thank you for bringing kids' stuff for Alicia. We can't wait to go to playgroup again."

We're here if you need us

Reach out for Lifeline support

These have been difficult times, but you don't have to endure them alone. Call our Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland telephone crisis support service on **13 11 14**, 24 hours a day, seven days a week if you are experiencing mental health issues like feelings of anxiety or depression.



Our trained counsellors are ready to help and can talk with you about your worries and concerns.

Request our 'Good Mental Health Guide'

Knowing where to turn for help in a crisis is essential information we should all be equipped with. Our new Good Mental Health Guide has tips to help you or



a loved one maintain your wellbeing during times of stress or challenge. The purpose of this guide is to offer ideas and practical options, as a first step towards relief.

Phone 1800 021 821 to ask for your free copy.

More than a bed for the night

Wesley Edward Eagar Centre update

Since the 1970s, Wesley Mission's crisis accommodation in the heart of Sydney city has been a place of hope for men and women experiencing homelessness. It was one of the first accommodation services to offer single, lockable rooms, giving people the dignity of a safe 'home base'. But homelessness is increasing and the challenges of addressing homelessness have changed. Now the way we work must change too.

We recently launched a major appeal to raise \$12 million for redeveloping the building. The upgraded facilities will allow us to improve our model of support too.

In a triage approach, one member of our team will hear a person's story on arrival and immediately assess their needs. They will then be guided to the most appropriate in-house care and support options – from addiction counselling to trauma support – without having to repeat their issues.

The redeveloped Wesley Edward Eagar Centre will include spaces for local partners onsite. People with complex issues can access to a full range of services under the one roof including:

- Pastoral care
- Centrelink outreach
- Counselling
- Dental services
- Local Area Health services
- Housing support
- Devotional opportunities
- Employment services

"When it's completed, the newly refurbished six-level building will serve to restore hope and dignity," says Wesley Mission CEO, the Rev Keith V Garner AM. "It will connect people with a broader range of services for long-term support and opportunities to help them permanently break the cycle of homelessness."



The building's new triage space will support guests to leave homelessness behind.



"Coming here was like a safe haven," says Cecil.

Please consider supporting our Wesley Edward Eagar Centre Appeal – to give, visit wesleymission.org.au/weec2020

The power of connection - Dave's story

As the COVID-19 crisis unfolded, Dave was working on the frontline with the vulnerable and marginalised community of Sydney. He loves to know he's making a huge difference.

Usually Wesley Mission chaplain Dave sees people in need face-to-face in a building in the inner city, where they can drop in and be linked with services like emergency accommodation and counselling. But since COVID-19 struck, Dave and his team have been 'meeting' people by telephone and email to coordinate the support they need.

Increasingly, that's food relief for those who have lost jobs and can no longer afford the basic essentials. The team will drop off a hamper of groceries with a no-touch delivery, and have a social distanced conversation to check if any further help is required.



The encounters that are particularly special to Dave are when the answer to this question are 'yes' and we are able to assist further.

Dave shares the story of a man a team member took a hamper to recently, who had asked to speak with someone about getting his life back on track after years of homelessness. Now he's being found secure, longer-term accommodation. He was linked to a recovery group for people breaking free from drug and substance abuse, and a chaplain specialising in these issues, who is supporting him with regular phone calls as he continues his journey towards healing.

"He has great potential to move forward now and make leaps and bounds in his life, and that's our ideal scenario," says Dave.

"To walk with people through difficult times – that's what inspires me, because that's what helped me."

"When I was younger, I'd found myself at a place in life where I'd bowed to peer pressure and made a bunch of choices that weren't producing positive outcomes in my life. It was through a church that people came alongside me. They didn't judge me for where I was at, and they walked with me until I could put my own good supports and practices in place."

"Having people or organisations that can support you through a tough season and help you see hope – that's so important."

Your generosity allows our staff like Dave to continue their work and supports people in the greatest need – thank you!

Chantelle's Will to bless others



The desire to contribute into the lives of people in need in a significant way – motivated by faith in God – is very important to Chantelle. It is why she has decided to make a gift to Wesley Mission in her Will.

Chantelle used to work at Wesley Mission herself, and hearing the stories of the foster children we support had touched her heart deeply. "I thought, 'Yeah, I'd love to be able to contribute to that.'"

Then she and her husband Dan came along to one of our Wesley Mission Wills Days to have their Wills prepared by an independent solicitor. That's where they became

aware of the opportunity to specify a gift to charity, and the potential this had to change lives. After realising they definitely wanted to move forward, Chantelle says she was surprised by how easy the process was.

"I spoke with the solicitors and they were simply able to write it into my Will. My husband and I had been thinking about doing our Will for some time, so we thought, why not make the most of it?"

"One of our core beliefs has been 'blessed to be a blessing'. We've always strived to give as we've been given to. Sometimes - financially - we can't give now, but at the end when everything is said and done, we can bless others."

"We thought it would be a wonderful way to contribute later on down the track. We've been given a lot, and we want to be able to pass that on. Being able to leave something to bless someone beyond our time is a very worthwhile cause."

Chantelle is one of many wonderful people who choose to commit a gift in their Will to Wesley Mission. Would you like to learn more about this opportunity to make a powerful and lasting impact on future generations of people in need? Our Wesley Mission Wills Days are a great place to find information and support to weigh up the idea and decide on your wishes. See below for details.

Upcoming Wesley Mission Wills Days

Have an independent solicitor prepare your simple Will for a fraction of the cost.

Thursday 25 June

Thursday 23 July

Thursday 20 August

St George & Sutherland Shire area

Camden area

Parramatta

Find out more and book your place: www.wesleymission/willsdays



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WM-72524

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Donate online wesleymission.org.au

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