



wesley

Winter 2014

impact

The challenges of caring

Breaking autism's barriers

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“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

Ephesians 4:32



04

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”

(1 Peter 5:7)

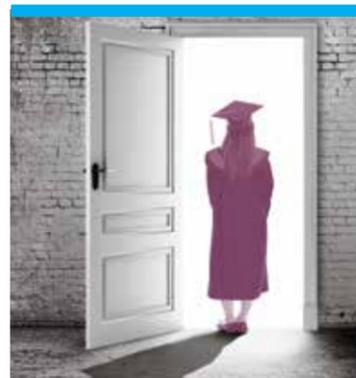
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One feature of the Gospels is the sense of pace which we discern in the ministry of Jesus. He moved across the region, teaching the good news and demonstrating the reality of God's kingdom.

However, we cannot fail to notice that he made time for those who sought his healing and wholeness.

Very early in his ministry, he met a leper and it is clear that he understood not only the presenting problem of leprosy, but also the deeper issues in this man's life. In addition to the physical healing that Jesus brought to this man, he saved him from the rejection he faced from his local community. Free of illness, the man was able to enter the city on whose outskirts he had likely been encamped for many years.

Jesus Christ provides us with the living example of true person centred care – a model which Wesley Mission follows today as we reach out to the lonely, the sick and the disadvantaged.

In this edition of Wesley Impact! magazine you will read stories of people who have come into the person centred care of Wesley Mission through loving family members – a mother who has supported her daughter with autism and a person who is seeking to walk again after a horrific attack left him paralysed.

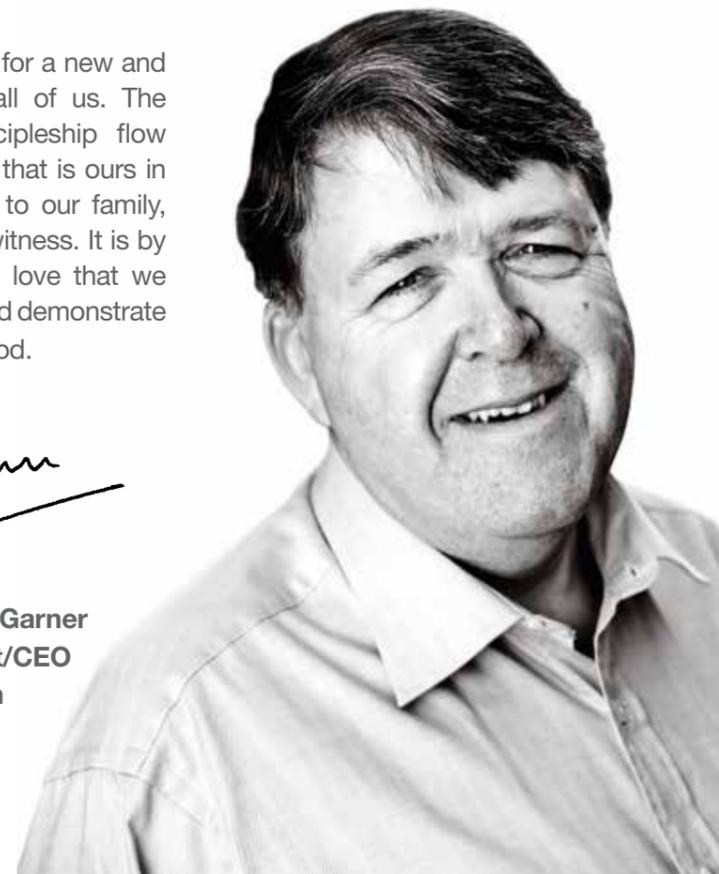
In each case the needs are complex but the care of both family and Wesley Mission is consistent and committed and shaped by Christian compassion.

When God restores our lives, he touches every part of us. This includes our thinking, our desires and our purpose. We find a new bearing on life. The mystery and power of the cross is that God has enabled this new direction by making peace through the love he has shown to us through Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ calls for a new and living way from all of us. The demands of discipleship flow from the freedom that is ours in him. This applies to our family, work and public witness. It is by reaching out with love that we both encounter and demonstrate the Kingdom of God.

Keith Garner

**Rev Dr Keith V Garner
 Superintendent/CEO
 Wesley Mission**



Breaking autism's barriers

Melissa and Vicki's story

Sitting with purple flowers in her hair, Melissa smiled at her mum Vicki. It was a rare thing for Melissa to be this relaxed in church. She has autism and the echoes of the music in most church services make her feel very uncomfortable.

But in a small group of other people with a disability she was about to take her first communion in a quiet way that gave her a sense of belonging.

Vicki sat beside her and thought about what it meant for Melissa to be participating in this important Christian tradition.

"Even though Melissa wouldn't understand the religious aspect of church I still wanted her to do her first communion and confirmation so to be a part of the family's faith," Vicki said.

"Melissa would really prefer to be at home watching TV alone. But it is important for her to be involved in every part of family life."

Melissa is unable to speak and has a severe developmental delay. However, with the strong support of people from her family's church she was able to take this main step.

"She has only taken communion a couple of times since her first communion as she finds it stressful with all the noise," Vicki said. "These days we light a candle together and I can see her become very calm."

It is this type of gradual leadership that helps Melissa participate in family and community life.

Melissa attends a Wesley LifeSkills program at Campbelltown four days a week. Vicki chose Wesley LifeSkills because of its person-centred approach and its partnerships with families. This has allowed Vicki to help determine the type of mentoring and care that is provided to Melissa in a very effective way.

"She used to have toileting accidents all the time," Vicki said. "It was just because she couldn't communicate when she needed to go to the toilet."

"The staff at Wesley LifeSkills and I have worked hard over a number of years just to teach Melissa to point to the toilet when she needs to go."

When Vicki talks to people about Melissa she proudly shows photos of her so people get a sense of Melissa's identity. One of the photos shows Melissa glowing at her debut, resplendent in a ball gown with her brother Michael as her partner.

Involving Melissa in every single part of family and community life takes stamina and determination. Vicki remembers times when they have been out together and Melissa has wet herself at the shops.

"It would have been easy to go home, crying in the car," Vicki said.

Vicki knows these dilemmas and isolation are faced by families who have a child with a disability.

"It is very easy to become isolated," she said. "The hard part is to be the family that's out there."

"It is very easy to become isolated," she said. "The hard part is to be the family that's out there."



“At tenpin bowling I had to give her instructions such as ‘pick up’, ‘walk’ and ‘hold ball’ but after a few times she could do it all herself.”

Being non-verbal she sometimes expressed her anxiety the only way she knew how—by screaming. She has become more comfortable with the centre and new environments through trips to the cinema, local café and tenpin bowling centre.

Wesley LifeSkills care worker Ben Dunstan, who has supported Melissa through many outings, said it is vital to give her very clear and concise instructions.

“At tenpin bowling I had to give her instructions such as ‘pick up’, ‘walk’ and ‘hold ball’ but after a few times she could do it all herself,” he said.

Ben said he has seen Melissa change during the past few years.

“Melissa has come 360 degrees since she first stepped in the door,” he said. “She can sit calmly in a café and enjoy a drink. She has matured into a young lady.”

Lisa said Melissa is now comfortable interacting with others.

“It was a big moment when we saw her sitting with other clients,” she said. “We were all amazed because for so long she didn’t interact with anyone or like anyone sitting near her.”

Lisa said the centre’s success was largely due to the time staff spent with parents. It ensures that clients can carry what they learn into a variety of environments: home, public transport, cinemas and other public spaces.

Vicki values this approach. Melissa is learning new skills and mixing with her peers during community outings. It has engendered new confidence in Vicki: she is always thinking of the next step or measure to help Melissa be as independent as possible.

Vicki remains resolute: she has energy, clarity and determination.

“Melissa keeps me going,” Vicki reflects. “Also without the support of family and friends, I would have been burnt out many years ago. I can only thank those around me.”

On a deeper level Vicki talks of her own connection with God and how it supports her. Her church community nurtures Vicki and Melissa.

“Having faith gives me inner peace and I really value that,” she said. “But to me, faith and peace need to be matched by making a difference in the world around you.”

As mother and daughter journey together, that is certainly what they are doing. **i**

Vicki works in a busy office in Sydney’s west and is constantly balancing work and home life. As a single mum, life is especially difficult. The strain of raising Melissa took its toll on her marriage, although it was not the only factor. It makes her all the more conscious of continuing to have the right support.

From the outside Wesley LifeSkills Campbelltown looks like an ordinary office but inside there are piles of board games, a large screen TV, lounge chairs, dining tables and a kitchen. It is a busy place with the 18 clients participating in a variety of activities, outings and cleaning.

Service Coordinator, Lisa Yates, manages a team of four, who take the time to gently mentor their clients and involve them with the wider world. Helping a person with autism develop skills to live as independently as possible takes many hours of dedication.

Lisa said the program aimed to foster community inclusion, social interaction and encourage independence.

As Melissa arrives each day she is greeted with a laminated A4 streetscape complete with buses, food, games and wind-blown trees that hang to the scene on Velcro patches. The workers step each client visually through what will happen during the day: the meals, the trips and even the weather. As each activity in the day is completed, it is removed from the street. This helps people with autism feel less anxious.

Lisa said the Wesley LifeSkills program aimed to foster community inclusion, social interaction and encourage independence.

“We make the centre a place where clients can feel very relaxed and welcome but we also communicate to them that it is a public space and we need to be respectful and tolerant of others,” she said.

When Melissa arrived at the centre in 2008 she was anxious and timid about this new, foreign space.

Amid the bobbing babies and kickboard-wielding retirees in the pool at the Cabravale Leisure Centre in Sydney's west, Lucas Cree is about to be baptised, confirming his journey of faith and his ongoing relationship with God.

Lucas has been wheelchair-bound for the past few years after a horrific attack in his home left him officially dead four times, brain damaged and with little prospect of ever walking again. But every Wednesday he comes to the pool to work with a physiotherapist to realise his dream of leaving his wheel chair behind.

He asked for baptism in the pool during his regular physiotherapy session. Pastor Matt Le Claire from Parkside Baptist Church is in the pool to ask Lucas to confirm his commitment to God. Then to the cheers of Lucas' gathered friends, Lucas is immersed under the water.

He waves to everyone when he returns to the surface and asks Matt, "Can I keep practising my walking?" With that he continues to walk from end-to-end of the pool at a measured pace. It says a lot about Lucas' spirit these days—to always keep moving and changing.

Lucas now lives at Wesley Woodward, a place that not only accommodates young people with a disability but gives them dedicated support to live as independently as possible. If he can achieve his dream, Lucas will move into his own place. Wesley Mission staff are supporting him in his massive challenge.

The 42-year-old has never been scared of trials and recalls as a young man running into a burning house to rescue his grandmother.

"I'm a courageous man when I need to be," he said.

The key influences on Lucas as he grew up were the family: the Christian inspiration of his grandmother, and mother, Charmaine. She lost a leg to cancer when Lucas was three years-old but went on to win a gold medal at in the women's high jump in the 1980 Paralympics in Holland. For Lucas, Charmaine has been

the inspiration to overcome the challenges of the past few years.

"I just jumped up even in the early days after I lost my leg and said I'm not going to be disabled," Charmaine said. "But Lucas has a much bigger challenge than I had."

Charmaine has been there urging her son, encouraging him and ensuring he is included in family events.

The strong bonds between Charmaine and her two sons were forged in the fear of a violent husband and father, from whom they eventually fled while Lucas was a small child. The little clan struggled to make ends meet but warmly cared for each other.

Charmaine remembers that Lucas was always looking for adventure and pushing to set his own course.

Lucas had no familiarity with speed: what it looked like or what it did. It was not surprising that he returned to the caravan with something totally different: heroin. Kara balked at the drug. "That stuff will kill you," she said.

Little did Lucas realise how true Kara's words were. The young man was intrigued by the heroin and became addicted from his first injection. During the next 15 years, he would be declared clinically dead from a drug overdose 12 times.

Among other petty crimes, he became a very skilled car thief to fund his habit. On his ankle is now a telling script: a plain tattoo with the name of the gang, LCT (Local Car Thief). His life was about the rush of drugs, the fast cars and the parties.

"I just jumped up even in the early days after I lost my leg and said I'm not going to be disabled," Charmaine said. "But Lucas has a much bigger challenge than I had."

"He wanted to be wild and free from the moment he was born," she said.

But navigating his life to maximise his freedom also led Lucas into stormy waters.

He left school at 16, got a job in a print shop and moved into his own place: a poky caravan in a rundown caravan park furnished with just a fridge and a sofa. Lucas was elated that he was truly independent.

For him the picture was complete when he met and fell in love with the 20-year-old woman in the adjoining caravan. He loved her for her spirit and tattoos. But Kara had other priorities and an explicit errand for Lucas: "Go and buy me speed".

While Lucas loved the life he was leading he was about to be thrown headlong into a life over which he had little control. And it all happened after an argument over a bottle of tequila. When Lucas refused to share his bottle with a friend, the friend responded by beating Lucas up, stomping on his head and leaving him to die. Doctors were able to save Lucas' life but he remained in a coma.

Keeping a bed-side vigil, Charmaine asked for her family to pray.

"I must have prayed 10 times a day at his hospital bed," she said. "Everyone thought he would be a vegetable. But he's not and I think it's because of the prayer."

Walking in his footsteps



“You cannot underestimate the value to him of getting some of this independence back.”

value to him of getting some of this independence back.

“I say to him ‘one step at a time’... it’s baby steps. Just him getting himself upstairs is great to see.”

Charmaine sees how Lucas’ confidence has grown and the important role his church community has played in this process.

“Lucas was originally very self-conscious about going out in public,” she said. “Now he is happy to be out and about in the community. He loves to go to the movies and family activities. He’s recaptured a lot of what he used to like about himself.

“When he goes to church everybody talks with him and they never talk down to him. That is so important to his self-worth. They just accept him for who he is.”

Back at the pool, Pastor Matt Le Claire ponders Lucas’ faith and new life.

“Lucas is a man with rough edges but there is no doubting his faith,” he said. “I’m really happy for him in being able to establish a new life despite the challenges.”



The attacker was given a 10-year sentence but Lucas’ confinement was going to last longer. When Lucas awoke from the coma he knew God had been active in his fragile life and began to think about a future with him.

Looking back he sees the damage he did to himself and others. “I regret all the sin I’ve done in life,” Lucas said.

Each week Lucas attends Parkside Baptist Church and is part of a regular Bible study group at Wesley Woodward. His faith is not for ‘Sunday only’. God is at the centre of his life and the decisions he makes in the face of serious challenges.

It has also led him to a point that many would avoid: to forgive the man who tried to kill him.

“I can forgive but I cannot forget,” Lucas mused. The emotional wounds are as long lasting as his physical scars but he has dedicated himself to forgive.

Lucas is unsteady as he rises from his wheelchair on the verandah of Wesley Woodward. The strength and balance are slowly coming back. His tall frame is a surprise once he gets to his feet.

When Lucas first left hospital after the assault he lived in a nursing home, sharing a room with three elderly men. It was cramped, he had no support and his condition did not improve.

When Lucas first came to Wesley Woodward he was unable to prepare simple meals or go to the toilet by himself. In the spacious unit that Lucas shares with another resident, the crumbs on the kitchen bench and full fridge are a testament to their growing independence. The encouragement and tender care of the Wesley Woodward staff has contributed to the change and a new outlook on life.

“A care worker will take me to do my shopping once a week and we sometimes go to a cafe. It’s good to get out and about,” Lucas said.

Charmaine said Wesley Woodward had given Lucas independence by providing him with his own living space and enabling him to plan his own outings and meals for the week.

“He is one of the many people who weren’t born with a disability and so he remembers a time when he was totally independent,” she said. “You cannot underestimate the

Carers: compassionate, resilient says new Wesley Mission report

The latest Wesley Report Giving disability carers a break was launched at the Wesley Conference Centre in May by the Rev Dr Keith Garner.

Joining Dr Garner at the launch was Dr Ken Baker, Chief Executive, National Disability Services, who talked about his own experience caring for his wife who suffers from the effects of a debilitating stroke. He strongly endorsed the report.

The 60-page report is Wesley Mission’s first published survey of people impacted by disability and provides a snapshot of life as a disability carer; the commitment, the joys and the challenges.

The survey and related interviews with disability carers were conducted in January 2014.

“The reality is that the role of a carer is hugely taxing and takes its toll on even the most robust, loving people,” Dr Garner said. “We discovered that carers of people with a disability are incredibly compassionate and resilient. Their capacity to overcome adversity and rise to continual challenges is remarkable.”

The survey asked carers to consider the impact if the services they receive were absent. Across all aspects measured (social, emotional and financial), carers indicated that they would be considerably less satisfied without the provision of care services.



Dr Ken Baker and the Rev Dr Keith Garner launch the report

Eighty-two per cent of respondents in the survey indicated that their level of satisfaction with their mental health would decline without the provision of care services. Seventy-one per cent said the level of stress in their lives would worsen if services were reduced.

The compassionate care of God

With the Rev Dr Keith V Garner

— 1 Peter 5:1–7 —

One of the primary responsibilities of those in Christian leadership is to articulate the vision of the church and to keep the mission and values before the church or organisation. Today we frequently talk about organisational culture and, for us, the importance of care has to feature in that culture.

In this edition of *Wesley Impact!* you will read about the importance of care. Our recent research report focused on the significance of care and particularly the need to care for the carers.

In 1 Peter 5, this important epistle takes on a remarkably personal approach. The writer even sees himself as an eye witness to the

sufferings of Christ. When we reach verses 6 and 7, there are a number of practical considerations which seem to centre on the challenges of the early Christian community. PHEME PERKINS suggests that the reason behind some of the writer's words is that "Christians must be assured that their suffering has not escaped God's notice."¹

"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7)

The imperative to throw all our anxieties and cares on God resonates with the teaching of Jesus (Luke 12:11, 22-32), but it also encompasses the thought that God exercises universal care over all things.

In pastoral visitation, I have noticed the complex variety of interpersonal situations that exist and I never cease to be amazed at the level of care that is exercised by loving families and friends. In the recent Wesley Report, the research showed how extremely stressful life can be for those who provide care. The lifestyle of carers can too often become completely focused upon and dedicated to the well-being of those for whom they care. The complexity of combining caring responsibilities with everyday life can mean that there is little time left to enjoy life. Despite these challenges, carers are very resilient.

When Peter writes these words, he recognises the nature of care, the need of the carer, and the one in whom we can trust.

The nature of care

Caring for others can be very demanding and it certainly takes its toll upon the carer. At Wesley Mission we seek to direct our concern not only to those who are being cared for, but also toward those who are expressing compassion in their care of a loved one.

It is the very nature of God to be One who cares for us. The humility displayed in caring for others reflects something of God's nature among his people. Here is the source of real strength. It should not surprise us that the picture of the shepherd and caring is closely aligned in the writer's message. "Peter is telling his readers to trust in God's power to care for them."²

Our care today is set against the backdrop of the enormous cultural and social changes occurring in our community. We need to remind ourselves of the importance of offering care to each other and

there is no better starting point than by observing the ministry of Jesus Christ himself. The wonderful promise "He cares for you" is a marvellous reminder of the night in the boat when the disciples asked of Jesus, "Do you not care that we are perishing?" (Mark 4:38). The question the disciples asked has a clear answer—he does! The nature of our care is that we are to be so aligned to him, captivated by him and committed to his purposes that we share and demonstrate that same care towards others.

In an increasingly impersonal world of mass media and teleconferencing, it is important to re-establish that God cares for individuals, especially those in need, one by one, day in and day out.

The need of the carer

The Wesley Report focused upon disability carers and recognised the level of disability in our Australian community. An astounding 2.7 million people provide informal care to those with disability and 29 per cent of these are primary carers.

While Peter would not have such people specifically in mind, his message to a church under fire is one that can be consistently applied to people under pressure. We all require a place to which we can turn when we are in need. Christians are to entrust themselves to the power of God as they undergo what the Apostle calls a "fiery ordeal" (1 Peter 4:12). Anxiety and concern can often distance us from friends and can even separate us from God. I can, however, draw the conclusion from my own pastoral ministry and the experience of others that even the most difficult of circumstances may be the context in which people gain a better understanding of themselves and are drawn closer to God.

In a study of pastoral care in postmodern culture, Paul Goodliff concludes that the priorities of care are essential in the building of the Christian community, creating relational health in a fragmented society and in the sustaining of meaningful relationships. He says,

"The first pastoral task is to build a community that is true to the realities of human experience and genuinely reflective of the love of Christ."³

Our Christian churches and organisations need to be centres where those who live under the pressure of caring for others can find genuine support and purpose.

The one in whom we can trust

Peter finishes this exhortation with a remarkable and demanding invitation. It does not come out of any sense of 'knowing it all' or perceived arrogance. The words come from the pen of one who is writing to Christians scattered over the country known today as Turkey. Many of these Christians were living under great pressure and knew what it was to seek the succour and strength of God.

Peter the Apostle, if he was the writer, knew what it was to be re-commissioned as a 'shepherd' of Jesus' followers. All of this came after the disaster of his earlier denials (John 21:15-19). This sharp and intimate glimpse reminds us how important it is to be shaped and remade by Christ, if we are to care for others.

Tom Wright spells out the implications of these verses and offers a hopeful thought to us all, "The verb is a strong one: pick up everything that is bothering you, everything that is weighing you down, and fling them on God's back. He will carry them. He will be delighted to do so. He loves you, after all."⁴ **i**

1. Perkins, PHEME, *First and Second Peter, James and Jude – Interpretation Commentary*, Westminster John Knox Press, p.79

2. Marshall, I Howard, *1 Peter, IVP New Testament Commentary*, p.169

3. Goodliff, Paul, *Care in a Confused Climate*, Darton, Longman and Todd, p.141.

4. Wright, NT, *The Early Christian Letters for Everyone*, Westminster John Knox Press, p.94.

Fostering a graduate

It is a telling fact that 50 per cent of young people in foster care do not complete Year 10. That makes Emily Hendry's entry into the University of Newcastle all the more remarkable.

Emily graduated from high school and began an IT degree at the university. Soon she will pursue her ideal passion—a design degree.

Independence

Emily was removed from her birth family at age seven and from that time lived with a few families. Life turned once more at the age of 15 when a dedicated family chose to foster her.

Emily said many young people in foster care try to be as independent as possible because they are often moved between families and feel they can only rely on themselves.

"We want to be independent but schools are always telling us what to do," she said. "It is for our own good but it grates."

"That's why foster kids don't want to follow rules or wear uniforms."

The process of being placed with a foster family is often extremely bewildering and Emily knows the difficulties well.

"You are taken from one family and grafted onto another and it's very difficult to understand how the new family operates," she said.

Support

Wesley Dalmar Out-of-Home Care has been supporting Emily through many difficult challenges, including the turbulent teenage years. Wesley Mission helped Emily with her application to attend another school to increase her opportunities.

There was more good news around the corner. Christine and Peter Harrison were teachers at the

school and noticed that she was struggling. When they found that her family circumstances were largely the cause, they asked if they could become her foster parents. It was beyond Emily's dreams.

"I was so excited," she said. "Past families had been unhappy. So it was exciting to have a family that wanted to nurture and care for me—and all before they really knew me."

Sitting in the sun on the university campus lawn, Emily reflects that the transition to her new foster family had its challenges.

"It was hard to work out the whole family dynamic and how things worked in that house," she said. "Like any family, they had their way of doing things and sometimes it's not obvious what needs to be explained."

"I thought I was independent and only needed a place to live. I didn't think I needed a family but I was wrong."

"I was bright but really lazy and without my family's support I would not be here at uni."

Like Emily, many young people in foster care often have no continuity in their lives because they change families all too often. To overcome this sense of dislocation Wesley Mission aims to provide consistent and regular support to young people in care and foster families.

From childhood and throughout her teenage years, Emily had the same Wesley Mission case manager—Monique Du Preez. Her caring support was something Emily treasured and often seemed as simple as sharing a cup of coffee.

"She was always there for me to vent," said Emily. "When I think back now on all the stuff I talked with her about it was all pretty trivial but it was important to me at the time."

While Emily was adapting to her new family another more defining change was occurring: a discovery of faith. It was a clear awakening.

"The foster family I had when I was seven-years-old planted in me the seeds of knowledge about God," she said. "But it was in my teenage years, at a Christian camp, that I



Keith Garner, Emily Hendry and Wesley Mission Officer Mark Scott

"I was so excited," she said. "Past families had been unhappy. So it was exciting to have a family that wanted to nurture and care for me – and all before they really knew me."

discovered we were all meant to be in relationship with God.

"Once I understood that a whole new world opened up."

Given how much chaos there had been in her childhood it was no wonder that missing the school bus or forgetting her lunch caused Emily so much angst as a teenager. However, she said her faith in God meant that she stopped being anxious about the smaller matters in her life.

"I know everything has a purpose and so I don't panic," she said.

The Harrisons provided a clear example of faith in action.

"They were a great example of sacrificial love that we see in Jesus," she said. "They showed me what it looked like to live with Christ."

Emily is eager to develop her faith, has joined a campus Christian group and has discovered a church 'to call home'. She is often now found reading books by English theologian John Stott.

In acknowledgement of Emily's success and to assist her complete her degree, she was recently awarded the Wesley Dalmar Scholarship, one of two new Wesley Mission scholarships.

Like many students, Emily struggles to make ends meet and so the scholarship will give her an added financial boost.

"It will be really helpful and I am struggling financially," she said. "I need to cover \$135 per week in rent plus food and travel. Centrelink does not cover it all."

Wesley Mission CEO the Rev Dr Keith Garner said the scholarship would ensure that young people could move into adult life with the best preparation possible.

Transition

"Caring for young people does not stop when they reach 18," Dr Garner said. "For any young person the transition into the next stage of life—whatever that may be—is important. We believe we must support them during this transition."

For Emily an IT degree and a career in graphic design beckons.

Whatever her future holds, Emily's faith continues to give her confidence and she remembers well "that all things work together for good for those who love God" (Romans 8:28). **i**

NEWS

Anniversaries celebrated at thanksgiving service

A joyous thanksgiving service at the Wesley Centre marked the 202nd anniversary of Wesley Mission and the 120th year of Wesley Dalmar.

The service drew Wesley Mission worshippers as well as Wesley Dalmar staff, current and former foster children and foster carers. Vibrant singing and thoughtful prayers provided a time for reflection on the past and the future.

It was also a service that looked to the future with the announcement of two new scholarships designed to support young people in Wesley Dalmar's care and who want to pursue further education: the Wesley Dalmar Scholarship and the Wesley Marcus Wilson Scholarship.

Scholarships

Superintendent the Rev Dr Keith Garner asked the congregation to 'complete the work': an apt call as people remembered the legacy of Wesley Dalmar and Wesley Mission.

"To 'complete the work' is to 'fulfil', which carries with it the concept that God has definite purposes for his people to accomplish," he said.

During the service, 18-year-old Emily Hendry was presented with the new Wesley Dalmar Scholarship by Dr Garner and Wesley Mission Officer Mark Scott. Emily was in the care of Wesley Dalmar until 2013.

She is currently studying for a Bachelor of IT but is changing to a Bachelor of Visual Communications and Design. The Wesley Dalmar Scholarship will help support Emily though university and gain the qualifications she desires.

Sixteen-year-old Brittany Lee Jones was the recipient of the Wesley Marcus Wilson Scholarship. Brittany and her two siblings came into the care of Wesley Dalmar in 2004. She is still with her permanent carer and will soon be adopted by her.

Brittany is about to undertake a Hospitality Certificate at Hamilton TAFE and the Wesley Marcus Wilson Scholarship will provide much needed assistance as she studies.

Memory

The inaugural Wesley Marcus Wilson Scholarship is named after Marcus Wilson, a young man who came into the care of Wesley Dalmar in 1998 with his two sisters. Marcus died from heat exhaustion when installing ceiling insulation in 2009. The scholarship will honour the memory of this special young man whose life was tragically cut short.

Dr Garner said the scholarships were designed to ensure that young people could move into adult life with the best preparation possible.

"Caring for young people does not stop when they reach 18," he said.



Keith Garner with Erica Morgan

The service also heard from Amanda and Glenn Mulligan who have supported a number of children through both short and long-term care since 2003.

They are currently providing permanent care for two children and temporary care for another two children. Amanda is very appreciative of her Wesley Dalmar education support worker while caring for a child with a disability.

Friendship

Earlier in the afternoon Wesley Dalmar staff, volunteers, current and former clients joined for an afternoon tea of fellowship and friendship in the Wesley Centre.

Emily Hendry spoke to those gathered about her positive experience in foster care and her plans for the future as the first recipient of the Wesley Dalmar Scholarship.

The event also heard from Erica Morgan who grew up in the care of Community Services and who now works as a case manager with Wesley Dalmar. **i**

Try our Big City Day camps this school holidays

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NEWS

New teaching facilities for Wesley Hospitals open at Ashfield, Kogarah

A new era in mental health education has begun with the opening of two new Wesley Mission teaching facilities in Sydney.

Wesley Hospital Ashfield and Wesley Hospital Kogarah have opened education facilities for nursing and medical students, as well as health and allied health professionals.

The \$2.6 million facility at Wesley Hospital Ashfield and the \$2.9 million facility at Wesley Hospital Kogarah have been built to meet the growing demand for student placements in mental health education and the ongoing training of nursing and medical professionals.

Wesley Mission Superintendent the Rev Dr Keith Garner said the centres provide students with a different learning experience to that of a university classroom or hospital.

"Most students never have the opportunity to see mental health practice in a reputable and well-established private hospital setting," he said. "It also offers students a balance between classroom engagement and work experience."

Flexible

Dr Garner was joined at the Kogarah opening by the Federal Member for Barton Mr Nick Varvaris and Federal Member for Banks David Coleman, and at Ashfield by the Mayor of Ashfield Councillor Lucille McKenna and Assistant Director of Chronic Disease Management, Primary and Mental Health Care, Department of Health, Lorraine Ricketts.

The state-of-the-art centres adjoin the hospitals and are fitted with the latest technology. There are flexible work areas for students, breakout areas, and seminar and training rooms.



The centres also have the newest audio-visual hardware and software for secure video conferencing. The centres are well-positioned and are accessible to many of the larger universities in Sydney and beyond.

Wesley Mission submitted a tender application to build the facilities through the Department of Health's Innovative Clinical Teaching Training Grant in 2010 and was successful. **i**

Spotting the signs key to campaign

Wesley Mission is partnering with outdoor advertiser Adshel in a vital and inventive national awareness campaign to help prevent suicide.

The *Spot the signs, help stop suicide* campaign is rolling out across the country through Adshel spaces as part of their *The Importance of Giving Back* campaign.

Posters will run in metropolitan and regional areas until the end of 2014. The cause is compelling: over 2,500 Australians take their own lives annually.

"More lives are lost to suicide each year than from skin cancer or road deaths," the Superintendent of Wesley Mission the Rev Dr Keith Garner said.

"Simple effective interventions can make a difference and save lives. The support of Adshel will help raise awareness, build strength and understanding in communities and

help prevent suicide." Wesley Mission has a long and ground-breaking record in suicide prevention: founding the crisis telephone counselling service Lifeline in 1963 and Wesley LifeForce in 1995, which has now trained more than 20,000 Australians in suicide prevention through workshops and the establishment of community networks.

The posters focus upon three different people who are dealing with a range of tangible and pressing issues. The campaign message is to help Australians spot the signs of suicide as early as possible and to attend a Wesley LifeForce suicide intervention skills training workshop.

"By highlighting the thoughts of a father, brother, mother, son or friend it will enable people to be more aware of the hidden signs of depression and suicide," Dr Garner said.



The campaign was developed in consultation with Mindframe. The Australian Government's Mindframe National Media Initiative (Mindframe) aims to encourage responsible, accurate and sensitive representation of mental illness and suicide in the Australian mass media. **i**

Optus volunteers in Wesley Mission's world

A group of Optus employees were seen around Wesley Mission in Sydney's CBD each with \$10 in their hand to buy food for three days. No, they hadn't been given a pay cut! They were participating in the Wesley Mission Food Challenge to understand some of the struggles homeless people face in surviving day to day.

Lucy Parker, the Wesley Connect Food and Care (formerly Wesley Food Ministry) Program Coordinator said the volunteers also learned a lot about the general issues of homelessness in Australia.

"This was a good opportunity to not only understand the issues of homelessness but the ways in which Wesley Mission assists people out of homelessness," she said.

Prior to doing the Homeless Food Challenge on 30 May, the Optus Team had already started a food

collection drive. The result of this drive was a huge delivery of non-perishable food items to Wesley Mission which they assisted to sort and store at the end of the day.

Wendy Russell, Optus Talent Acquisition Manager, said having to stretch \$10 so far really put life into perspective.

Well-being

"The challenge was really difficult," she said. "And I was questioning the nutritional value of any stuff I could actually afford.

"I didn't know the statistics around homelessness such as 17 per cent of homeless people are under 12. It was really tough to hear."

Megan Kingham, Manager, Optus Health and Well-being said giving back to the community was very important for well-being.

"In an increasingly self-centred world it's a great thing to do," she said.



Food challenge

Megan also emphasised the value of hearing more about Wesley Mission's work. "Corporate sponsorship is not just about novelty cheques, it's about understanding the way charities work," she said.

If you are interesting in donating to the Wesley Connect Food and Care Program please call Lucy Parker on 9263 5360 or bring items to Wesley Congregational Life, 3/220 Pitt Street, Sydney. **I**

Gambling enquiry hears from Wesley Mission

The NSW Legislative Council's Enquiry into Gambling in NSW has heard that Australian children are being socialised to think that gambling is a mainstream activity with little moral or ethical consequences.

Speaking at the committee enquiry at the NSW Parliament, Wesley Mission Superintendent the Rev Dr Keith Garner said gambling was being portrayed as "purely a natural part of life and requires little risk or effort."

"Gambling advertising does not present an accurate picture of the result," he said.

Dr Garner also told the committee hearing that while gambling addiction impacted all socio-economic groups it hit low-income earners the hardest: gambling is a regressive tax.

"The message of winning is endlessly repeated with scant mention of the possibility of loss," he said. "Hidden from public view is online betting,

which is made from a computer, tablet or phone device. Such practice blurs the line between public and private activity."

A decade ago the annual turnover from internet gambling was just \$6 billion, it is now \$42 billion with Australia's share of this global market about five per cent; significantly more than its share of the global population.

"It is often said that Australians would bet on two flies crawling up a wall," he said. "What would be far more meaningful to us would be to say what would those flies see if they looked from their position on the wall? They would see a growing number of Australian households where gambling has become an issue, including financial stress, bankruptcy, family breakdown, theft, depression and anxiety, domestic violence and substance abuse.

"Our gambling counselling, financial counselling and the staff of our two

hospitals see the impact of addiction first hand. Online and interactive gambling is increasing quickly, with recent research indicating that problem gambling rates for internet gambling once it is established are higher than for pokies gambling."

Gambling technology was changing rapidly and governments were struggling to keep pace with changes in the sector, according to Wesley Mission's submission.

The enquiry is examining the design and accessibility of electronic gaming machines and new and emerging gambling products and services, the regulation of the number and location of electronic and high intensity gaming machines, access to cash and credit in and around gambling venues, and the regulation of gambling and measures to reduce the exposure of children and young people to gambling activity. **I**

New care for older Australians at home

Wesley Mission is now rolling out new Home and Community Care packages across NSW.

Following successful tenders new funding has been made available for new and extended work on Sydney's northern beaches, the Sutherland Shire, far-west and south-west Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and Port Macquarie.

"More older Australians will be able to enjoy independent living in the ease of their own homes," said Helen Wilson, Wesley Mission's General Manager of Aged Care.

Professional

"Wesley Mission has an outstanding record in providing professional and friendly personal care so people can enjoy their independence. Staff assist with activities such as light

housekeeping, meal preparation, socialising, transport and grocery shopping. They also provide assistance with showering, dressing, or nursing care."

As part of the roll out, Wesley Seniors' Living Centres are being developed in south-west Sydney and Newcastle, providing a one stop shop for older Australians and a community focal point for interaction, support and information. **I**

Congregation celebrates 25th anniversary

Wesley Congregational Life is a very multicultural Christian community and one of its congregations, the Wesley Chinese Congregation, recently celebrated 25 years together. A special celebratory service took place to mark this milestone with the Rev Dr Keith Garner delivering a compelling sermon and a number of choirs bringing the occasion alive in song.

Humble

Hannah Zheng from Wesley Congregational Life said the congregation had humble beginnings but has grown into one of the few large Chinese churches in Sydney's CBD, with 110 people attending every Sunday. Each week the service is delivered in Mandarin.

"Wesley Chinese Congregation has a diverse ministry that extends beyond the Sunday worship," Hannah said. "There is youth fellowship, home visits, choirs, church outings and camps, bible study and the Chinese Gospel Library at 220 Pitt Street."

Participation

One of the popular groups within the congregation is the Evergreen Fellowship, made up of senior members. Their theme is 'keep a young heart within Christ and be active'. And they live out this ethos without reserve. As well as supporting each other and those in need, the Evergreen Fellowship members participate in many fun activities such as dance classes on Sunday afternoons.

The congregation is well-known among Sydney's Chinese community and Hannah credits this to the



very active congregants. "We also work very close with the Sydney Chinese Christian Churches Association to organise large scale events where we can spread the love of Christ," said Hannah.

One of the key aspects of Wesley Chinese Congregation's evangelism is its mission work in China. Since 2003 the group have organised trips to the People's Republic most years. These have been a valuable opportunity to engage, support and learn from the rapidly growing Christian community in China. **I**



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