

CONNECT

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March 2022



INSIDE:

Your support in 2021
Yaza's dream
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Your gifts = housing
... and so much more!

Your generosity in action.



CatholicCare
VICTORIA

Thank you for your faithful support!

In FY2021, your generous giving made a big difference for families in need.

With your support:

39,701 Victorians received the loving help they needed in times of distress.

21,542 people in crisis were assisted with housing, homelessness, advocacy, pastoral care, and other crisis support.

7,755 people supported to deal with challenges impacting their family, such as family breakdown and separation, parenting issues, child safety, and family violence.

6,758 people used life-changing counselling, mental health support, relationship education, and youth services.

5,296 people benefited from employment, adult education, and refugee services to help them build brighter futures for them and their families.

You'll read about this and more in the following pages. We couldn't have achieved this without your support. Thank you for loving others in action and in truth (1 John 3:18).

Thank you for supporting refugees like Yaza*

Imagine growing up in a refugee camp in Thailand. Your dreams of a brighter future seeming so far away. Then, one day, against all odds, your family is able to make their way to Australia, and you begin a new life.

You enrol in high school where you work hard to learn the language. You throw yourself into your studies so you can be sure to graduate. When you do, it's almost as if you can taste it. Your dream of a brighter future is just around the corner. Then... devastating news: your father is gravely ill.

This is Yaza's story.

Yaza arrived in Australia with his family in 2014. After graduating high school, he found himself the primary breadwinner for his family due to his dad's illness.

Although he'd worked hard to learn English, it was still Yaza's second language. And it was a struggle to find work when his confidence speaking English was low. He took any casual job that he could find, but what he really dreamed of was a career. He wanted an apprenticeship as a painter.

Then COVID hit. Like the rest of us, Yaza was forced into isolation and much of his time was spent caring for his dad. His English skills quickly regressed as he didn't have any opportunity to use them. In desperation, he contacted his former high school to see if they could help him find the work he dreamed of. And that's how he connected with CatholicCare Victoria.

"Our Job Readiness program exists for people like Yaza," explains Job Readiness Worker, Sarah. "Our clients are people who are not eligible for government funding, or simply need more help than government services and programs can offer."

In Yaza's case, it was the latter. While he was faithfully working with job services to secure employment, Sarah explains that the type of employment that Yaza dreamed of finding seemed out of reach.

"They weren't able to support his goal of being a painter or starting his career. They were just trying to find him a job: any job."

But thanks to your generosity, CatholicCare Victoria was able to step in and give Yaza the support he needed.

Throughout lockdown, Yaza met with his Job Readiness Worker. He never missed an appointment. With their help, he worked hard to apply for countless positions and complete his job search paperwork for Centrelink. His confidence in his English improved. Eventually, his Job Readiness Worker received wonderful news: an interview!

With some extra help from the Diversitat Victoria Job Advocates program (arranged by his CatholicCare Victoria Worker) Yaza received urgent interview preparation support. Following his interview, Yaza was given a trial. And after the first few days of his trial came the life-changing moment: Yaza was offered a painting apprenticeship!

"Despite receiving countless rejections on his journey," says Sarah, "he never lost hope".

With your help and a lot of hard work, Yaza found the career he longed for and the brighter future he dreamed of as a young boy in a Thai refugee camp. He loves being an apprentice painter and is looking forward to starting trade school this year. Sadly, Yaza's dad passed away last year. The pain of losing his father is raw, but Yaza now knows that he has the means to provide for his mum and family. He says that makes the world of difference – and he knows he has wonderful people like you, to thank for that.

If you'd like to support the work of CatholicCare Victoria and refugees like Yaza, go to:
www.catholiccarevic.org.au/donate

How you're helping refugees like Yaza...

- **One-on-one support, before and during employment**
- **Workshops on Centrelink, job interviews, and resumes**
- **Skills-assessment to help build self-confidence**
- **Advocacy for better inclusion**
- **Applying for the right job: not just any job**
- **Language classes for women and mums**
- **Financial independence for the future!**

With your help, CatholicCare Victoria's Job Readiness program supports asylum seekers and refugees in their search for work. Yaza is one of them.

**At CatholicCare Victoria, we respect the dignity and privacy of all who reach out to us for support as they work towards a fresh start in life. So, while the stories and quotes are true, client name and image have been changed for privacy purposes.*



Thank you for supporting our Chaplains!

Every year, Catholic Chaplains give pastoral support to thousands of Victorians in hospitals, prisons and youth justice centres, as well as those who are living with HIV/AIDS.

Every day, these faithful messengers of God's mercy offer their compassion in those circumstances where it's needed most... and help people to cope with emotional pain and loneliness.

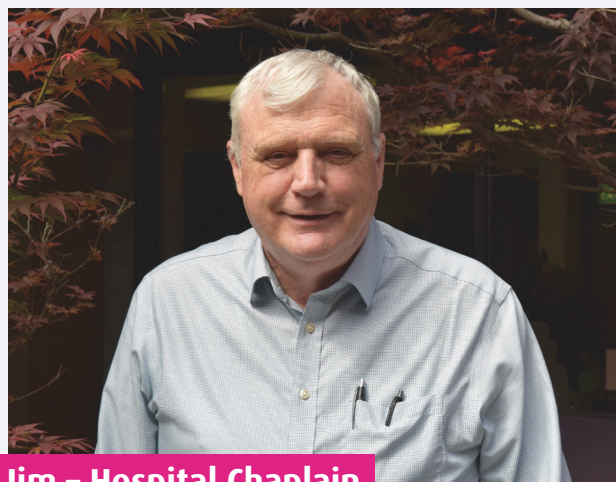
As you read the following reflections, we pray they encourage your heart.



Melanie, MGL - Youth Justice Chaplain

"As a youth justice chaplain, I come into contact with some of the most vulnerable young people in Victoria during their time in custody. My spiritual and pastoral care role sees me engaging with them, both one-to-one and in group conversations.

While hearing their stories often saddens me, it is a gift to be able to show them compassion, encourage them to see themselves in new ways, and share hope."



Jim - Hospital Chaplain

"As a Chaplain, I have the privilege of walking with people through incredibly difficult journeys.


Due to recent COVID restrictions, I was unable to physically visit some of the hospitals where my ministry usually takes place. I messaged the patients that I was not allowed to visit in person and invited them to call me instead if they wished. Shortly after, someone did. It was a patient who had just received a terminal diagnosis.

The conversations we had over the following month covered deep issues of faith and fear, grace and love. In her final message to me she said: "I feel no fear today, it is amazing. Thank you".

She died two days later. And I thank God for the privilege of having been - in some way - a minister of His perfect love to her."

Thank you to everyone who has donated to CatholicCare Victoria's 2022 Chaplaincy Appeal. You are helping to bring the gift of God's hope and mercy to vulnerable Victorians.


*To find out more about supporting this vital ministry, visit: www.catholiccarevic.org.au/chaplaincy-appeal
Your generous support ensures Chaplains can continue to provide much-needed pastoral care. Thank you.*



Meeting the newcomers when they first come into prison builds a connection early. I love listening to them as they share their story.

No matter how horrific their life has been, it is still their story. And listening to their story validates it, helps them to own it, and even come to recognise something of the goodness within themselves.

It encourages them to be open to my support as they work toward the next chapter of their life story. I have seen some of the toughest presenting people visibly change, simply because I have chosen to listen.



Sr Mary
Senior Prison Chaplain



How your gifts = safe and secure housing

It's time for a spotlight on a CatholicCare Victoria program which you may not know much about. Introducing, Centacare Housing Services! We sat down with Kathy from the Housing Services team, to ask her how your gifts translate to safe and secure housing for vulnerable Victorians.



Q: Kathy, can you please explain the role of Centacare Housing Services, and how our wonderful supporters make such a difference?

A: Generous donations from compassionate people like you will help CatholicCare Victoria to provide secure, affordable housing for people and families on low incomes through Centacare Housing Services. The goal is to provide long-term housing at an affordable price to people who might be experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.

Q: And what other help does this allow Centacare Housing Services to provide?

A: Alongside the normal tenancy management and housing services, we work alongside other teams in CatholicCare Victoria to provide whole-of-life support for clients who are facing homelessness. That might mean referring them to the No Interest Loan Scheme to help with the purchase of essential items to furnish their new home, or working with the Emergency Relief program to ensure they can meet all their family's basic needs.

Q: So Kathy, why is secure, long-term housing so important?

A: After experiencing COVID and repeated lockdowns, we all know what uncertainty feels like. It's destabilising. And if you don't have stability in something basic as knowing where you'll sleep at night, you can imagine the effect that has on the emotional and physical wellbeing of a family or individual.

If we can help a family find a safe and affordable home which they know will be theirs for the long-term, then that can really help them in other circumstances they may be going through as well

– whether that's securing a job, getting the kids to school on a regular basis, or something else entirely.

Q: Any final thoughts?

A: Only thank you. Your generous support means so much more than a physical space or building. It means a home and security for vulnerable families, some of whom are on the brink of homelessness. Your support really makes the world of difference.

Now building in 2022...

5 units in Darley

9 units in Officer

12 units in Melton

23 units in Warrnambool

24 units in Bacchus Marsh

25 units in Delacombe

49 units in other locations yet to be confirmed

That's 147 social housing dwellings which have been made possible by our partnership with the Victorian state government and with the help of your generous support. Thank you!

Hope after destruction...

Thanks to your support!

When the 2019-20 Victorian bushfires hit, they claimed five lives and tore through more than 1.5 million hectares of public and private land. Today, this disaster is a distant memory for many. But for survivors who are still picking up the pieces and rebuilding their broken lives, the trauma is ongoing.

That's why your generous donations are not only used for disaster response efforts, but in recovery too. Your support is helping CatholicCare Victoria to run Colour and Creativity Workshops and community gatherings for the 2019-20 bushfire survivors, through its Community Connection Van.

"We run art classes where bushfire survivors can express their creativity," explains Madelaine, workshop facilitator. "Creativity can actually help you to recover from trauma because it creates space to think deeply and reflect, while also allowing you to stay rooted in the present moment."

"Having said that, the workshops are not about problem solving and they aren't necessarily about counselling either. But what they do promote is gentle and caring friendships between fellow community members who share the same heartbreaking experience. And through these workshops, we see the healing of trauma take place in the most beautiful ways."



But what's vitally important, is that these workshops and gatherings are ongoing, because it allows your CatholicCare Victoria team to build rapport and foster healing within the community they seek to serve.

"Sharing stories, sharing life," says one anonymous participant. "The art brings out discussion, thoughts, and reflections. These years have been full of loss, tears, and loneliness... the art classes bring hope, fun, and friendship. Thank you."

Scan the QR code to learn more about the CatholicCare Victoria Community Connection Van... made possible with your support!



Help in hard seasons

We all have seasons which are harder than others. But as Alice* discovered, talking to a qualified counsellor can be a big help.

"I was having issues with my marriage. And when you're at your lowest point, you just need to do something about it. My sister told me about CatholicCare Victoria's counselling services and said, 'Even if it doesn't solve your problems, it will give you someone that you can talk to'."

"It really did. Talking with someone makes you stop, stand back and take a really good look at things. It shows you that you're valid."

*That your concerns are valid.
And while I'm not at a place where
I would say life is completely improved,
I have a bit of faith in myself again.*

"I still speak with my counsellor once every six weeks. It's been a life saver."

CatholicCare Victoria's counselling services offer you a safe place to talk with qualified counsellors. If you'd like to find out more, go to: www.catholiccarevic.org.au/counselling

*Name changed for privacy reasons.

Thank
you for
making the
2021 Giving
Tree Appeal
a success!



CatholicCare Victoria GIVING TREE APPEAL

We were so humbled by your generous response to our annual Giving Tree Appeal... especially following another challenging year of lockdowns.

Generous and loyal supporters of CatholicCare Victoria made over 1,050 donations, translating to more than **\$165,000** to support some of Victoria's most vulnerable. Thank you for your compassionate care.

Over Christmas, your generosity helped distribute **500 food hampers for 500 families and individuals**, who were struggling to put food on the table. Thank you for making their Christmas brighter.

Thanks also to Rinoldi Pasta, New Colonial Cookie Company, Food Factory Sales and Ital Food Group for providing free or discounted food for the 500 Christmas Hampers. Special thanks to all the Catholic parishes and schools who rallied their communities with fundraising efforts. And thanks also to the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne for their support of this campaign through their *Jesus is Christmas*: a televised Christmas Carols special.

But most of all...
thank YOU for your generous donations!

