

mercy foundation®

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THIS ISSUE

A new model
of affordable
housing

Helping
communities end
homelessness

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to celebrate

Home in a Box



at the
service
of human
dignity

Creating a welcoming home

Everyone needs and deserves a home. A safe, affordable, permanent home is the foundation that we all need for stability and that children need to thrive.

Setting up a home when you have spent a long time homeless can be a daunting experience. Starting with nothing and trying to make a house a home when you are living on a tight budget in unfamiliar surroundings can be overwhelming. Having few possessions can make it difficult to settle in to your new surroundings and lay down roots. Second-hand or worn out products can reinforce feelings of poor self-worth.

Home in a Box was developed to help people who have experienced chronic homelessness settle in to their new home. Home in a Box consists of two large boxes, bursting with high quality, brand new sheets, pillows, towels, cookware, cutlery, a dinner set, toaster and kettle and more. With Home in a Box, a person can spend their first night at home in a warm bed with fluffy pillows, shower and dry off with cosy towels, and enjoy a cup of tea and toast.

Since 2013, we have delivered 158 Homes in Boxes to help people make their new house a home. The workers who deliver Home in a Box to their clients often tell us of the difference it makes to people's lives.

"I'm just going to visit him now. The look on his face when he walked into his new place was priceless. He said that he has never had new towels or kitchen goods and was totally rapt with everything."



He is being taught how to prepare basic meals and the kitchen equipment has been fantastic."

"He was absolutely overjoyed at receiving the items. He could not believe how many items were included and that they were brand new. He asked me to pass on his gratitude. He said that he does not know what he would do without everything from Home in a Box."

"I so appreciate the help that you are able to provide. It's nice to know that when you move someone into a new flat that they will have at least a pillow and blanket for the first night and a kettle and toaster for breakfast the next morning! It makes a huge difference to that first night's experience."

Home in a Box would not be possible without the support of many donors and sponsors. Special thanks to MyHouse, Kennards Self Storage, Maxwell & Williams, Hospitality Products, HC Distributors and the Sisters of Mercy North Sydney for their generous and ongoing support.

At the service of human dignity for 30 years

In 2020, the Mercy Foundation celebrates its 30th anniversary. Established by the Sisters of Mercy North Sydney in 1990, the Mercy Foundation continues the Sisters' mission to address disadvantage at the grass roots and challenge the structural causes of poverty.

Catherine McAuley started the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy in Dublin in 1831. Catherine was a visionary and a social reformer. She worked to build a more just society and inspired hundreds of women to join her. In 1865, the Sisters of Mercy arrived in North Sydney and a new Congregation was established to continue Catherine's commitment to the poor in a new land.

Throughout 2020 we will be celebrating the Mercy Foundation's 30th Anniversary. It is our great privilege to continue Catherine's legacy on behalf of the Sisters of Mercy, North Sydney.



Photo: in the 1990's, the Mercy Foundation supported the FairWear campaign that brought about structural change resulting in fair work practices and the protection of rights for migrant outworkers in the clothing and textiles industry.



Ending Homelessness

A successful beginning for a new model of affordable housing

In May this year, YWCA Canberra launched Rentwell, the ACT's first charitable property management service. The Mercy Foundation provided start up funding for this project through our Grants to End Homelessness program. Rentwell was developed to provide affordable housing, prioritizing older women at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Property owners enter into a head lease agreement with YWCA Canberra, who provides the properties to eligible tenants at below 75% market rate. Property owners receive a land tax exemption through the ACT Revenue office. They can also claim any foregone rent as a tax deduction.

Rentwell has now leased and tenanted 10 affordable rental properties to individuals and families. Tenants include a number of older single women and single parent families.

After a great start, YWCA Canberra has now secured additional philanthropic funding to support Rentwell for the next three years. This in turn means many more affordable properties will be available for people at risk of homelessness in Canberra.



Krishna was the first property owner to lease her investment property through Rentwell. "Through initiatives like this I think we can all help end homelessness, something I think is achievable"



Helping communities end homelessness

Since 2010, the Mercy Foundation has assisted communities to bring about an end to homelessness for their most vulnerable people sleeping rough, by helping them implement a Registry Week.

In the last few months we have worked with the End Street Sleeping Collaboration to run a Connections Week (Registry Week) in inner Sydney. During Connections Week, a community gets to know the name of every person experiencing street homelessness and an understanding of what type of housing and support that each individual needs. At the end of Connections Week, the community has a By-Name List of all people experiencing street homelessness.

The list is prioritised so that communities know exactly whom they need to work with as a priority, as their health is at great risk if they continue sleeping rough. The information collected is confidential. The person surveyed determines which services or organisations have access to their information.

Connections Weeks provides data that indicates what type of housing and support is needed, how we need to reconfigure local systems to be more efficient and what responses are needed to address the drivers of homelessness. Connections Week is about ending the devastating experience of street homelessness for those most at risk in our community.

Social Justice Small Grants

Helping communities around Australia address social justice issues at the grass roots

Our Social Justice Small grants recipients have achieved some fantastic outcomes in their communities this year:

- A project with KWILS (Katherine Women's Information and Legal Service Inc). helped Inform young, marginalised women in the remote areas of the Katherine region about domestic and family violence, explained what their rights are and provided them with access to resources as needed.
- A small grant to Wellsprings for Women to help migrant women gain employment was the focus of the Women's Cooking Group project. Twenty-five women were trained in food handling, food presentation and catering. Twenty women earned their food-handling certificate and have been employed for catering at community events. A fantastic outcome.
- Funding for a Play Therapy project and family support helped improve seven primary school children's emotional well being and had positive outcomes both at home and at school.
- Sisterworks in Victoria was funded to run a project that addressed the isolation of refugee women and taught them new skills. The project was very successful, with 30 women coming together to learn new craft skills, network, and open a pop-up shop to sell their designs.
- A contribution to Cana's Life Transformation project helped a total of 25 people undertake education and workplace readiness in areas that included horticulture, beekeeping, bookkeeping, forklift and motor vehicle driving.
- A small grant helped the Russian Ethnic Representative Council run information sessions about the Australian welfare and legal system, legal aid and domestic violence services for women in Melbourne.
- Funding towards a study area at a student accommodation service in NSW enabled 21 students to access resources to help them complete assignments and to focus on their education goals.



congratulations



Congratulations to Julie Sneddon, CEO of Cana Communities, the recipient of the Cath Leary Social Justice Award for 2019. The award recognises Julie's outstanding work, leadership and commitment to transforming the lives of disadvantaged and marginalised people

Congratulations to the winners of the Mercy Youth Awards. The winner this year was a student from Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College; second place went to a student from St Aloysius College Adelaide and third place was shared by students from Catherine McAuley College Victoria and Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College. The awards are open to students across Australia and will run again in 2020.

Congratulations to the team at Wellsprings for Women who won the Multicultural Award for Innovation from the Victorian Multicultural Commission. The award recognises the 'Cooking: The Art of Belonging' program. The Mercy Foundation funded the Wellsprings for Women's Cooking group through our Social Justice Small Grants program in 2018/19.

L to R: Julie Sneddon, CEO of Cana Communities with Sr Loreto Conroy RSM, Congregation Leader of the Sisters of Mercy North Sydney

Home in a Box Update

With thanks to all the generous donors to our Home in a Box program, we are on track to double the number of Homes in Boxes we usually deliver in a year.



The latest recipients include:



A 19 year old woman who had lived in shelters and refuges for two years.



A woman in her 30's who has overcome many challenges in her life and is now living in her own home for the first time in 10 years.



A 20 year old man who was sleeping rough for many years.



A grandmother, her daughter and grandchildren had all been homeless for 12 months or more and are now in safe, permanent housing.



Thank you to Year 12 students at Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta for donating a number of personal packs for men and women, to be delivered with Home in a Box. The recipients are greatly appreciative of the products and your efforts.

Thank you to Mercy Catholic College Chatswood for your ongoing support. The students raised in excess of \$1,300 for the Mercy Foundation during their Mercy Week celebrations.

Thank you to our generous suppliers:



Christmas is a tough time for people experiencing homelessness. Homelessness is a lonely and isolating experience. We continue to work toward ending chronic homelessness and homelessness experienced by women and children, through our grants programs, research and by working directly with communities.

Your support is 100% tax deductible and will help us fund additional projects to end homelessness and our Home in a Box project.

Thank you for your generous support.

Yes, I would like to help bring about an end to homelessness.

Donation Amount (donations over \$2 are tax deductible)

Name:

Address:

(Please tick) Cheque ☐ Money Order ☐ Master Card ☐ Visa ☐

Card Number: Expiry Date: /

Cardholder's Name:

Signature:

Post this form to Mercy Foundation, 40 Rocklands Rd Crows Nest NSW 2065. You can also donate by phone 02 9911 7390 or online via secure website www.mercyfoundation.com.au and click the Donations tab.

A tax deductible receipt will be mailed to you. **Thank you for your support, it is greatly appreciated.**



 at the service of human dignity