



OUR COMMUNITY IN FOCUS

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Through the Pathways program, young people like Sam and his brothers are able to find suitable foster care options to suit their circumstances.

Sam's story

Sam has only very blurry memories of his mother from when he was taken into care by the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) at the age of two. His two older brothers however, remember the fighting between their mother and father, the moving from place to place, and the drug use that happened on a daily basis at their home.

Sam and his brothers also remember being frightened, and being bullied at school for their dirty clothes as their mother was often unable to attend to their basic needs.

The three children were removed from their mother's care after she overdosed and nearly died. They came into Churches of Christ Care's Pathways

program not knowing what their future held, afraid and feeling alone. Through the Pathways program, a foster family was found who were happy to take the three boys, while their mother received support and counselling.

Carers supported the young boys to maintain contact with their mother throughout the process.

The first few months of adjustment were difficult, particularly for the older two children who had challenging behavioural problems as a result of being subjected to abuse and neglect. Sam also suffered attachment withdrawal being separated from his mother.

Gradually, the foster carers were able to build a warm and trusting relationship with the children.

Through the continued support from our staff and the foster carers, Sam and his brothers were able to be reunited with their mother who had been working on her own problems including securing stable employment for herself and establishing a positive and secure environment for the children.

The children are now attending school everyday and have developed positive relationships with their mother, teachers and peers. They are still in regular contact with their foster carers.

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Bringing the light of Christ into communities

A division of Churches of Christ in Queensland and working with Churches of Christ Vic/Tas





One step at a time



was especially for me. Since living at the lodge, I have started at a new school and made new friends. The staff have supported me in my contact with my parents, and helped me work through my anger so Mum and I can have a better relationship. Coming into the Pathways program has helped me so much.”

At 16, John moved to a Pathways transition flat from where he will eventually make the final move to a home of his very own.

Churches of Christ Care’s Pathways Semi-Independent Living Program helps teenagers and young adults from the ages of 15 to 18 make the transition from foster or residential care to independent living.

It bridges the gap between the two and provides the young person with helpful life-skills and mentoring from our staff.

At the age of 14, after years of unsuccessful placements in various foster homes, John finally arrived at a Pathways residential care lodge. Here, John found both the independence and encouragement he needed. From

personal organisation to goal setting, financial budgeting, job seeking strategies. The support staff helped John learn essential life skills. These skills eventually helped him better communicate with his parents and understand their difficult situation.

“When I was 14 I came to live at the lodge,” John said.

“At first I was really scared and very sceptical. But the staff were really caring and gave me a welcome pack which included a handmade quilt that



Every year Churches of Christ Care supports many young people like John to transition from care into fully independent living.



Pathways in the community

Last year, Churches of Christ Care Pathways programs provided foster and kinship care to 2,724 children and young people, residential care for 102 young people, and assisted 46 young people through its semi-independent living program.

These services for children and young people in times of crisis, endeavour to achieve positive long-term outcomes for all concerned. Without the dedication of our 554 foster carers from across the state, these services would not be possible.



Donna's home

In Australia today, unfortunately there are thousands of children and young people who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to remain living with their own parents.

Whether they have been victims of abuse, neglect or a tragic accident involving their parents, these children need safe and nurturing environments to help them find a path to a brighter future. This is often provided by foster carers.

Fostering gives a child a home for as long as they need it but the aim is to reunite the child with their family as soon as that is a safe and secure option. Sometimes this is not possible, and the child stays in care until they are 18 years of age.

Becoming a foster carer was something I had wanted to do for years; to give a child a home where they can feel safe. When I first became a foster carer I knew it would be rewarding, but I never imagined just how rewarding it could be. Over the past several years of being a foster parent, I have experienced emotions I didn't think possible.

When a child comes into our home, at first we notice how little they have in possessions, but we don't see the



huge parcel of past hurts, anger and confusion. Sean, aged nine, and his two little sisters, came to us with little known issues, but it became apparent that Sean needed one-on-one care. Working with Pathways team leaders who support you fully, makes you realise you are not alone on those bad days.

Youth workers, child safety officers, counsellors, occupational therapists and teachers all working together also helps. With ongoing support, Sean has gone from almost no schooling to attending every day. We support Sean with visits to family and keeping contact between him and his sisters who are now with another carer. Using empathy and acceptance when Sean is grieving, feeling unsafe or angry really works. Sean craves constant attention and most days is aggressive or abusive, and feels scared to be alone. This makes life hard, but the support and training I receive from the Pathways staff gives me the confidence to work with Sean and deal with any issues that arise. Being a carer means making a difference to a child's life and I think being a specialist carer makes it even more fulfilling for me.

Becoming a foster carer and giving a child a safe home is an extremely rewarding and fulfilling choice.



An important message about making your Will

Did you know that around 50 per cent of adult Australians do not have a valid Will? A Will is one of the most important documents you will ever sign. Without a valid Will, you will have no say in how your estate is managed after death, and your assets will be distributed according to State Law, even if your intentions are well known.

This can cause unintentional hardship and emotional stress for your loved ones. The only way to ensure your wishes are carried out is to prepare a Will. Taking time to write your Will

allows you to make provision for your family and friends. It also gives you the opportunity to let your love live on through a bequest to a charitable organisation such as Churches of Christ Care.

A bequest – however large or small – is a legacy of love. It stands as a monument to the values you hold dear

in your life, and is a unique way to continue your support for Churches of Christ Care long after you are unable to do so personally.

Your bequest to Churches of Christ Care will touch the lives of many people in need in the community. It will allow us to continue and to extend our outreach to those less fortunate.

If you would like more information on bequests including correct wording in your Will, or would like to inform us of your intention to make a bequest please call 1800 600 900 or complete and post the form attached to this newsletter.



Housing their future

Everyday there are over 100,000 people recognised as homeless in Australia, but there are also countless others who are living in untenable and unsustainable circumstances.

Churches of Christ Care seeks to support people in need by providing access to safe, suitable and affordable accommodation. Our focus is not just to provide housing – we go beyond housing and provide value added tenancy management, family support services, and pastoral care.

Churches of Christ Care recently launched the newest housing development in Labrador on the Gold Coast. A number of the tenants who moved into this accommodation recently sent letters to us describing how living in the new units had impacted their lives and their families. Here is what three of the tenants wrote.

Churches of Christ Care is an amazing organisation. I was contacted several months ago, by the housing program manager, informing me I was approved for accommodation at the new Labrador development.

I was amazed, along with all those who attended, at the quality, décor and locality to amenities of these units. Both Carolyn and Steve (Churches of Christ Care staff) have been so helpful and have made the transition to my new home so easy. I didn't even have to ask for assistance in any way as they had thought of everything, even down to providing me with a special step mat for my veranda so I could use my disability scooter more easily.

The Labrador units are so beautiful you would never have thought they were community housing, as the building and surrounding landscape blend into the neighbourhood so well. The quality fittings and storage, the blending décor of natural colours, curtains and air-conditioning all are wonderful.

I want to thank Churches of Christ Care, and Carol and Steve for all their assistance and caring – I suppose that is why it's called Care Housing.

Jim

Moving from one house to another or one town or country to another is a big event in someone's life and raises many doubts. The deep doubts I had about moving my family were all dispelled when relocating into the new Churches of Christ Care units on the Gold Coast. Churches of Christ Care not only provided personable and efficient staff to make our move enjoyable, but also placed us in a beautiful, tastefully decorated modern dwelling that has all the features of a home I would buy if I could. My family and I are still in shock that we have been so lucky!

Megan

Care Housing provides a range of rental housing options for individuals and families who are earning low incomes, discriminated against in the private housing market, homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Churches of Christ Care State Office – 41 Brookfield Road, Kenmore Q 4069
Phone: (07) 3327 1600 **Email:** care@cofcqld.com.au **www.care.cofcqld.com.au**

Established in 1930, Churches of Christ Care is a large not-for-profit Christian organisation active in the areas of early childhood, child protection, affordable housing, retirement living and aged care services. Churches of Christ Care is a division of Churches of Christ in Queensland.



Support your community

First name	Surname	
Address	Postcode	State
Email address	Tel (H)	Tel (W)

Please accept my donation of: \$25 \$50 \$100 Other _____

Enclosed is my cheque/money order payable to Churches of Christ Care. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

Please charge my credit card AMEX Visa Mastercard

Credit card number	Expiry date
<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

Signature _____

I am interested in receiving more information about leaving a bequest to Churches of Christ Care

Please send me a Personal Record Book

Donate online at:

www.care.cofcqld.com.au

Post to: PO Box 508 Kenmore Q 4069

I'd like information about:

- Early Childhood Services
- Foster Care
- Housing and Support Services
- Retirement Villages
- Aged Care Services

Churches of Christ Care values your privacy and only collects your information to notify you of information and events related to our organisation. We will not pass your details to a third party. Should you wish to have your name and contact details removed from our records please phone 1800 600 900.