

belong

Keeping it in the family

Carinity connection
spans generations

Community centre a beacon of hope

Building connections in Boonah



carinity

YEARS
75

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At Carinity, we know it's the little things that make a big difference. Our Living With Purpose philosophy and dedication to delivering the best care means we're trusted and loved by families and residents. Don't just take our word for it – see what families have said about us on Product Review.



“We can never thank Colthup Manor enough for the way they treated Mum with dignity and love. They were amazing...”

Annette C



“The staff at all levels are so caring and truly loving to the people in their care. We couldn't be happier...”

Ann



“The care is second to none. Nothing is too hard or too much trouble. The food is delicious and appropriate for an aged person...”

Elaine



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AN OUTREACH OF  QUEENSLAND BAPTISTS



ceo message



“Our story is not just of those we serve, but also of those who choose to serve as part of Carinity. This includes not only our dedicated employees and volunteers – past and present – but also our faithful supporters and donors whose prayers, financial support and bequests allow Carinity to continue helping those in need.”

Carinity's 75th anniversary celebrations have been in full flight across Queensland. I have been blessed to celebrate with a number of sites and together with representatives of our services, clients and the broader Queensland Baptist family.

Being able to join in these celebrations early in my season at Carinity has been a real privilege and a touching reminder of why we do what we do. While our services have evolved over the decades to meet changing needs in our

society, our underlying reason for being stays consistent. Carinity exists to make a real difference in the lives of the people we are called to care for. It is all about serving individuals – or as I would say, “The One”.

Our story is not just of those we serve, but also of those who choose to serve as part of Carinity. This includes not only our dedicated employees and volunteers – past and present – but also our faithful supporters and donors whose prayers, financial support and bequests allow Carinity to continue helping those in need.

You will notice this edition of *Belong* includes our annual

Christmas Appeal. If you are able, we would very much appreciate any financial contribution that you might be able to make.

As we enter the festive season, we give thanks to God for all His gifts - especially His greatest gift, his son, Jesus Christ. I pray that all of our extended Carinity family enjoy a happy and safe Christmas filled with love and laughter.

KEVIN GRIFFITHS
CARINITY CEO

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Keeping it in the family

Former Carinity student Stevie visits her beloved Nan, Auntie Nellie, at Carinity Brookfield Green



AN OUTREACH OF  QUEENSLAND BAPTISTS

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Community centre a beacon of hope and connection

A strong sense of community can make all the difference to the wellbeing of people in regional areas. In the country town of Boonah, residents find connection at the Carinity Fassifern Community Centre, a social hub that recently celebrated 40 years of serving the local community.

Community Development Coordinator Samantha Caves estimates the centre has cooked over 50,000 sausages over the years at its popular Friday barbeques, but the impact of a simple snag on bread goes far beyond feeding people.

“For residents who are new to the district, or perhaps feeling isolated or going through a hard time, we’re here to offer

a listening ear, link to local services and provide social opportunities,” Samantha said.

“We have over one thousand people walking through the doors every month to seek support and attend activities, which include low-cost fitness and wellness classes, a carers support group, music sing-along, social bingo, bible study, and community café.

“In addition to our regular timetable, we host a range of public awareness and social events throughout the year, including the annual Health & Wellness Expo.

“This free expo brings the community together each October during Queensland Mental Health Week to learn from allied health services and focus on self-care.”

With social inclusion at the heart of the Fassifern Community Centre, the service has responded to a local need by establishing employment pathways that connect residents to long-term sustainable careers.

Samantha said that funding from the State Government’s Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative had enabled the centre to offer Certificate III in Individual Support qualifications.

“Boonah has higher than average levels of socio-economic disadvantage in terms of employment, income levels and education,” she said.

“Our program addresses this disadvantage by offering fee-free training in aged care and disability support, which are among the most in-demand industries for jobs in Australia.”



In recognition of its successful work skills program, the centre recently received the Community Training Initiative of the Year award for the south-east Queensland region.

Samantha said she was thrilled to receive the prestigious award on behalf of Carinity.

“It’s wonderful to have received formal accolades for our achievements, but what’s most important is knowing that we’re making a real difference to people in our community.”

“We have been running the work skills program since 2018 and have helped almost 200 people in this time, with over 90% of graduates achieving employment within their chosen field,” she said.

“Participants include people from diverse cultures, women re-entering the workforce, people with disability, Indigenous Australians, and job seekers who are young, mature aged or disadvantaged.

“It’s wonderful to have received formal accolades for our achievements, but what’s most important is knowing that we’re making a real difference to people in our community.



“Our success as a community centre is based on providing practical support that responds to local needs, such as assistance with the No Interest Loans Scheme, acting as an agent for Services Australia and facilitating the Carinity Connections program, which offers free yard maintenance for the elderly and vulnerable.

“Many of our events and activities are undertaken in partnership with local community groups and supported by a team of staff and volunteers absolutely dedicated to building an inclusive and connected community now and into the future.”

The Fassifern Community Centre was born from the efforts of various local churches who rallied for support services in the area.

Four decades later, the centre has firmly cemented its reputation for assisting people from all walks of life to actively participate and contribute to an equitable and resilient region.

Left: Carinity’s Samantha Caves and Carole Evans with Sandra Ehlers from training partner Horizon2 at the Queensland Training Awards South-East Regional Final. **Above:** Volunteers, exhibitors, staff and guests at the annual Health & Wellness Expo hosted by the Fassifern Community Centre.

Unlocking Monique's true potential

It's hard to believe that Monique, a confident graduate of Carinity Education Gladstone, once struggled in school. But Monique's educational journey was far from smooth.

"I was having a really hard time with schoolwork at my old school. I couldn't stay still or focus," she said. "The teachers didn't know how to handle me. I have dyslexia and when I struggled keeping up, I'd get frustrated and disrupt the class."

Eventually, Monique dropped out. A guidance counsellor from her previous school suggested Carinity Education Gladstone, believing it could offer the support she needed. After taking some time off, Monique enrolled — and her experience was life-changing.

"Carinity was like no other school I'd been to. The staff weren't just kind and supportive, they completely changed the way I saw education. Learning became fun and engaging. The small class sizes meant the teachers could really get to know us and understand how we worked. They paid attention to our individual needs."

Principal Jane Greenland remembers when Monique first arrived at the school.

"Monique was referred to us because she struggled attending mainstream schooling, showed evidence of anxiety, and had learning difficulties. Monique thrived in every way at Carinity - she worked with us, communicated well, and was open and honest. We will always hold a soft spot in our hearts for Monique."

Youth Worker Cassie Benjamin shared similar memories.

"Monique flourished in the Carinity environment where she was allowed to be herself and didn't feel judged by her peers or staff. She was comfortable sharing her life and struggles and was open to guidance on all kinds of levels. Monique had a knack for being a caring friend and supportive of the staff who helped her."

Monique reflected on how the staff took a personalised approach to teaching.

"When I'd get frustrated, instead of brushing it off, they'd take the time to really listen and help me figure out ways to manage my emotions and focus better. They made learning hands-on, which is how I learn best. They adapted to me."

When prompted on her fondest memories, Monique recalled

how teachers took an interest in students beyond academics.

"Lunchtimes were great, but the best part was how the teachers connected with us. They'd play with us, joke around, and organise outings to our favourite spots, like the skate park or the beach. I was part of a project on fish care, and we even had two fish tanks in class. I led one of the groups in taking care of our tank."

According to Cassie, Carinity Education Gladstone gave Monique the support she needed - not just for her education, but also the confidence she needed to be the best version of herself.

This support made all the difference for Monique.

"They listened to me, figured out how I learned best, and made school interesting. They did a lot

of one-on-one work with me, which helped me grow."

On graduation day, Monique was overwhelmed with emotion.

"I cried. I couldn't believe I had actually passed and graduated. I was sad to say goodbye to what had become my second home. The teachers were like family. Getting up on that stage, seeing the people who helped change my life, made me so happy. It gave me hope that I could do anything."

That newfound confidence was evident when Monique spoke about loving her work as a Process Technician at Queensland Alumina. Since leaving school, Monique has gone above and beyond her goals. She's pursued further studies, becoming a valuable employee and a mature, confident young woman.

"I'm so proud of how Monique's taken charge of her own career and found a sense of fulfillment within herself, achieving so much along the way," said Principal Jane.

Monique recently returned to the school to reconnect with the teachers and youth workers she remembered fondly.

"I loved going back, I had the time of my life telling them how good my life is going and about how I miss the school. But most of all I loved the opportunity to go see all the people who helped shape my life and see how they are doing. And to tell them about all the fun things I get to do at work and outside of work. There's honestly nowhere else I'd recommend more!"

Opposite page and above: Monique catches up with Carinity Education Gladstone staff who supported her during her school years.

Bottom left: Monique celebrates her graduation day alongside two close friends in 2020.



Celebrating 75 YEARS



Over the past two months, Carinity staff, service users and supporters from all over Queensland have had the opportunity to reflect on the real difference Carinity has made to the lives of those we are called to care for at a series of events celebrating the organisation's 75th anniversary.

The marquee occasion on the calendar of festivities was an inspirational gathering of the Queensland Baptist community held at St Lucia in Brisbane.

Among the special guests in attendance were a number of long-serving Carinity staff - one of whom has worked for the organisation for 38 years.

Several current and former service users whose lives have been transformed with the support of Carinity were also in attendance. They included a former resident of the Carinity Orana accommodation for homeless youth; a disability service user; home care clients; and aged care and retirement village residents.

Function guests viewed a number of emotional video testimonials from people whose lives have been changed thanks to Carinity. These included Tereapii, a Carinity Education school graduate

and Jasmine, a former prisoner supported by Inside Out Prison Chaplaincy. The biggest cheer of the day, however, was reserved for the interview with Alec, a current resident of the Clifford House aged care community. Alec's heartwarming story showcased his appreciation for the wonderful care he receives at Clifford House. His video was met with a rousing round of applause that led the 87-year-old to rise to his feet and acknowledge the crowd with a hearty wave.

Also at the gathering were members of the Dart family, descendants of the generous pioneers who donated the land on which the Carinity Brookfield Green seniors' community now sits, and relatives of Baptist campaigners who fought to establish Carinity's first care home for the elderly.

Given Clifford House shares the 75th anniversary with the broader organisation, it was only fitting that our first community celebrated with a separate morning tea at their current location in Woolloowin.

Residents, family members and staff enjoyed live entertainment by students and creative arts teachers from the nearby Kedron State High School. Regular visitors to Clifford House, the students sung, played music and even performed some magic tricks for the residents.

A number of other anniversary celebrations have been held at Carinity sites around Queensland, including in our aged care and retirement communities; schools; and home care, youth and disability support services.

The anniversary has been a remarkable opportunity to reflect

on the impact our organisation has had on so many members of the community. We have been truly blessed by those who have gone before us, those who are with us now, and those who will continue our legacy of service well into the future.



Scan this QR code to view the videos created to celebrate our anniversary.

Above: Carinity services throughout the state celebrated our 75th anniversary during August and September.



Keeping it in the family

For the O'Chins, family is everything. When Brookfield Green resident, Auntie Nellie O'Chin, joined the community at Carinity Brookfield Green, her large family banded together to create a visiting roster to ensure the beloved grandmother had a steady stream of visitors to help her feel at home.

With 12 children – 5 boys and 7 girls – Auntie Nellie, a Gubbi Gubbi and Wakka Wakka woman, has spent her life surrounded by family and friends. Faith has played a significant role in Auntie Nellie's life, and her journey to Carinity, through her involvement with what is now known as the Australian Indigenous Ministries (AIM). Through her work, she connected with an enormous range of people and travelled throughout Queensland, sharing

her wisdom, guidance and spirituality with those she met.

It was through her work with AIM that Nellie met Harold and Audrey Kleinschmidt. Their friendship endured, and when Mr and Mrs Kleinschmidt moved to Carinity Brookfield Green during their later years, Auntie Nellie became a regular visitor. While Auntie Nellie travelled between Brisbane and Coffs Harbour, spending time with family members, she always made time to visit Harold and Audrey. Her visits left her with a positive impression of Brookfield Green, a sentiment that she shared with her family.

While the O'Chin family, spread from Brisbane to Coffs Harbour, did their best to care for Auntie Nellie as her health declined, when the time came to consider a shift to residential aged care, Brookfield Green was the first place they looked.

"We looked around at a couple of places, but always felt welcome at Brookfield Green, and had a good feeling about it," said Auntie Nellie's son, Craig. "We're very happy with our decision. Everyone seems to know her and the staff are always helpful. It gives me peace of mind."

This wasn't the family's only connection to Carinity. Auntie Nellie's granddaughter, Stevie O'Chin attended Carinity Education Southside, graduating in 2016. Now recognised as an accomplished artist, a pivotal moment in Stevie's career came when she sold her first piece at a Carinity Education Southside art show, with the auction-hammer falling at \$900. Stevie said her art teacher at the school, Bec Mennen, encouraged her to see her potential as a professional artist.

"I didn't think I could really make a career out of my art until Bec

really encouraged me and pushed me to keep going," she said.

Since school, Stevie's career has flourished and she has joined a list of family members that are accomplished artists – Jack O'Chin, Auntie Nellie's late husband and Stevie's grandfather; as well as a number of her Aunties, including Dr Hope O'Chin (Auntie Hope) and Robin O'Chin. Artwork created by her family over the years, including cultural artefacts held by the Queensland Museum and pottery from the renowned Barambah Pottery, are widely recognised and respected by the broader art community.

Most recently, Stevie has completed Birrunga Gallery's Cultural Creative Development Program, a three year program designed to guide and mentor young First Nations artists. Her artwork also features on a Carinity polo shirt, celebrating Indigenous cultures and their influence on the organisation.

Family and Indigenous heritage is something Stevie celebrates and explores in her work.

"My family history is something that I want to carry on, so it's not forgotten. Most of my artworks are based on Indigenous themes and I do a lot of dots and symbols," she said.

Her involvement in the Birrunga Gallery program pushed Stevie's creative boundaries, leading her to try her hand at portraiture, with great success. After placing as a finalist in 2021, Stevie won the 2024 Performing Arts and Music Award in this year's prestigious Brisbane Portrait Prize with her portrait of Shannon Ruska, a recognised cultural leader in Meanjin/Brisbane.

However, her favourite portrait subject has been her beloved



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grandmother. Stevie's portrait of Auntie Nellie takes pride of place on her wall at Brookfield Green. The portrait evokes deep memories and connects Stevie to culture.

"My best memories of Nan are visiting her at her house. She would always play with my hair. I have strong memories of her singing to us in language and telling stories as little children."

Stevie's latest focus is incorporating Auntie Nellie's Gubbi Gubbi and Wakka Wakka language into her artwork, as well as featuring it on clothing designs.

"My nephew wanted to wear something unique that had language on it," she explained.

For Auntie Nellie and Stevie, their time with Carinity has offered kindness, shelter and support when they needed it most.

"I was really lost with where I was going to go after school but being at Southside guided me towards what I'm doing now. I think I've come pretty far from where I started," Stevie concluded.

Opposite: Stevie O'Chin visits her beloved Nan, Auntie Nellie, at Brookfield Green. **Above:** Stevie and Auntie Nellie with the portrait Stevie painted to celebrate her grandmother. The painting hangs proudly in Auntie Nellie's suite at Brookfield Green.



A focus on...

The Chaplaincy and Mission team

Seventy-five years ago, Carinity began because a group of committed Christians wanted to see change in their community. They were driven not only by the practical need to provide accommodation for the elderly, but also a strong desire to replicate Christ's compassion towards people in need.

While Carinity has grown and diversified in terms of the range of people we can assist, our commitment to our Christian values and ethos remains fundamental to everything that we do.

In recent months we have further renewed our commitment to ensuring everyone we have a relationship with has access to spiritual care by creating a number of new roles within our Chaplaincy and Mission team.

Tracy Valentine has recently joined the team as the Mission Engagement Manager responsible for providing pastoral care to seniors and those with a disability.

She joins Philip Hamilton, who has been with us since January, and new arrival Claudine Hawkins. Philip and Claudine partner with Queensland Baptist churches in developing and implementing community development initiatives. They are also responsible for overseeing chaplaincy activities in our schools and other youth-focussed services.

While we are pleased to welcome a number of new faces to the Chaplaincy and Mission team, we are equally delighted to welcome back an old friend. Reverend Don McPherson has recently rejoined Carinity on a part-time basis and will oversee our hospital chaplaincy activities.

We look forward to seeing our new employees, along with established team members Dan Lyons and Graham Hembrow, bringing Jesus' love to the broad cross-section of Queenslanders that we are called to care for.

Above: (Left to right) Philip Hamilton, Tracy Valentine, Claudine Hawkins, Graham Hembrow, Dan Lyons and Don McPherson are the Carinity Chaplaincy and Mission team.

chaplains chat



"As we sing these carols, let us reflect on the incredible gift of Jesus Christ and the love that God has shown us. May the melodies of Christmas fill our hearts with gratitude and inspire us to share the message of Christ's love with the world."

Make Christmas meaningful

As the festive season approaches, the air fills with the joyous sounds of Christmas carols. These songs not only bring excitement for the season, they carry profound messages about the true meaning of Christmas. A perfect example is my favourite Christmas Carol, *O Holy Night*.

O Holy Night is one of the sacred Christmas hymns, beautifully capturing the awe and reverence of the night Jesus was born. The background of the hymn is not overly remarkable. French

composer Adolphe Adam was commissioned to write a song in 1843 to celebrate his town's organ being repaired. But what a hymn. The lyrics are powerful and capture the mission of God.

O Holy Night speaks of how Jesus was born in a world compromised by sin and error, longing for redemption. His arrival is the message of divine love, bringing a thrill of hope as the weary world rejoices that humanity's Saviour has come to offer salvation. The chains broken are those of sin and death, and the means of our eternal liberation is the Gospel (Jesus' death and resurrection) which continues today by breaking chains of oppression and injustice in the world around us in His name.

Motivated by love for others, and deep reverent appreciation of God's masterpiece of a plan, *O Holy Night* sparks a desire to fall on our knees and worship in response.

This Christmas, may you experience the true meaning of Christmas, hopefully aided by anointed carols like this one. As we sing these carols, let us reflect on the incredible gift of Jesus Christ and the love that God has shown us. May the melodies of Christmas fill our hearts with gratitude and inspire us to share the message of Christ's love with the world.

REVEREND DAN LYONS
DIRECTOR OF MISSIONAL
CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

With gratitude for God's keeping through 2024 and bright hope for 2025...

May the Wonder of Christmas fill you with joy, love and faith.

"...you are to give him the name Jesus... the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God ... For nothing is impossible with God."

Luke 1:30, 35, 37





Homeless service transforming the lives of young people

When Rhiannon was just 16 years old, she found herself homeless after leaving a tumultuous family life behind.

After couch surfing and occasionally sleeping on the streets, Rhiannon’s school counsellor referred her to Orana, Carinity’s short-term accommodation for young people in crisis.

Rhiannon said from the moment she first stepped inside Orana, she felt welcome, safe and supported. Little did she know at the time, just how much of an impact the stay would have on her future.

“I was already pretty independent when I arrived, so I tried not to rely on the staff too much, but it was a real comfort to know they were always there if ever I needed help,” Rhiannon said.

“There was a big focus on mental health and well-being, so always a friendly ear to listen and provide emotional support.

“There were two youth workers in particular who became like

family to me – Tracey, a mum figure who had a soft spot for everyone but wouldn’t let you get away with things, and Nathan – a big brother type who was always encouraging us to get outside and be active.

“One of my most profound memories happened when Nathan was sitting on the couch with me and another resident. He told us that he was proud of us. It sounds simple, but I had never had anyone say that to me and I needed to hear it.

“It meant so much to realise there were people who actually cared about me, and it changed my life. “I think if I hadn’t received the support I did, I would be in a darker place and not making the best life choices.”

Rhiannon said her time at Orana inspired her to become a youth worker herself and in a full circle moment, she is now back at the service helping other young people to get their lives on track.

“I was definitely inspired to pursue this career and give back,” she said.

“My experience as a resident here helps me relate to the young people I support because I’ve been in their shoes and know how hard life can be when you don’t have anyone in your corner.

“It was a bit strange at first because all the workers who supported me as a young person are now my colleagues, but I have such a strong connection to this place and love being here.

Orana supports up to five people aged 16 to 21 years at a time, providing the stability of a home environment, the privacy of individual bedrooms, and practical help to finish school or obtain employment.

“The environment is very friendly and non-judgemental. Our residents go to sleep at night knowing they’re safe and that someone’s always here for them.

“People usually stay for about three months, but it could be longer. It’s sad to say goodbye but at the same time it feels good to see them move on and head out into the world to pursue their dreams and goals with confidence,” Rhiannon said.



Help us support vulnerable people in the community

While Christmas can be a season of celebration and giving thanks for your own blessings, unfortunately it’s a time when far too many Queenslanders still yearn for things that most of us take for granted – good health, a safe bed to sleep in, food in your belly and freedom from violence.

Thanks to the generosity of supporters in our 2023 Christmas Appeal, we were able to provide much needed relief to countless people in the community who were struggling, by gifting emergency food hampers, school supplies and fuel vouchers.

We provided craft materials and sensory toys to help children impacted by trauma with their counselling sessions, purchased accessible resources for our disability hubs, and brightened the lives of youths in out-of-home care by providing recreation opportunities they wouldn’t otherwise receive.

If you are in a position to donate this Christmas, we would be so grateful for your tax-deductible gift. Even the smallest donation can make a real difference to those who need it most.

See how Carinity walks alongside people in their time of need

Visit carinity.org.au/appeal-2024 to watch the stories of three extraordinary individuals who have turned their lives around:

- **Corey** arrived at Carinity Orana in a police car as a young teen after being kicked out of home.
- **Tereapii** overcame significant difficulties in her teenage years after enrolling at Carinity Education Southside.
- **Jasmine** was down a path of addiction and crime before meeting a volunteer from Carinity’s Inside Out Prison Chaplaincy.

DONATE TODAY



Yes, I would like to donate to the 2024 Carinity Christmas Appeal

There are three easy ways to give, and all donations of \$2 or more tax deductible!

Online

carinity.org.au/donations
(hassle-free and saves administration costs!)

OR

Phone

07 3550 3737
(9am-4pm, Monday to Friday)

OR

Post

Complete the form overleaf and return it in the enclosed reply-paid envelope

On behalf of the people we support, *thank you* for your kindness and generosity!

I will donate \$ to the 2024 Carinity Christmas Appeal

TEAR HERE

Please direct my donation to the following area:

Where most needed

- ☐ Your gift will be utilised by the Carinity service that most needs assistance.

Community services

- ☐ Your gift will help us continue to support disadvantaged people in the community, including:

- ★ Youths affected by homelessness
- ★ Children in out-of-home care
- ★ People with disabilities
- ★ Families in need of counselling
- ★ Women and children impacted by domestic and family violence
- ★ Elderly and unemployed people who seek support from our community centre

Education

- ☐ Your gift will help ease cost-of-living pressures for families of Carinity students who need help.

Chaplaincy

Your gift will provide hope, solace, compassion and guidance to people in:

- ☐ Prisons ☐ Schools ☐ Hospitals ☐ Aged Care

☐ I enclose my cheque/money order made payable to Carinity

OR please debit my ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa

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Cardholder's Name

Signature

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Please send my receipt via:

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Thank you for making a difference!