

belong

A historic celebration

Carinity Education
Shalom's first year
12 graduation

Caring in the quiet moments

Meet our new Executive
Manager Residential
Aged Care



carinity



Last year was our 75th anniversary, and together we were able to celebrate those who have faithfully gone before us: the pioneers who built Carinity to what it is today. I am so grateful for their work, as it has created an incredible platform for us to all build on.

In May last year I joined the incredible community that is Carinity. Each day I feel blessed to have the opportunity to contribute to this extraordinary organisation – for a number of reasons.

The first is that we are all able to serve and care for others. But it's not just this – it is the opportunity we have to make a real difference to the lives of those we are called to care for and for their families. It is a unique opportunity that I am truly grateful for.

The second is the privilege of working with such incredible

people. The Carinity team is simply amazing. We have people from many different backgrounds and cultures. Even though we may all be different, I have felt and seen something that unites us all – love and compassion – not just for those we serve, but also for those who serve alongside us. It is often said that working in care-giving roles is a calling more so than a job and I truly believe this is the case with Carinity employees.

Last year was our 75th anniversary, and together we were able to celebrate those who have faithfully gone before us: the pioneers who built Carinity to what it is today. I am so grateful for their work, as it has created

an incredible platform for us to all build on.

As we look to the new year, a key focus area for Carinity will be implementing a raft of Federal Government reforms aimed at improving the sustainability of the aged care industry and enhancing the quality of care received by seniors. While Carinity already enjoys industry-leading satisfaction levels, we look forward to using the reforms as an opportunity to maximise our impact on the elderly people we serve throughout the state.

KEVIN GRIFFITHS
CARINITY CEO

Contents

3 | A historic celebration Carinity Education Shalom's first year 12 graduation **6 | Caring in the quiet moments** Carinity's new Executive Manager Residential Aged Care, Heidi Wiebe **9 | Future leaders embracing connection** Townsville church developing the next generation of indigenous leaders **10 | The heart of a carer** The importance of getting help to avoid carer fatigue **12 | A journey of service and adventure** Carinity client Jan's amazing story of serving others - while having some fun along the way **14 | My Story – Lynne Williams** Volunteer chaplain **15 | Chaplain's Chat** Make plans, but hold them lightly.



On the cover

Crystal's siblings Veronica and Tosh, along with their nephew Jedakai, were very proud of her on graduation day.



AN OUTREACH OF QUEENSLAND BAPTISTS

Carinity Education Shalom: Celebrating a historic first year 12 graduation



A group of eight students from Carinity Education Shalom have created history by becoming the school's first Year 12 cohort. The emotional graduation ceremony was the latest achievement for the thriving learning community that was on the brink of closure only seven years ago.

The occasion was celebrated with a special all-school event at Northreach Baptist

Church in Kirwan, attended by students, family members, and staff. Each graduate was escorted by a Prep student and proudly wore a graduation gown and a stole that was designed by talented Year 10 student Mescha.

Students were presented with a college portfolio, an Indigenous Christian Bible, and a photo book full of memories. The event featured creative performances, including a powerful Haka by New Zealand

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First Nations students, followed by a dance celebrating Australian First Nations traditions.

The ceremony concluded with an emotional whole-of-school guard of honour as the graduates made their way out of the church, marking the end of one chapter and the exciting beginning of another.

The celebration highlighted the transformation of Carinity Education Shalom, which began its journey in 2018 when Carinity stepped in to rescue the school from closure. Reopened as a Prep to Year 7 school in 2019 with just 70 students, the school has steadily grown, adding a new secondary grade each year and tripling its initial enrolment numbers.

The school's remarkable growth is a testament to the strength of the Shalom staff, who have come

together to create a supportive and culturally safe environment.

Four of the eight graduating students had attended the school since Prep.

"I have had the privilege of being with these students since their first days at school, many of them starting in Prep," said Director of School Campus, Sharyn Ive.

"Watching them grow has been an overwhelming blessing. I hope they leave knowing their unique gifts, kindness, courage, and resilience are exactly what the world needs."

The graduates' journey has been one of persistence and transformation, according to Head of Secondary, Stuart Todd.

"These young people have grown into leaders and role models. Their achievements go far beyond academics - they

are resilient, compassionate, and committed to making a difference," he said.

For the graduates, Shalom was more than a school - it was a place where they felt understood, supported, and valued.

The graduates shared their reflections on their time at Shalom, highlighting how the school provided a supportive and understanding environment.

"Shalom let me take breaks when I needed to. They didn't push me when I was tired, and that's helped me succeed in my own way," Kailyn shared.

Brendon, who has been at Shalom since Prep, recalled his early fears.

"When I first started, I was afraid of not making any friends. But within a week, I found my place here. I now dream of travelling



"Watching them grow has been an overwhelming blessing. I hope they leave knowing their unique gifts, kindness, courage, and resilience are exactly what the world needs."

the world and supporting my family," he said.

For Jerry, the school became a second home.

"They care for your health, well-being, and you as a person," he shared. "Even when I get frustrated, they're always there, trying to help and make things better, which makes me appreciate them. My career goal now that I've graduated is to become an electrician."

Lyndon, another long-time student, shared his love for history and his future aspirations.

"I like learning about the 'old stuff' in history," he said.

Lyndon is known at Shalom for his positive spirit, with Stuart describing him as "the heart of the school."

Kyrarn, a more recent addition to Shalom, spoke about the sense of belonging he found, saying Shalom "feels like home".

Stuart described Kyrarn as "a rare gem," praising his kindness. Kyrarn looks forward to spending time with family and finding a career where he can give back to his community.

The graduation ceremony was a time of excitement and emotion, celebrating not only academic achievements but also the personal growth and strong sense of community that define Shalom.

As the eight graduates move forward, they carry the lessons and values instilled at Shalom.

According to Sharyn, the graduating students' journey reflects God's faithfulness.

"I trust He has great plans for each of them as they step into the next chapter of their lives," she concluded.



Page 3: Friends Kyrarn, Brendon and Gerard were thrilled to celebrate their graduation together. **Opposite:** Students Lyndon, Kyrarn, Gerard, Kailyn, Crystal, Brendon, and Tyrone celebrated with Head of Secondary, Stuart Todd. **Above (clockwise):** Stuart Todd congratulates students on their graduation; Year 10 student Mescha used her artistic talents to design the graduation stole; and Tyrone received his graduation folio from prep student Rachel.

Caring in the quiet moments

For Carinity's Executive Manager of Residential Aged Care, Heidi Wiebe, it was a moment shared in the small hours of the morning that helped her appreciate the true importance of her chosen career path.

As a Registered Nurse on the night shift in a tiny 22-bed country hospital in Canada, one of Heidi's patients was an elderly man.

"He was awake and couldn't sleep. He was lonely. I just remember feeling so privileged that, because it was 3am and there wasn't much going on, I had the time to sit with him. From then on, anytime I could find that moment, I sat with people and just chatted with them. It's a privilege to sit with people and for them to share their wisdom with you or to impart their experience. That keeps you going."

While those quiet moments ignited her commitment to the individuals in her care, it was leading improvements in the delivery of palliative care in aged care that focused her interest and passion on how to best support people living in aged care.

"An important part of our work is helping staff, residents and families understand that what matters is the resident's quality of life – doing what brings them enjoyment. So that's our responsibility, to shift that mindset around care delivery and how we achieve the right balance."

"The program was focused on living well. We shifted the focus to living, instead of existing, and it was truly transformative. We started to talk to people about their wishes and how they wanted to live," Heidi said.

Heidi brings this focus on living well to Carinity's 11 aged care communities.

"In aged care, we're looking to help people live well every day."

Crunching the care numbers

The aged care sector is currently going through a raft of changes, with new measures being introduced to support the delivery of care and the financial sustainability of the sector. One of the recent changes involved the introduction of mandatory care minutes for each resident. For Heidi, this is an opportunity to further Carinity's already strong focus on prioritising individual preferences.

"The introduction of the care minute requirements is an opportunity for our staff to work with residents and their representatives to reassess how the time we spend with them is best suited to their individual needs. It's about reaching agreement on their individual preferences and working on how we can accommodate those choices within our rostering.

"Sitting and talking to somebody can be as much about providing

care as helping them shower. For some residents, going for a little stroll, spending 10 minutes doing a puzzle or reading a few pages of a book can be as much a part of their care plan as helping them have a good mealtime experience."

Heidi believes it will take time for everyone in the sector to shift their thinking around what's possible.

"An important part of our work is helping staff, residents and families understand that what matters is the resident's quality of life – doing what brings them enjoyment. So that's our responsibility, to shift that mindset around care delivery and how we achieve the right balance."

From a care provider's perspective, Heidi and the Carinity team see two main positives from these shifts in thinking around what constitutes the delivery of care.

"Number one, obviously residents have a better experience every day. And two, our staff will have more fulfilment at work because they can spend those moments with residents and build those relationships to provide that level of care and understanding.

"Increasingly, conversations around care will become, 'How do you want to live?' instead of, 'How can we care for you?'. It's a really important shift in focus to living instead of being cared for.

"Part of the challenge will be for residents and families to get used to the different approach as well as staff. The 'old' approach to care is what we've all grown up with, and our expectations reflect that. Now we need to think about how we shift our expectations and embrace this new direction. It's a change to a 'doing things with residents' style of care instead of 'doing things for residents'."

The importance of the 'little things'

With these changes to what aged care can look like, and how we can help our loved ones live according to their wishes, even when they can't communicate them, Heidi has simple advice: "Start early and talk about the uncomfortable stuff."

For Heidi, that means having conversations about what's in your advanced care plans, beyond the straightforward health elements.

"Talk about the little things that are important to you, with the people who'll make decisions for you. Start early."

In life, it's often the little things that are the most important to us, and that's certainly the case when it comes to feeling at home.

Opposite: Carinity's new Executive Manager of Residential Aged Care, Heidi Wiebe, outside the Carinity Brookfield Green residential aged care community.



Heidi stresses that the things that may seem like a minor detail in the scheme of our overall health are often the elements that make a real difference in maintaining our sense of self.

“When I talk about advanced care, I say that anyone could go and ask any of my family about the one thing that’s absolutely non-negotiable for me when I can’t make decisions for myself, and it’s sour cream and onion potato chips.

“For me, it’s a source of comfort, it’s a source of joy. It’s something that I look forward to at the end of the day. My family know that’s a non-negotiable for me.”

Heidi believes shifting our focus from the mandates of care, to prioritising the activities and choices that bring joy to our lives, has the potential to be the biggest achievement in aged care reform in a generation. It’s an exciting opportunity to reconnect back with the heart of caring for others, and one the whole Carinity aged care team is looking to embrace with joy.

Above: Heidi takes a moment to chat with Carinity Brookfield Green residents Anne and David.

Future leaders embracing connection to country and creator

A Townsville church is helping to develop the next generation of Indigenous Australian leaders with support from Carinity.

Shalom Family church has a community of around 75 people and 10 families, predominantly from First Nations backgrounds.

Pastor Andy and Emma Bollom said the church began in 2021 “with a heart to walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families” and “see their faith, voices and dreams flourish”.

As part of this vision, the church runs The Mentoring Project. The program mentors 20 First Nations youth who are disadvantaged, socially isolated, suffering from financial hardship, or have experienced family violence.

Funded by Carinity’s Collaborative Community Projects, the cultural and faith-based program provides mentoring, employment opportunities, and self-development activities for the young people.

“By developing the core group, they will grow in their identity, culture, and leadership within their families and social groups, providing a broader positive impact for the community,” Andy said.

The participants, aged between 10 and 17 years, attend a youth weekend camp each school term that provides faith development and new cultural experiences.

“So far, we have swum in and explored Alligator Creek, hiked Yunbenun (Magnetic Island), and



hunted on Nywaigi Country near Ingham. We foraged through mangroves and cooked our catch on hot coals,” Andy said.

“In November we learned how to find and harvest ochre on local Nywaigi Rainforest Country. Learning on country, and before our creator, is essential for faith and cultural identity formation.

“In December we had a five-day road trip north to Yarrabah Aboriginal Community to serve the community, listen and learn, and be a part of their Christmas event.”

The Mentoring Project was inspired by two influential men: Jesus Christ and land rights activist, Eddie ‘Koiki’ Mabo.

Andy hopes The Mentoring Project participants might follow the path of Mabo, who he described as “iconic to Australia, particularly Townsville and North Queensland”.

“He was one man who overcame a disadvantaged background and



much adversity yet changed the landscape of our nation for First Nations peoples,” Andy said.

“If one man can change part of the nation, we are aiming to walk alongside 20 young men and women who could contribute to further healing and transformation for our country.”

Above: As part of Shalom Family’s The Mentoring Project, young First Nations people have visited Nywaigi country and spent five days in the Yarrabah Aboriginal community.

The heart of a carer

Selina Smith feels she was born to be a carer. She has devoted most of her life to looking after family, including her late husband Randall (Ran) who had muscular dystrophy, and three sons who have a range of health conditions.

Selina is one of over 3 million informal carers across Australia who provide unpaid care and support to family members or friends who have a disability, illness or are frail aged.

"In the early years of our marriage, Ran worked in insurance and could look after himself, but his condition got progressively worse over time," Selina said.

"When he was 42, Ran was really sick in hospital. We nearly lost him and they were very close to amputating his legs.

"We were living in an old Queenslander in Nanango and when it was time to bring him

home, he couldn't make it up the steps to the front door.

"We had to leave him in the car for the night and I pulled out a little tent beside him in my front yard to make sure he was okay. I couldn't let him out of my sight because I was so worried and loved him so much, but we coped and finally got him inside.

"Looking back, I wish I'd insisted that we got outside help and that I'd taken time to look after myself, even if it had just been going for a walk every now and then."

"Our name was on the emergency list with the Housing Commission for a more suitable home and finally they found us a place in Toogoolawah."

Luckily for the Smith family, their new residence was just down the road from Carinity's disability support service, Our House, although they would not get acquainted until another unfortunate event four years later.

In the 2011 floods, a wave of water surged through the Smith home, forcing them to evacuate. While most locals stayed at the showgrounds, Our House opened their doors to some vulnerable people who were seeking temporary accommodation.

"Maggie (Our House Client Services Coordinator) was so

welcoming and helpful during our stay and beyond," Selina said.

"She offered me a job cleaning here one day a week, which became my only break from caring responsibilities at home and made me feel really special.

"Two of my boys started receiving support from Our House, which was amazing, but unfortunately Ran refused to



"I was born for this life of caring, even though it was so much harder than I ever expected."

ones, it's important to know that there is support available.

Carer Gateway is a national service funded by the Australian Government that provides free local support including counselling, coaching, domestic assistance, education, equipment and respite care. They can be contacted on **1800 422 737**.

Selina sadly lost Randall to a stroke in February last year and is working through her grief, continuing to care for two of her sons who live with her, while making plans for the future.

"I was born for this life of caring, even though it was so much harder than I ever expected," Selina said.

"I was married for over 40 years and had three lovely lads who are my pride and joy. They've encouraged me to take up a hobby and I want to, but in the back of my mind I still think Ran needs me.

"I've always wanted to get a van and travel around Australia. If I ever have the chance to fulfil this dream, I have peace of mind that Our House will be there for my boys."

allow me to organise any home support for him.

"He was old fashioned and felt that I should be the only one to help him, but it was exhausting. His muscles continued to deteriorate so it got to a point where I was doing absolutely everything for him.

"As well as cooking his meals, I would cut up all his food. I had always dressed the wounds on his feet, but now I started helping him in the toilet and showering him. He couldn't shave or brush his own hair.

"I had to learn how to use a hoist to get him out of bed into his

wheelchair each morning. He wanted everything done a certain way and never wanted me to leave his side.

"People would tell me I looked tired and urge me to take a holiday, but I felt there was no way I could take any time for myself.

"Looking back, I wish I'd insisted that we got outside help and that I'd taken time to look after myself, even if it had just been going for a walk every now and then."

With carer fatigue a significant issue for those who dedicate their lives to looking after loved



Above (clockwise): Selina and eldest son Shane at Our House; Selina with husband Randall in 1992; a family outing in 2017 with Selina and Randall, sons Emmitt, Shane and Ben, daughter-in-law Danielle and granddaughter Tina.

Jan's story - A journey of service and adventure

Growing up on a dairy farm in the Sunshine Coast hinterland, Jan Rigby had a dream – to be a nurse in the Air Force.



Today, as a client of Carinity Home Care, she is grateful to be supported by a team of carers and nurses that share her commitment to making a difference to the lives of others.

Jan's nursing dream was not initially supported by her father, however his discouragement of the idea was met head-on with Jan's determination and hard-working mentality. Between school and milking the cows morning and night, she kept herself busy trying to find an opportunity to study nursing.

Her father eventually gave his blessing for her to leave school at 16 and Jan headed to Gympie to commence her nursing training. As a qualified nurse at 19, she commenced her career in Central Queensland, working between Longreach, Winton and Hughenden. Those nursing days were busy and long, but there was always time for the long drive into Longreach to attend the Friday night dances with the local sheep shearers. Jan's passion for music was set alight, and her record collection was rapidly growing!

One fateful day in 1964, Jan was stranded in Townsville due to a train strike. Unable to return to Hughenden, pondering what she was going to do for a bed and food, a sign proclaiming 'The Air Force wants you!' caught her attention.

With her curiosity sparked and her excitement growing, Jan found herself walking up a flight of stairs to learn more about nursing in the Air Force. After passing an IQ test - something her father had assured her she would never be smart enough to do - and her medical, Jan became a proud member of the Australian Air Force. Her childhood dream had become a reality!

Jan's service in the Air Force spanned four years, commencing in the MediVac team supporting injured soldiers out of Vietnam,



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then moving between each base across Australia providing nursing care. A strong believer in 'work hard, play hard', Jan did not spend her free time sitting still.

Parachute jumping soon joined her long-time love of dancing as a favourite pastime.

Jan continued her career in nursing after the Air Force, juggling a family of three children, moving between Brisbane and Cairns, before finally returning to Brisbane.

When Jan retired from nursing, she followed another passion - teaching. Over her 18 years at Taigum State School, Jan helped hundreds of children overcome their various challenges. Through supporting children with reading difficulties, or through dance, music, and arts, those days were incredibly fulfilling.

Travelling has been another great love for Jan, with her longest trip being a three-and-a-half-month trip around the world and her favourite location was Peru.

Those adventurous days were wonderful times and special memories for Jan.

Making a difference

Jan's days are a lot quieter in recent years, at home in Taigum in Brisbane's north. As her health conditions advance, the support of services provided by Carinity Home Care under her government-subsidised Home Care Package enable her to remain living independently in her home of 28 years.

Her regular carers, Kelly and Alysha, support Jan four days a week, providing assistance with home tasks; transport to appointments and the shops; and personal care.

"Keeping my clients at home, being able to make a difference, and seeing them happy brings me much joy. When I leave a client's home and they're smiling, I know I've done my job," shared Kelly.

"Getting to know my clients - their life story, interests, preferences - is really key as it means I can support them in the best way for their wellbeing.

"And it can be the smallest thing that makes a difference. Last week, I pruned Jan's hedge.

"Sitting with me outside on her walker, we shared stories, listened to music, and laughed together. It really picked up Jan's spirits and was fabulous to see her so bright."

As a carer, Kelly shared how beneficial this is for her wellbeing too.

"Being a carer is the most rewarding job I've done. It's such a privilege to be a part of our clients' lives, respected and trusted, at times when they may be feeling vulnerable. It truly changes your life - makes you look outside the box and feel so good about yourself."

Between the Carinity support four days a week, and family visiting on Tuesdays for 'card day', Jan continues to bring joy and purpose to so many lives, including her carers, through her brightness, sense of humour and wicked laugh!

Above: Jan and her Carinity Carer, Kelly, enjoy a cup of coffee and a game of cards after all the house chores have been completed.

The Wesley Hospital

My Story | Lynne Williams

After 30 years supporting patients in Brisbane hospitals, dedicated Carinity volunteer chaplain Lynne Williams has retired. We found out what motivated her to bring the love of Jesus to people during their darkest days.

What inspired you to get involved in chaplaincy? Around 30 years ago a very dear friend of mine was struck down with cancer. I would go and visit with her and it was a very special and precious time. Soon after that another girl in my *Know Your Bible* class mentioned a hospital chaplaincy course run through the Uniting Church Trinity College. I applied for the year-long course and embarked on that in 1993. The following year I began visiting Baptists at Wesley, St Andrew's and Holy Spirit Hospitals in the city.

What is the role of a hospital chaplain? People in hospital are often facing major decisions, coming to terms with bad news, or are in shock. My goal as a chaplain was to represent Jesus, to listen attentively and actively, and to be sensitive to the needs of patients. We can be a listening ear, just allowing patients to 'offload'.

How has the role of hospital chaplains changed over the past three decades? Over the years, there have been major changes in chaplaincy: the work is so much more valued by doctors and staff. They don't have the time to sit down and be with a patient who may be troubled, sad or anxious. This is where a visit from a chaplain can be very valuable.

What have you most enjoyed about being a hospital chaplain? I have found the ministry wonderfully fulfilling – such a privilege. For me the biggest reward is when I see the Lord at work. Sometimes when visiting a patient, I was made so welcome. Some would say, "You were just the person I needed to see today."

It was a joy to catch up with some people as they came into hospital at various times over the years. Each is an individual with his or her own story, which illustrates to me how each person is unique and has different joys and difficulties and the Lord loves each one. I have been so blessed.

chaplains chat



We often plan almost every element of our lives, however James reminds us that we are not in control of the future. Our efforts, though well-intentioned, must always be aligned with God's will.

Making plans for a new year is always fraught with speculation. It's a good exercise but nobody really knows what is going to happen in the future. For example, in January 2020 I conducted an envisioning session for a not-for-profit group called 20-20 Vision. Shortly afterwards, COVID-19 hit and within three months our plans for the year had scuttled!

There is wisdom in making plans, but holding them lightly, particularly in the midst of uncertain times, takes humility, faith and courage.

In James 4:13-15, the Bible offers wisdom for navigating life's uncertainties with humility and faith. A summary of the verses could be: 'don't boast about your plans because you don't know the future!' Instead, depend on God. The passage emphasises the importance of considering God's will, urging us to acknowledge the fragility of life and the sovereignty of God.

These verses also invite us to reflect on the nature of our plans and ambitions. We often plan almost every element of our lives, however James reminds us that we are not in control of the future. Our efforts, though well-intentioned, must always be aligned with God's will.

Acknowledging the uncertainty of life encourages a spirit of humility and dependence on God. This recognition allows us to be open to change, flexible in our strategies, and aware that success does not lie solely in our hands. As we engage the future and serve others, let us do so trusting that God directs our paths and that our efforts are part of a bigger, divine purpose.

May 2025 be a blessed year for you.

REVEREND DAN LYONS
DIRECTOR OF MISSIONAL
CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP



In our Annual Christmas Appeal, we asked for your help to ensure we can deliver on our promise of supporting vulnerable people in their time of need.

Donations for the Appeal are still open. Any assistance you can offer to help us provide vital services to children, women, the elderly and those living with a disability will be greatly appreciated.

You can donate online at carinity.org.au/donate or call **07 3550 3737**.

Our year in numbers

2024 CARINITY HIGHLIGHTS

Carinity makes a real difference to the lives of
Queenslanders in 24 communities across the state.



1,114

Seniors cared for in
our **11** residential aged
care communities.



2,595

Seniors received care and
support to remain living
independently at home.



364

People lived in our safe and
secure retirement living
communities in **5** cities.



868

Students received an
education across our
6 school campuses,
including the first cohort
of Year 12s in Townsville.

58



Students graduated
from **5** Carinity
schools, collectively
attaining **201**
Certificate
qualifications and
traineeships.



1,883

Employees worked at
33 sites from Townsville
to the Gold Coast, and
west to Toowoomba.

15,159



Hours of counselling
for **251** clients dealing
with family violence,
youth crisis and
mental health issues.

106



Chaplains
supported people
in **41** hospitals,
schools, aged
care communities
and prisons.

49,784



Hours of care
delivered to
101 disability
service clients.

2,966



Safe nights of
accommodation for
35 at-risk young
men and women.

\$219,878



Approved to fund **8**
community outreach
initiatives run by
Baptist churches.

134



Volunteers
supported people
in aged care,
schools, community
services, hospitals
and correctional
centres.