

belong

Neighbour in need

Logan locals lend a hand

Carinity Education rising stars

Graduates fulfilling
their potential

Where friendships bloom

Relationships thriving
in aged care homes



carinity



Carinity's work is driven by our Christian values and a commitment to walk alongside people, especially when life feels uncertain. That calling has sustained us for decades, and it continues to inspire us as 2026 begins.

As we step into 2026, I want to begin by saying thank you. Whether you connect with Carinity through aged care, home care, retirement living, education, disability support, counselling or chaplaincy, you are at the heart of why we exist. Your stories, hopes and challenges shape the care we provide and the communities we create.

Summer in Queensland has a way of reminding us of what matters most — warmth and a sense of connection are foremost in our thoughts at this time of year. At Carinity, those qualities guide our everyday work throughout the year. We believe that genuine care is more than a service; it's a relationship. It's about listening

well, showing up consistently, and honouring every person's dignity and unique journey.

In the year ahead, our focus is simple: keep making a real difference in ways you can feel. That means continuing to invest in the things that matter most to you—reliable, high quality care; kindness in every interaction; and clear, practical communication when you need it. It also means we'll keep seeking your feedback and learning from it, so we can serve you better.

This edition of *Belong* shares stories of hope and connection—from students who have overcome adversity to graduate from Year 12 to residents who are building meaningful friendships in our aged care homes. I pray these stories of connection encourage you as much as they encourage me.

Carinity's work is driven by our Christian values and a commitment to walk alongside people, especially when life feels uncertain. That calling has sustained us for decades, and it continues to inspire us as 2026 begins.

Whatever your circumstances today, I hope you experience the peace that comes from knowing you are seen, valued and cared for.

Thank you for trusting Carinity to be by your side. On behalf of our whole team, I wish you a safe, joy filled end to summer and a hopeful start to the year.

KEVIN GRIFFITHS
CARINITY CEO

Contents

3 | Carinity Education rising stars Graduates fulfilling their potential
6 | Christmas cheer caps of big year Carinity Fassifern celebrates the festive season
7 | Neighbour in need Logan locals lending a hand
12 | Connecting for health Social connections improving physical and mental health
14 | My Story Annette Kirwood
15 | Chaplains Chat God sees every person with dignity and worth.



On the cover
Tyla and his fellow Carinity Education Shalom Year 12 cohort celebrate their graduation at the Townsville school.



Carinity Education's rising stars

A total of 70 young people graduated from Carinity schools during 2025, amassing 174 certificates and qualifications. While we are happy to see the success of all our graduates, the stories of Kailey, Maddi and Tyla highlight the transformation that occurs within our Carinity schools.

Kailey's artistic ambitions

When Kailey first enrolled at Carinity Education Southside, she wasn't sure of her future or where her strengths lay. But the support of her teachers and youth workers soon had her beginning to discover her talents and confidence.

"Before coming to this school, I struggled with knowing what path I wanted to take for my future. With the endless encouragement from Carinity, I am now confident I want to pursue my art," she said.

"With the help of Carinity, I have sold two pieces of my art. Since coming here, I have learnt the importance of education; I have studied harder than ever and my grades show it. I have matured as a person and learnt the importance of kindness and gratitude."

Kailey's youth workers, Mackenzie and Steph, say her dedication quickly became apparent once she realised the path she wanted to follow.

"What stands out most to me about Kailey's journey is watching her grow her emotional resilience. Kailey has been through many hardships that could have easily dimmed her light. Instead, she turned pain into passion and a strong

determination to achieve and do hard things," Mackenzie said.

Kailey values Southside's inclusive community and constant guidance.

"The thing I love most about this school is the constant encouragement from youth workers and teachers alike. I have never met such a kind and generous group of people, and I truly appreciate it.

"They have seen my good times and bad times and stuck by me. They are a big part of my personal growth," she said.

Carinity Education Southside has also helped her pursue her passion through real-world opportunities.

"I am most excited to pursue my art career and see where it leads me. Southside has offered me countless pathways to showcase my art and have supported me through it all," she said.

Above: (Top) Youth workers Mackenzie Dalglish and Stephanie Fuentes were thrilled to celebrate with Kailey on her graduation day. (Bottom) Kailey proudly showcasing some of her artwork.



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Social media / online carinity.org.au /carinity carinity_qld @carinity_org

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Maddi's journey to purpose

Maddi never imagined she'd be proudly graduating Year 12. Just a few years ago, school felt like a place she didn't belong.

"I hated school and my attendance was very poor. My grades were lower than they should have been, and I did not want to put in any extra effort. I was going to leave at the start of Year 10," Maddi said.

But everything changed when Maddi joined Carinity Education Gladstone, a place where she felt seen, accepted, and safe. Slowly, her outlook shifted.

"My attitude towards school and the efforts that I put in have changed. I have matured and have obtained part-time employment, and I put in extra effort to ensure my grades are good," she said.

The difference wasn't just in the classroom, it was in the culture. Maddi found a community that accepted her, encouraged her, and helped her believe in herself.



"Support is provided to us for all aspects of school, both in and out of class. There are a lot more opportunities for us and we feel included and feel like real people, not just a number," she said.

One teacher, in particular, made a lasting impact.

"My teacher, Karen Larose, provided me with support and guidance and pushed me to be successful in my studies. Without Karen and the school's help, I would not have achieved what I have today," Maddi said.

Now, Maddi is looking ahead with purpose and passion. She's preparing to study Youth Justice, driven by a desire to help others who've faced similar challenges.

"I am excited to be able to continue my studies next year with courses in Youth Justice work because I want to help those who are in situations like I was a few years ago. The school has guided me to develop and plan my personal career path through fostering an environment that I was comfortable in," she said.

Above: Maddi receiving an award on graduation day with teacher Karen Larose and Jaki Pianta, IVET School Relationship Officer.

Tyla's confident leap forward

When Tyla joined Carinity Education Shalom in 2021, he faced the challenge of starting fresh in a new school and finding his place among unfamiliar faces.

"Before I started at Shalom I had experienced some difficulties at my previous school," Tyla said. Slowly, he began to believe in himself and build friendships.

"I have grown so much since coming here. I have made friends and have become confident and comfortable," he said.

Tyla also found comfort in Shalom's supportive environment.

"I find Shalom to be easy and relaxed. My favourite part of each day is talking with my teachers. My biggest champions have been my amazing teachers and my friends from Year 12," Tyla said.

With that help, Tyla tackled new challenges and achieved a range of certificates, including *Certificate II in Automotive Electrical Technology*; *Certificate II in Automotive Vocational Preparation*; *Certificate I in General Education for Adults*; and short courses in *Career Education*, *Literacy*, and *Numeracy*.

"I am currently in the interview phase for a mechanical apprenticeship. My goal would be to become a fully qualified mechanic," he said.

His teacher, Paris Hart, is very proud of Tyla's transformation.

"His self-confidence has increased so much. When Tyla first came to us, he was shy and reluctant to participate. Fast forward to Year 12, and he excelled at TAFE and school and is extremely confident socially.

"Tyla was often the only student going off to TAFE - which was a huge change from school where everything was familiar. He had a lot of support and stuck it out, managing to complete several certificates," Paris said.



Above: (Top) Stuart Todd congratulates Tyla on his graduation; (Bottom) Nevaeh, Laihanna, Tyla, Costa and Darlene, celebrate their graduation together.

Christmas cheer caps off big year at community centre



The Carinity Fassifern Community Centre wrapped up another fantastic year with their annual Christmas party on 12 December.

The free event was attended by over 85 locals, who were treated to a delicious two-course meal with musical entertainment by members of the Fassifern Salvation Army Brass Band. Highlights included a competition for the most festively dressed and a presentation to thank the numerous local heroes who serve their community by volunteering at the centre.

Overseen by Community Development Coordinator Rhys Wilson, the Fassifern Community Centre enjoyed many achievements throughout 2025. These included securing



funding for the Cottage Crops community food program, hosting the annual Health & Wellness Expo, welcoming new allied health services to the centre and providing regular opportunities for social connection through events

like bingo and community barbeques. In addition, the centre ran no-cost training programs to support people with the skills to launch careers in early childhood, aged care and disability support.

Clockwise: Community members Roy and Liz Galvin enjoy the celebrations; Elizabeth Collins impresses with her festive accessories; Carinity Community Development Coordinator Rhys Wilson (left) entertains the crowd with the Fassifern Salvation Army Brass Band; Carinity Bunderra Lifestyle Support Worker Nick Leavey shares a Christmas cracker with Michael Osbourne; regular volunteers Kerrie Alford and Carole Evans showcase their talents feeding a crowd.



Neighbour in Need: Logan locals lending a hand

On the first Sunday of each month, a group of Logan residents gather with gardening gloves, cleaning supplies, and big smiles. They're part of Neighbour in Need, a program run by Logan Connect, and their mission is simple: to bring hope and practical help to people in their community who need a hand.

For many living in the Logan area, life's challenges can make everyday tasks feel difficult or even overwhelming. That's where Neighbour in Need steps in.

The heartbeat of Logan Connect

An initiative of Logan Connect, Neighbour in Need began with a simple idea: build stronger, kinder communities by neighbours helping neighbours.

Volunteers come together for two hours each month to make a real difference in their local community – whether it's through yard work, cleaning, cooking, visiting or even knitting.

Today, around 30 volunteers regularly give their time. Some are retirees with energy to spare, others are young people wanting to give back. All share the belief that small acts of kindness can

ripple outward, strengthening the whole community.

While lawns are trimmed and windows are cleaned, the deeper impact is harder to measure. The real gift the program brings is connection. A friendly chat over a cup of tea, a shared laugh while pulling weeds – moments that remind people that they are not alone. It's in the smiles, the restored confidence, and the friendships formed. Volunteers often say they get as much out of the program as the residents do.

“You think you're just mowing a lawn. But then you see the joy on someone's face, and you realise you've given them back a piece of their life,” one volunteer explained.



At its heart, Neighbour in Need — it's about people. It's about showing up, lending a hand, and proving that community is built one act of kindness at a time.

Extending impact

In 2025, Logan Connect was successful in receiving a grant through Carinity's Collaborative Community Projects.

According to community chaplain and Neighbour in Need program manager, Kerry Anderson, the grant has enabled the program to build its capacity and gain full momentum in 2025.

“The requests for assistance have really increased this year. With six new volunteers joining us, it's been wonderful to be able

to support a larger number of households than we hoped and planned for,” Kerry said.

Allison's story: Finding strength through community

Life has not been the easiest road for Allison. As a single, full time mum, her days are consumed with caring for her girls and managing her poor health. The basics like school supplies, packed lunches, and petrol for the car were often out of reach. While she often leans on the support of a local food pantry, and is grateful for the relief it provides, the weight of daily challenges remains heavy.

Despite these hardships, Allison's warmth and friendliness shine through. Her community connections, however, had been limited, mostly tied to her daughters' school. That changed when she reached out to someone she trusted, Kerry Anderson – a former school chaplain she had known for six years, and the program manager for Neighbour in Need.

Kerry's first visit to Allison's home revealed just how overwhelming things had become. Housework and yard maintenance had piled up, leaving Allison feeling defeated. A team of volunteers from Neighbour in Need stepped in, beginning with a house cleanup. Over time, they returned to mow, whipper snip, and restore her backyard. Each act of service lifted a burden.

“At times when I haven't been able to meet the bills, it's been invaluable,” Allison shared.

“The volunteers are always beautiful. It's really nice to know that people care.

“When you're facing problems in everyday life, sometimes you feel very alone. With people volunteering their help and coming around with smiles, it's really lovely and heart-warming to know that acts of kindness still happens in this world,” Allison added.

Inspired by the kindness she had received, Allison started giving back in her own way, supporting her neighbour who

It's in the smiles, the restored confidence, and the friendships formed. Volunteers often say they get as much out of the program as the residents do.

had been unwell. Allison looked out for him, and in return he fixed her car and now regularly helps maintain her property. This mutual care became a symbol of the resilience and generosity that grows when people stand together.

Looking forward

As Logan grows, so does the need for programs like Neighbour in Need. Logan Connect hopes to continue expanding its reach, welcoming more volunteers and supporting more households. The vision is clear: a city where no one feels forgotten, and where help is always just a neighbour away.



Neighbour in NEED

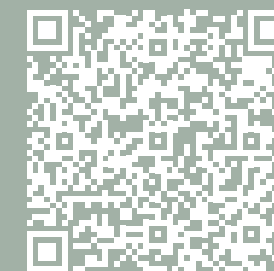
Want to learn more?

Visit facebook.com/NeighbourinNeed

 NeighbourinNeed

Do you live in the Logan area, and want to lend a hand?

Register to volunteer for an upcoming Neighbour in Need project day by scanning this QR code.



Know someone living in the Logan area who needs a little help, or have a project in mind?

Email your request to:
kerry@loganconnect.org.au

Above: Logan residents of all ages pitch in to lend a hand to neighbours in need.

Where friendships bloom

Sometimes, the most meaningful friendships blossom by simply being in the right place at the right time. For many of our residents, cherished friendships have sprung from sitting beside each other at lunch, singing together during a concert or striking up conversation over a game. We chatted to a few firm friends throughout our aged care homes to see how the people around them make each day a little brighter.



Valerie, Wendy & Audrey

For Valerie, the friendships she's found at Carinity Brownesholme are incredibly precious. Having been seated together for lunch, the trio of Valerie, Wendy and Audrey have become close friends. All three women had strong connections before they moved to Brownesholme, but they still found a blessing in being able to expand on their friendship network.

"Wendy and Audrey have offered emotional support and feel like extra family. They're good sports and beautiful company," Valerie said.

"We enrich each other's lives by helping each other through tough times, offering comfort, building confidence and providing a sense of belonging."



Fay, Valmai & Iris

A judgement-free mindset and willingness to give activities a go brought a group of friendly Brownesholme residents together. For residents Fay, Valmai and Iris, knowing there's a friendly face nearby has made the adjustment to living in aged care a little easier.

"Feeling connected helps to avoid loneliness and makes you feel valued and supported," they said.

The group of friends makes sure to go out of their way to greet new residents, offering a warm 'hello' to help everyone feel welcome.

"We don't know what they're going through," the friends noted, "so we just try to make them feel welcome."



Gayle, Maureen & Joyce

Shared experiences often bring people together, and that's certainly the case for Joyce, Gayle and Maureen. The three women all have hearing difficulties and met during the organised activities.

"We're able to support each other," they explained.

Company is very important to all three, and together they enjoy playing cards, competing at bingo and heading on bus trips.

"Spending time together as friends strengthens our minds, our outlook and our love for one another," they said.

At Carinity, helping residents foster new friendships through conversations, activities and social engagements is something our dedicated team loves to do. And with such beautiful friendships emerging, it's easy to see why.



Pam & Margot

Another Brownesholme resident, Pam, hadn't been able to get out and socialise for nearly two years before joining Carinity. Pam was struggling with loneliness after losing her husband – so making friends brought a sense of connection and support.

"My friends have a warm nature and we share values," Pam said. "It can get lonely in your room. I always encourage new residents to join the activities organised by staff."

For Margot, moving into Brownesholme gave her back some of the freedom she'd lost over the years.

"I wasn't socialising very much. It was difficult getting into a bus or car," she said. "But I've been fortunate to find friends easily since moving here. I have so many friends through my home. All different, but all special."

Sharing kindness with so many new people has made Margot's new home feel like a "big family". Her advice to new residents is always simple: "saying hello with a smile is a great start".



John, Dennis, Barry & Anne

John, Dennis, Barry (pictured) and Anne (pictured) haven't just found friendship with each other – their families are now connected, too. The group met at Fairfield Grange after their families encouraged them to attend activities and meet new people. The suggestion worked, as now their families also keep in touch and get together when they're visiting, with everyone invited.

All four were active in their communities before they moved into aged care.

"I used to go out with the boys for morning tea and a yarn," said Dennis, while Anne enjoyed getting out for a walk. Having the opportunity to establish new friendships has made a difference to all four.

"It's nice to have some mates to talk to," noted John. Anne agreed: "It makes life easier, and nicer, to have friends. You feel less alone, and you can still have a laugh about things and not take life too seriously."

Regardless of how they met their new friends, all the residents agreed on one thing: getting outside, meeting people and taking part in activities was essential. At Carinity, helping residents foster new friendships through conversations, activities and social engagements is something our dedicated team loves to do. And with such beautiful friendships emerging, it's easy to see why.

Connecting for health

Anita Lyons has helped countless people navigate life's challenges. As a Child and Family Therapist at Carinity Narangba, Anita said there's a common theme she sees when supporting people's mental wellbeing – a longing for connection.

"Human beings are literally wired for relationships. Connecting with others is a biological need and actually essential for our health and wellbeing," Anita said.

"We're naturally social creatures, but unfortunately it seems like there's more loneliness than ever before.

"Technology is great at giving the illusion that we're all connected as we can check in on the version of other peoples' lives that they choose to present on social media

platforms. However, good social connection isn't about the number of people on our friends list, but how truly engaged we are in the real-life relationships we have," she said.

Generally speaking, having good social connections means feeling supported by those around you, being comfortable sharing your thoughts and feelings, and genuinely caring about other people and what's happening in their lives.

"When it gets down to it, all anybody wants is just to feel seen, heard and understood. That's the key to true human connection," Anita said.

Throughout history, humans have relied on social connectedness for safety and good health. The benefits of connection include creating a sense of belonging, purpose and identity, boosting your confidence, improving

your sense of self-worth, and reducing your stress levels.

Other benefits include feeling more positive, having greater resilience in the face of adversity, helping you recover from disease and illness faster, and strengthening your immune system.

If seeking more meaningful connections is a goal for you, how do you go about achieving this? Anita thinks we all need to get back to basics.

"We're all so glued to our screens that we've lost a lot of what used to be basic human interactions," Anita said.

"Make eye contact and be intentional with how you relate to others. There are people all around us, so connecting even in the most basic way could be as simple as saying hi and smiling at somebody in the supermarket."

Some of the ways you might like to meet people and form deeper connections could include seeking out a social club based on your interests, joining a gym or sports team, becoming involved in church, volunteering in the community, reconnecting with friends or relatives you don't often see, or attending local events.

Remember that forming new relationships takes time and effort, so don't be disheartened if it doesn't work straight away. However, if social isolation is bothering you, or if you have mental health difficulties that are creating loneliness, seeking help is important.

You can chat to a loved one, make an appointment with your GP, engage the services of a mental health professional, or access free support from organisations like



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Lifeline **(13 11 14)** or Beyond Blue **(1300 22 4636)**.

Anita said that when someone brings up a longing for connection in a counselling session, the first step is to look at what barriers they're facing.

"Is there a past hurt, a lack of opportunities, or perhaps issues of low confidence or self-esteem at play? We then work together to make sense of things and to find the tools and solutions to set them up for success.

"Making a difference, supporting healing and seeing the transformation process when someone makes positive changes to their life is definitely the most rewarding part of my job," Anita said.

Carinity Narangba offers counselling and therapies to help individuals improve their mental wellbeing and quality of life.

Families and young people in Upper Caboolture, Burpengary and Narangba may be entitled to free support thanks to Queensland Government funding, while those on an eligible NDIS plan can also access services with no out-of-pocket expenses. For everyone else, affordable payment options are available for appointments in person or via telehealth.

Left: Child and Family Therapist Anita Lyons supports people to improve their mental wellbeing at Carinity Narangba. **Above:** Strong social connections are vital to good health.



My Story

Annette Kirwood

"I learnt at an early age that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and I've tried to live like that."

So says Annette Kirwood, a passionate supporter of Carinity. She donates regularly – often each month – and is proud to partner in our mission to assist Queenslanders in need.

"I was born into a Christian family and brought up well and I just want to give back whatever I can. Every little bit helps," she explained.

Annette has a long association with Carinity. Her grandfather, Ernest Kirwood, was one of the early residents of the Clifford House aged care home in Brisbane in the early-1950s.

Annette is particularly inspired to support Colthup Manor, Carinity's aged care home in Ipswich.

Her great friend, former workmate and housemate, Marg Elvery, moved to Colthup Manor two years ago after she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

As members of the Bella Nova Singers, they once sang to Colthup Manor residents. Now Annette visits Marg every day in Jacaranda wing, the memory support unit providing specialist care for residents living with conditions such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

"I've been able to see the care that Marg has received, and it has been very good. The staff are so patient and they manage Marg and her condition just wonderfully," Annette explained.

"I'm so indebted to the staff for the way they look after Marg. They said I can come up here every day and sit with her. I look forward to coming here."

Annette said donating to Carinity is her way of showing her appreciation for Colthup Manor and its dedicated nurses.

"It's a way I can express my thanks for the care that they're giving to Marg, and the support they have given to me. I've been accepted as part of the family."

You can support Carinity by donating at:
carinity.org.au/donate

Above: Annette Kirwood holds a photo of her grandparents, Ernest and Ann Kirwood. Ernest was an early resident of Clifford House, Carinity's first aged care home.

chaplains chat



God sees every person with dignity and worth, especially the lonely, struggling, marginalised, tired, and discouraged. As we commit our plans to the Lord, we are also invited to share His heart for the vulnerable.

2026 is officially underway, and with a new year often comes new plans for the months ahead. These plans are usually made with the best of intentions—improving our health, stewarding our resources well, or setting goals for work and ministry. Planning itself isn't a problem, but it's important to remember where our greatest impact is felt: with people.

Among those people are individuals who are often unseen, unheard, or forgotten by the wider community. Beginning the year with them in mind

reshapes how we think, how we plan, and how we serve. It reminds me of Paul's words in Galatians 2:10: "Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do." In the midst of significant ministry plans, Paul was called to remain attentive to those who were easily overlooked.

God sees every person with dignity and worth, especially the lonely, struggling, marginalised, tired, and discouraged. As we commit our plans to the Lord, we are also invited to share His heart for the vulnerable. This doesn't replace strategic planning—it deepens it. Behind every strategy is a human story, someone made in the image of God and deeply loved by Him.

Stepping into the new year with this focus starts with listening. Whose voices have we not heard? Whose needs are easy to miss? Taking time to understand the barriers people face allows us to respond with empathy rather than assumption. It also invites creativity, courage, and collaboration as we consider new ways to support those who have slipped through the cracks.

As we plan for the year ahead, may we be known not only for what we achieve, but for how we love.

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

2025 CARINITY HIGHLIGHTS

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



1,130

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



421

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



2,483

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



968

Young people received
an education across
our **6** school campuses,
100 more students
than last year.



70

Students graduated
from Year 12 at
Carinity schools,
an increase of
20% from the
previous year.



1,844

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



12,765

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

132



Chaplains
supported people
across hospitals,
schools, aged
care, prisons and
home care.

43,644



Hours of care
delivered to support
67 disability
service clients.



2,787

Safe nights of
accommodation
provided to at-
risk young men
and women.

\$452,028



In funding awarded to
support **14** new and
12 ongoing outreach
initiatives run by **26**
Baptist churches.

155



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