

belong

Mobility in our senior years

Exercise is vital for Ted and Babs

Courses launch career changes

Free training in Beaudesert and Boonah



carinity



For many of the people we support, Carinity becomes part of daily life – a familiar place, a trusted face, a steady presence. That is something we never take for granted. Our teams across Queensland work hard to provide care that is not only safe and professional, but also compassionate and respectful of each person’s individuality.

Across this edition of *Belong*, a common thread runs through every story – the importance of connection, dignity and feeling supported at every stage of life. These values sit at the heart of Carinity, and it is encouraging to see them reflected so clearly in the experiences shared on the following pages.

Whether it is residents staying active and independent, people finding new purpose through training and employment, or individuals being supported through times of vulnerability, each story reminds us that care

is about far more than services alone. It’s about relationships, trust and the confidence that comes from knowing you are not facing life’s challenges on your own.

For many of the people we support, Carinity becomes part of daily life – a familiar place, a trusted face, a steady presence. That is something we never take for granted. Our teams across Queensland work hard to provide care that is not only safe and professional, but also compassionate and respectful of each person’s individuality. I am deeply grateful to our staff and volunteers for the care they provide, and to our customers and families for the trust you place in us.

As the community around us continues to change, so too must the way care is delivered. We remain committed to listening, learning and improving, so that we can continue to support people to live well, stay connected and feel a genuine sense of belonging.

Thank you for being part of the Carinity community. If there are stories, topics or issues you would like us to explore in future editions of *Belong*, we would love to hear from you. You can email your ideas to belong@carinity.org.au.

KEVIN GRIFFITHS
CARINITY CEO

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On the cover

Ted and Babs from Carinity Brownsesholme retirement village benefit from regular exercise



Mobility in our senior years

Staying active in our later years isn’t just about fitness - it’s about independence, confidence, and the joy of continuing to live life on our own terms. At Carinity Brownsesholme retirement village, this truth is lived out every day, especially through the remarkable example of Ted and Babs, whose health journeys have been shaped, and strengthened, by their firm commitment to their wellbeing and staying mobile.

At 91 and 88, Ted and Babs embody what it means to age with vitality. Together, they’ve weathered numerous health challenges with remarkable resilience, but their determination to remain mobile has been central to their recovery.

Ted’s story stretches back more than four decades, with his first hip replacement in 1985. On crutches for three-months, Ted’s muscles had wasted away and he struggled returning to work.

“The doctor said I could go to a physio every day, or go to the gym,” Ted recalls.

He chose the gym – showing up each day after work, slowly rebuilding strength, balance, and confidence.

“I’ve haven’t stopped going to the gym since 1985,” he said. “It’s just part of who I am now.”

That decision changed the course of his life, paying dividends in his shortened recovery when he underwent further hip replacements in 1995 and 2005.

Babs began going to the gym with Ted shortly after he started, and credits her strength and mobility for helping her bounce back from breast cancer and back surgery over the years.

“My back operation was a complete success, and I was back at the gym soon after,” she said.

Today, they head to the gym twice a week where they work steadily through weight-based strength and mobility exercises and cardio work.

Above: For over 40 years Babs and Ted have visited their gym several times a week.



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They also choose to 'park and walk', turning everyday errands into incidental opportunities to move. These small, consistent choices have added up to something powerful: the ability to continue living independently in their Brownesholme unit, surrounded by the routines and community they love.

Their active lifestyle extends well beyond workouts. It isn't about pushing limits; it's about staying engaged with the world around them. Ted still mows the lawn and tends the garden. They manage their care and the upkeep of their home themselves, drive independently, move around without the need for mobility aids, and enjoy a full social life including coffee catch ups, and weekly gatherings with the British Ex-Servicemen's Association.

"Keeping busy keeps us happy," Ted said simply.

The consistency of the class is what motivates people most: knowing that familiar faces will be there, week after week, creates a rhythm that's easy to maintain and hard to give up.

Alongside personal routines like Ted and Babs', Carinity Brownesholme retirement village also offers opportunities for residents and locals to stay active together. Every Tuesday at 9.30am laughter - that's the *Energise* exercise class brings people into the community centre for a lively session led by Jan Harland.

The class has become a cornerstone of wellbeing at



Brownesholme. Jan believes deeply in the power of regular movement, not just for physical health but for emotional and social wellbeing too. Her sessions blend strength work, balance training, and gentle mobility exercises designed specifically for seniors. But just as importantly, they offer a sense of connection and belonging.

"People come because it makes them feel good," she said. "But they stay because they feel part of something. The routine, the friendships, the laughter - that's what keeps them moving."

Jan believes that the consistency of the class is what motivates

people most: knowing that familiar faces will be there, week after week, creates a rhythm that's easy to maintain and hard to give up.

The benefits of staying active in our senior years are well known: improved balance, stronger muscles, better heart health, sharper cognition, and reduced risk of falls. But stories like Ted and Babs remind us that the real reward is the life those benefits make possible. Mobility means independence. Strength means confidence. Activity means connection.

At Brownesholme, movement isn't just exercise - it's a way of living well, together.

Exercise at home

Build confidence, strength, and stability right from the comfort of home with this beginner friendly guide to simple strength and balance exercises.

Designed especially for older adults, it focuses on gentle, effective movements that support everyday mobility, reduce falls risk, and help you stay active and independent. No special equipment needed - just a few minutes, a sturdy chair, and a willingness to start where you are.

carinity.org.au/ExerciseAtHome



READ
ONLINE



Energise group exercise class



Energise is a gentle physical activity class held in multiple locations across **Toowoomba and the Darling Downs** each week.

The classes are suitable for all ages, and safe for participants suffering from a wide range of health conditions like heart diseases, diabetes, and bone/joint problems.

Classes are run by Jan, an accredited group exercise instructor specifically trained in managing safe, low to moderate exercise classes.

Energise combines strength work, cardio, fitness, coordination and agility. Classes are always different, but always fun.

There are many benefits of participating in the *Energise* class, including:

- › Improve balance and flexibility
- › Prevent falls and injuries from falls
- › Lower blood pressure
- › Manage diabetes
- › Improve wellbeing and quality of life

For more details on *Energise* exercise classes, contact Jan Harland:

Call **0400 270 334**

Email Janifer.harland@gmail.com

Opposite: (top to bottom): Ted attributes the success recovering from his hip replacements to his commitment to moving; Superhero 'Babs and Ted' feature on the gym whiteboard! **Above:** Local Highfield residents enjoy Jan's *Energise* exercise class.

Charlotte benefits from grandmother's lasting legacy

A Brisbane independent school, which helps young women attain an education they once thought was unlikely, has always been dear to Colleen Mitrow.

She was the foundation Principal of Carinity Education Southside, a special assistance school which has supported thousands of teenagers who faced barriers to learning or struggled in mainstream schooling.

When Colleen helped establish Southside almost 30 years ago, little did she know that a family member would later benefit from the specialised education the school offers – and graduate from Year 12 there.

Colleen was “very pleased” when her granddaughter, Charlotte Minty, decided she would like to attend Carinity Education Southside part-way through Year 11. Colleen knew the school could provide the support her granddaughter required to help her thrive.

“Charlotte had been very unhappy at the large impersonal

high school she had enrolled in, and her attendance was dropping off,” Colleen recalls.

“Southside had been founded as a new school model that values diversity and where caring and learning go hand in hand. This indeed was the reality of Charlotte’s education experience at Southside.”

For Colleen, the school’s Principal from 1997 to 2011, Southside “remains a very warm and welcoming environment for students”. She believes it is a place where “each young person is valued for the gifts she brings to the school”.

“Southside, with its holistic focus infused with a real sense of caring, works for young people. It certainly worked for Charlotte too,” Colleen said.

“The teachers and youth workers were exceptional. Charlotte appreciated and had the greatest respect for them all.

“Charlotte grew in confidence after attending Southside and felt much happier at school. She

began to believe in her ability to do well in her studies at secondary school and beyond.”

Charlotte was engaged in the curriculum and happy with her academic success. She also enjoyed co-curricular activities in the wider community offered by the Sunnybank-based school.

She also had the opportunity to meet “many other interesting young people from a variety of backgrounds and with a diversity of experiences”.

“Unlike other schools, conformity is not seen as a virtue at Southside and students can celebrate their individuality. So, the young people don’t feel constant pressure to fit in,” Colleen said.

Charlotte admits she didn’t know much about Carinity Education Southside before she enrolled at the school which her grandmother established.

She believes she likely wouldn’t have finished high school had she not found her place at Southside. She is now looking forward to attending university.



“Most schools say they care, but Southside shows they care.”

Charlotte enrolled in the school because she was “seeking a more supportive and hands-on schooling environment”.

“Before attending Southside I had doubts that I would be able to complete Year 12 due to poor grades and attendance,” she said.

“Southside provided more one-on-one learning opportunities, and the smaller classes allowed teachers to learn and take into account students’ individual needs in the classroom setting.

“I enjoyed forming friendly relationships with my teachers and being able to have frequent group discussions within the classroom. I most enjoyed English and Maths.

“Graduating from Southside gave me the confidence to explore my career options and think about my future in a positive light.”

Charlotte is currently undertaking a Diploma in Social and Psychological Science at Griffith College. She plans

to study at Griffith University next year.

“I plan to use my time in university to explore my options and discover my passions and skills,” she said.

Colleen was “very proud” to see Charlotte graduate from Year 12 at Carinity Education Southside in 2025. It reinforced to Colleen why she started the school in a little house at Tarragindi in the 1990s.

“I have been reminded of the wide range of students for whom Southside provides a valuable education and a comfortable learning environment,” Colleen said.

“Today, so many wonderful young people with lots of potential are having negative school experiences and many are still dropping out of the traditional education system.

“The Southside Education model that we have developed together has been most successful in allowing many young people to continue and complete their education.

“The young people learn so much from each other as well as from the teachers and staff. It is a school where a young person’s social, emotional and cultural needs are met.

“I only wish that there were more schools like this were available to more young people during this important period of their lives.”

Above: (clockwise from top): Colleen Mitrow, co-founder of Carinity Education Southside, witnessed her granddaughter Charlotte Minty graduate from Year 12 at the school late last year; Colleen with current and past Carinity Education Southside Principals, Leann Faint and Christine Hill, at the school’s 25th anniversary celebration in 2022; Colleen and Charlotte at the school’s restaurant day last year.



When Christina McAuliffe spotted a post on her local community Facebook page about no-cost courses offered by Carinity in the Scenic Rim, she was immediately drawn to the opportunity.

With a father in his 80s, Christina found the Certificate III in Individual Support course appealing as it offered qualifications to work in aged care and disability support.

"I noticed Dad starting to need more help as the years went on. That guided me into wanting to learn more about aged care, as I've always had a passion for looking after people," she said. "It was challenging to study again as a mature age student, but remarkably the more I learned, the more I wanted to learn; I was completely drawn in.

"I had intended to pursue a career in aged care, but with the guidance of our very knowledgeable course trainer, I discovered that disability support was my true calling. "I was fortunate to secure my student placement at Carinity Bunderra and was then offered a job here as a Lifestyle Support

"The courses are held at the Carinity Fassifern Community Centre in Boonah, as well as Carinity Illoura in Beaudesert. They include weekly face-to-face classes along with essential workplace training."

Worker, which I've been doing for almost a year now. It feels like it was all meant to be!" Christina runs the Tuesday skills group at Bunderra and also provides individual support to clients with community access, respite, domestic assistance, and personal and high-level care.

"This job comes with so much variety and I just love being with the clients, helping them achieve their goals and seeing the joy that comes from that. It is immensely rewarding and I wouldn't want to do anything else," she said.

Carinity is offering more fee-free training opportunities thanks to funding from the

State Government's Skilling Queenslanders for Work Initiative. Enrolments are now open for Certificate III in Individual Support, as well as Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care.

Carinity Community Development Coordinator, Rhys Wilson, said the



courses respond to a local need for employment pathways that connect community members to long-term sustainable careers.

"The Scenic Rim has some socio-economic challenges when it comes to employment, income levels and education," Rhys said.

"That's why it's so exciting that our sites have partnered to continue bringing no-cost training that qualifies people to

work in some of the most in-demand industries in Australia.

"The courses are held at the Carinity Fassifern Community Centre in Boonah, as well as Carinity Illoura in Beaudesert. They include weekly face-to-face classes along with essential workplace training."

Christina is not the only recent graduate to have scored a dream job in the disability support team

at Bunderra. She is joined by Nick Leavey, a former manual arts teacher who runs an art studio in his spare time.

Nick heard about the no-fee training course from a neighbour and felt it was the perfect opportunity to pivot his career.

"I was actually employed at a special school in the UK before I moved to Australia," he said.

"Although that was well over 40 years ago now, all through my time as a teacher I was working with teacher aides who were supporting kids with additional needs.

"That's what drew me to get qualified as a disability support worker, as it's not something totally outside my experience."

Nick said he didn't personally find it difficult returning to study, although things changed once he started his practical work placement at Bunderra.

"That's when the real learning happened for me, and fortunately I was surrounded by an incredibly supportive team who always work together in the best interest of our clients.

"I enjoy all aspects of my role and feel lucky to be doing something that is so very worthwhile."

Find out more about the no-cost training available in disability support, aged care and early childhood education at **carinity.org.au/training** or **07 3556 6845**.

Opposite page: Christina and Nick celebrate their achievements with fellow graduates Samantha Capp and Kery Howes. **Above:** Christina assists Bunderra service users Sam and Matthew in the kitchen; Nick and Christina support the Bunderra cooking skills group to host a luncheon for family and friends; Christina and Nick have found joy and fulfillment in their new careers as Lifestyle Support workers; Rhys Wilson presents Nick with his Certificate III in Individual Support at the Fassifern Community Centre.



Nourishment takes more than just food

As the saying goes, ‘we are what we eat’. Through all stages of life, nutrition is vitally important. However, as we get older, our nutrition needs change – and so does our appetite and ability to easily prepare and eat food. As a result, older Australians can often find themselves skipping nutrient-dense meals, snacking, or limiting the variety in their diet.

In our aged care homes, Hospitality Support Manager Selena Argentati spends much of her time focused on maintaining the nutrition of Carinity’s residents.

“For many of our residents, eating well isn’t simply about choosing a healthy meal. It’s about the fact that everything has changed around them. Appetites often become smaller with age, food doesn’t always taste the same as it once did, a favourite meal might seem bland, medications can alter the taste of meals and the hands that once cooked for a whole family may feel different,” Selena said.

“Beyond the physical changes, there’s also the challenge of the loss of a loved one, or no longer having family sitting across the table at every mealtime.”

The consequences of a restricted diet can have serious impacts on our health and wellbeing. Missing vital nutrients can impact bone health, muscle strength, and energy levels, while dehydration and skipped meals often play a part in falls. Often, Carinity’s clinical team find that residents enter care having unintentionally lost weight.

“Sometimes it’s loneliness or it’s just that cooking became too overwhelming or ‘not worth it’ for just one person,” Selena said.

“One of the most beautiful changes we see after someone moves into our care is the return of routine and shared meals. There is comfort in knowing that breakfast, lunch and dinner will be there, freshly prepared and thoughtfully served. There is someone nearby to notice if intake drops, to gently encourage and to offer an alternative.”

“Our focus is always on food that feels familiar, comforting and enjoyable, while also being nourishing. We listen carefully to what residents love; a traditional roast, a simple scone with jam and cream. Even a favourite childhood dessert can spark appetite and conversation.”

Frequently, residents slowly regain not just weight, but energy and engagement.

“When nutrition improves, our residents are stronger, more alert, more likely to join activities and more able to maintain independence. But just as importantly, they are no longer eating alone if they choose not to.”

For Selena, this is where food is more than just nutrition.

“A meal shared at a table, with conversation and warmth, can be just as nourishing as the food itself.”

That’s where Carinity’s mission fulfills the gap, embracing our residents’ culture, preferences and needs, recreating a welcoming and comforting environment that feels like home.

“Food is memory, it’s culture, it’s comfort, and it is our mission to ensure every resident feels like they belong and they feel connected with their community,” Selena said.

Much like feeding a family, meeting every resident’s preference isn’t always easy.

“Our focus is always on food that feels familiar, comforting and enjoyable, while also being nourishing. We listen carefully to what residents love; a traditional roast, a simple scone with jam and cream. Even a favourite childhood dessert can spark appetite and conversation,” Selena said.

Getting residents involved is also vitally important.

“We love having our residents involved in the creation of the menu,” Selena said.

Residents are invited to give feedback each day, and are encouraged to share their own recipes, with some featuring on our menus.

“Our Chefs regularly spend time with residents, chatting about meals, menu ideas, suggestions, and even learning their favourite family recipe tips and tricks.”

“At the heart of everything we do, we believe food is about dignity, comfort and connection. When we support nutrition, we are not just supporting physical health, we are supporting quality of life.”

Opposite page: Residents at Carinity Clifford House look forward to meal times for the conversation as much as the food.

Tips on eating well as you age

If you’ve noticed that you – or a loved one’s – appetite and diet have changed, here are a few tips to help.

- › **Be kind to yourself.** Meals do not need to be complicated to be nourishing and enjoyable. Simple options can make a big difference, things like: eggs on toast; baked beans on wholemeal bread; rotisserie chicken with pre-prepared salad; soup with bread and cheese; or yoghurt with fruit and nuts are all good options.
- › **Convenience is key.** Using frozen, tinned, or pre-cut fruit and vegetables is totally fine. They are nutritious, reduce the physical effort of cooking, and won’t go off in the fridge.
- › **Aim for little and often.** If you have a small appetite, try eating small amounts more regularly. Even a piece of toast, a yoghurt, or a smoothie between meals can help.
- › **Make a meal of it.** Food tastes better when it’s shared. Consider inviting a neighbour, join a community lunch group or eat with family. Conversation often brings appetite back.
- › **Eat by hunger, not the clock.** Eat your biggest meal when you feel hungriest, even if that might be early in the day.

Fun for young and old

In our aged care homes across Queensland, we often welcome schools and kindergartens through our doors. These intergenerational visits aren't just fun for the residents, they provide young people with the opportunity to engage with and learn from another generation. From bingo to bowls, concerts, crafts and cards, there's always something to connect over.



My Story

Maggie Townsend

Her working life took her from a dairy farm in Somerset, England to a disability support service in Somerset, Australia.

Now Maggie Townsend, the longest-serving employee of Carinity Our House in Toogoolawah, has retired.

As Our House coordinator for 16 years, Maggie helped hundreds of local people who live with a disability transition from a life of dependency to being independent.

Maggie “fell into” working with people with a disability while travelling around Australia. Her association with Our House began long before she started working there.

“I was actually involved in fundraising when the community were raising money to build this place, so Our House was a bit dear to my heart even before I started working for Carinity,” she said.

Maggie has had “such joy” watching people who were once isolated and vulnerable grow into confident and happy members of their community.

“When you first meet some of them they barely say ‘boo’ to a goose, but now they’ve got so much confidence. They are able to speak up for themselves,” she said.

“They’re real friends; they have got a real connection instead of being at home on their own. We’re a family. Just like your own family, you want them to achieve and become the best that they can.”

Maggie has enjoyed seeing Our House grow from one participant 16 years ago to more than 20 clients – aged from 12 to 75 years – in 2026.

“I’ve loved seeing the place grow and welcoming new people – not just the participants but the workers as well – to enjoy this holistic community,” Maggie said.

“Carinity employs some wonderful people and it’s been a pleasure working with and getting to know them. I’m definitely a better person for having worked here.”

chaplains chat



Without the resurrection, Jesus would remain another martyr who died cruelly for a cause. Risen, He reveals God’s ultimate plan — that what was accomplished on Good Friday was sufficient. As Jesus declared, “It is finished” (John 19:30).

Good Friday can be a confronting day, especially as a public holiday, but it’s impossible to reflect on Easter without acknowledging the brutality of Jesus’ death. Films like *The Passion of the Christ* vividly portray the scourging, mocking and suffering described in the Bible, prompting some to ask whether it is too graphic.

While the reality of Jesus’ suffering should not be minimised, the events of Good Friday reveal something far greater than cruelty alone. They show the extraordinary lengths our Father was willing to go to when dealing with human sin

and suffering. Easter Sunday then reveals the outcome of that sacrifice — Jesus’ resurrection and the ultimate victory over death itself.

In Jesus’ death, God takes the punishment for human sin upon Himself so that we, the guilty party, might experience freedom. The resurrection demonstrates the complete triumph of Good Friday, dismantling the power of death and evil, which are the consequences of sin.

Without the resurrection, Jesus would remain another martyr who died cruelly for a cause. Risen, He reveals God’s ultimate plan — that what was accomplished on Good Friday was sufficient. As Jesus declared, “It is finished” (John 19:30).

Easter is therefore a message of hope. It offers forgiveness, restoration to God and the assurance of His grace. It shows God entering fully into human suffering and transforming death into life — not only physically, but spiritually. Because of Easter, death is not the final word, and new life is available every day.

I pray that you experienced the hope of Easter in 2026. If you would like to explore the Easter story further, Queensland Baptist churches across the state would be glad to welcome you and offer support.

REVEREND DAN LYONS
DIRECTOR OF MISSIONAL
CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

1 Peter 1:3 (NIV)

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

This Easter, may your heart be lifted as you discover the hope and new life found in Jesus.



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Top Rated Aged Care / Disability Support Services

For the second year in a row, Carinity has been awarded Product Review's top rated Aged Care / Disability Support Services provider. These awards come on the back of Carinity winning the 2024 Product Review award for Health Services.

The awards, which are based on reviews provided to productreview.com.au by our customers and their families, are a great testament that Carinity is living our mission of making a real difference to the lives of vulnerable Queenslanders.



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