

Building better lives together



Brotherhood
of St Laurence

Working for an Australia free of poverty

Building better lives since 1930

Circus spectacular celebrates life and promotes positive ageing

The Celebration of Life series of concerts that aim to promote positive ageing, foster connections among senior citizens and provide them with an opportunity for physical activity, social inclusion, creative expression and some fun have won their founder, the Brotherhood's Paul Brophy, a major aged-care award.

For the latest Celebration of Life, performer and choreographer Gabi Barton collaborated with Paul to create the Circus of Life, a culturally resonant extravaganza, with entertainment by Circus Oz, POW (Performing Older Women's) Circus and the Huffers and Puffers Big Band, as well as other local artists.

A series of circus and movement workshops were offered to residents of aged-care facilities in the lead up to the event at Collingwood Town Hall in September this year.

'More than 6000 residents from about 20 aged-care facilities throughout Melbourne, along with carers, staff, volunteers and families, now come along and enjoy circus performances from artists of all ages, share a meal and have a laugh', said Paul, who won the Individual Distinction category in the 2015 HESTA Aged Care Awards.

For more information about the Brotherhood's services for older people go to www.bsl.org.au/services/older-people/



Enjoying the circus extravaganza



Paul Brophy



Performers at the Circus of Life (above and right)



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

At this time of year, when our thoughts turn to the season's messages of goodwill, it is timely to remember those in our community struggling with serious health issues.

Christmas can intensify feelings of isolation and despair. However, there is always hope.

The Brotherhood's Younger Onset Dementia Group, for people diagnosed with the condition under 65 years, exemplifies this.

Younger onset dementia affects more than 25,000 Australians, with people as young as 30 diagnosed. It is a condition that enormously affects the sufferer and their family – not only intellectually, emotionally and physically, but also financially.

People in our group talk about the isolation they feel as a result of not being able to work and about the often terrible financial repercussions. They have gone from being financially independent with thriving careers and fulfilling lives, to being

unemployed and coping with the disadvantages that come from this.

There's such a sense of loss compared with the life they knew before. For many people, their meaning, purpose and identity stem from what they do, not who they are.

Illness can destroy hope and resilience in people and their families. That is why I am reaching out to you to ask that you consider donating to our Christmas Appeal.

The Brotherhood is blessed with the support it receives from our generous supporters who share our aspirations to enable the disadvantaged in our community build a good life for themselves and their families.

We are grateful for the generous help we receive from individuals,



Tony Nicholson

families, philanthropic trusts and foundations and from like-minded corporations. Without this financial support, we simply could not do our work.

Wishing you joy and peace at Christmas and throughout the New Year.

Tony Nicholson

A little kindness goes a long way

Random acts of kindness are making a comeback. Kindness asks no more than a smile to those you see on the street or a thoughtful thank you.

I met my friend when we first began school. She lived in a very old house. My friend would often come to play and I remember my mother regularly inviting her to stay, but I didn't go to her house very much.

One year at my birthday party, she came in her best dress, which was quite faded, and her gift was wrapped in newspaper. It was cold, but she wore a summer dress and sandals, and her mother was apologising for her clothes.

My mother, who always made people feel comfortable in any situation, said to my friend: 'Don't you look beautiful today? And good thinking! You knew how hot we would get playing party games inside.'

Not until I was much older did Mum tell me about my friend's family's dire situation and how my parents helped find them work and ensured they had food on the table.

When we act with kindness we make a difference to our world. This Christmas we know there will be many folk in great need of a little kindness from us all – some for a meal to share or a place to live, some for help finding work, some just to be recognised by another human being.

May you celebrate Christmas joyously and seize every opportunity to care for others in kindness, with dignity for all.

To donate to our Christmas Appeal and help those less fortunate, visit bsl.org.au or phone **(03) 9483 1301**.



Debra Saffrey-Collins, General Manager, Chaplaincy and Diocesan Partnerships, Brotherhood of St Laurence

Lifetime of skills benefits students

Retired primary school principal Christine joined the Brotherhood as a volunteer soon after moving from England to Melbourne with her husband this year.

With her background – a teacher for 38 years, including 23 as a principal, and with a masters degree in curriculum – the Brotherhood's Centre for Work and Learning in Fitzroy snapped her up.

Soon it was off to Laverton in the western suburbs where students in the Youth Transitions Program were studying for their Certificate in General Education. The program assists young people who are not studying or working to move into employment or back into education. Christine worked in class with the students who needed extra help, and also assisted them to prepare for interviews for work experience placements.

'They were a very lively bunch. They treated me like their granny', she says. 'They've done well, that group. Most of them have got jobs from their work experience.'

Next she returned to the Centre for Work and Learning, where she helps students undertaking vocational training complete their assessment. This includes helping them with their English – for many it is not their first language.



Christine loves using her skills and knowledge in her volunteer role at the Brotherhood.

Christine is also a key member of the team that is creating a literacy tool kit for the Laverton program with the aim of being used elsewhere at the Brotherhood. It will help young people with low literacy levels improve to the point that they are able to undertake training courses.

Christine will continue to volunteer. 'The Brotherhood's mission and vision is so good, and it's so practical. People actually do it and have a real impact', she says. 'The team here is incredibly dedicated and professional.'

We are seeking more tutors like Christine. Phone Volunteer Services on **(03) 9483 1390** or go to www.bsl.org.au/act/volunteer/ for more information.

Donated toys bring Christmas joy

Christmas is a time for fun and laughter, but there are many families who just can't afford to buy toys or books for their children during the festive season.

For more than 10 years, the Brotherhood of St Laurence toy shop in Craigieburn in Melbourne's outer north-west has been giving toys to families over the Christmas period who are experiencing social, economic and financial disadvantage.

This year, the toy store, at the Connections@Craigieburn centre, will help bring joy to 200 families who live in Craigieburn and the surrounding suburbs within the City of Hume.

Registered parents will be able to visit the shop and choose a gift for

each of their children from a range of new toys. Without this service, many children would not have a present to open on Christmas Day. But the toy shop is only possible through the help of generous donations from the wider community.

We are grateful to the following schools which have generously made donations, including Mentone Grammar, Lowther Hall, Melbourne Girls' Grammar, Korowa Anglican Girls' School, Braemar College, Somerville Secondary College and Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar.



The art of giving

Dorothy Braund, who passed away in 2013 aged 87, was a modernist artist who made a significant contribution to the Australian art scene. As part of her legacy to the Brotherhood, Ms Braund bequeathed selected sketches from her portfolio of work.

There are many ways in which you can make a bequest to the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

Many people make a financial contribution so that the Brotherhood has a sustainable future and we are always incredibly grateful to those who consider leaving us a monetary gift when making their Will.

But gifts to the Brotherhood come in all shapes and sizes, including art, jewellery and the occasional car!

If you would like to talk with us about leaving a gift in your Will to the Brotherhood of St Laurence, please call **(03) 9483 2457**.

Selected works by Dorothy Braund reproduced here with permission.



Dorothy Braund,
Untitled, 1982



Dorothy Braund,
Untitled, 1996

Gerard Tucker's legacy continues to inspire others

Mike Tucker, the great-nephew of the Brotherhood's founder, Father Gerard Tucker, keeps the family connection alive through volunteering. He tells his story below.

My strongest memory of my great-uncle is his 80th birthday. I was about 13 years old. This particular party was at John Tucker's house, my father's brother. There was an extraordinary number of close and distant relatives present. All of my first cousins were there, and my dad and his siblings. Gerard, one of six children, was the only male of his generation still alive.

I remember a man with a sense of humour. I looked up to this man who made witty comments and listened to you. He asked probing questions. He was a man who was interested

and interesting and clearly a great listener. He was a very curious and innovative man.

Some 43 years later, in 2008, I decided I wanted to give back to society. Having an emotional connection to the Brotherhood, and because of my background in operations and procurement, I joined the Social Enterprises Committee [a sub-committee of the Brotherhood Board], offering some thoughts on the community stores.

I love volunteering. I meet people who enjoy the conversations about

our improvement and the generation of ideas. We all receive pleasure and stimulus from our meetings – it's a win-win situation.

For details on volunteering, email volunteer@bsl.org.au or phone **(03) 9483 1390**.



Volunteer Mike Tucker has a family link to the Brotherhood.



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