

BUILDING BETTER LIVES TOGETHER

A newsletter for our valued friends and supporters



Brotherhood
of St Laurence

Working for an Australia free of poverty

ISSUE 77 December 2019



Above Hanan has been part of the Brotherhood's Youth Transitions Support Pilot program for one year.

Thank you for caring

My name is Hanan, I am 25 years old and I arrived in Australia after fleeing Syria less than two years ago with my older brother. In Syria, I lived in Damascus and was in my final year of studying a Bachelor of Translation degree. I love the English language. Sadly, I couldn't finish my degree as we had to leave.

Arriving in a new country is extremely challenging and a huge adjustment. To be honest, at the start I didn't feel good about it. My family and friends were back home. Everything was new and I didn't know anyone.

I knew what would make it better would be meeting people and learning about Australia, and that's why I joined the Brotherhood's Youth Transitions Support Pilot. The program helped

a lot. It taught me how the education system worked, how to interview, how to write a CV ... These things might seem simple, but they are difficult for people who have language as a barrier.

The Brotherhood staff knew that I was interested in Community Services so they helped me with that. I am now studying a Certificate IV in Community Services. I am really interested in working with young people and migrants. I can relate to people who came here and how they feel. I might be able to give something back one day.

People like you make young people in my situation feel good and more welcome. You are helping us build our skills and we feel like we are part of a community that cares.

I really like the idea that the program works closely with the young people it supports. They give advice that is relevant and suitable. The Brotherhood is a very supportive organisation.

I have been part of the program for one year now and I love it. I know others do as well. We can express ourselves freely. We have a lot of fun.

Thank you for caring and making a program, like this, possible.

Hanan

The Youth Transitions Support Pilot program aims to help refugees and vulnerable migrants, aged 15–25, to get the skills they need for a job, and take part in the community through work, education and sport.

Will you provide a gift that will make lasting impact?

With your support this Christmas, we can help more young people build a brighter future

Donate today support.bsl.org.au





Above Executive Director, Conny Lenneberg.

Executive Director's update

Welcome to the December issue of Building Better Lives Together, our final edition for 2019. It's hard to believe a new decade is just around the corner.

Our main story, featuring Hanan, is a powerful reminder of how lonely and bewildering it can be to settle into a new life in Australia. Thankfully, Hanan was warmly welcomed into our Youth Transitions Support Pilot program and overcame the barriers she faced with work and social connections. Her positivity and resilience shine through.

The young people from the David Scott School are also a source of inspiration to me. Maya, Lachlan, Courtney and Ben are thriving in a nurturing educational environment, thanks to the fantastic learning model and supportive staff at the school. Since interviewing the students for this newsletter, we received the exciting news that the Frankston Mornington Peninsula Local Learning and Employment Network (FMPLLEN) has awarded the David Scott School with a Best Practice School Award, and Maya and Lachlan have also won student awards for excellence and endeavour.

We've also just held our annual Sambell Oration dinner, proudly supported by ANZ. The event is attended by leaders from the community, business and government, and provides a unique opportunity to discuss important social justice issues affecting Australians. You can read Jenny Macklin's Sambell Oration on the Brotherhood website: bsl.org.au/events/sambell-oration

Thank you for reading about how we work to make lasting change. Your continued support makes our work possible. This is the greatest Christmas gift anyone can give.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Conny Lenneberg". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Conny Lenneberg
Executive Director

Getting ready for the new school year

Over two massive days in November, 80 corporate volunteers from six organisations joined the Brotherhood of St Laurence to prepare 2,700 education packs for school children experiencing disadvantage.

Funded by the Ross Trust, the packs include pencils, a document wallet, scrapbook, exercise book, glue stick, ruler and markers to ensure every young child is ready for the 2020 school year. Once the hard work is done by our wonderful volunteers, the education packs are distributed to 27 community organisations in Victoria, as well as young people participating in the Brotherhood's community programs.

Over the past three years, 9,100 young people have benefited from the Brotherhood's *education pack* program, helping children to go to school ready to learn.



Above Corporate volunteers giving their time to prepare education packs.

Corporate volunteering is a great way for organisations to give back to the community. In 2019, the Brotherhood has welcomed 190 volunteers from eight organisations at our social enterprise sorting facility, contributing 1,520 hours of assistance. Corporate volunteers also play a big part in the delivery of the Brotherhood's programs and services through various roles, including mentoring,

cooking breakfasts for children at Breakfast Club and running leadership development workshops. We'd like to extend a huge thank you to the Ross Trust for funding the program and to the wonderful corporate volunteers who prepare the packs each year.

Get your organisation involved in the Brotherhood's work by contacting partnerships@bsl.org.au or go to bsl.org.au/support/corporate-support/

Have you met Susie?

Susie Rouffignac has joined our Philanthropy team as Donor Relations Manager. Her role is to work with people that would like to support the Brotherhood with private funding or by leaving a gift in their Will.

Susie tells us ...

"For the past fifteen years I have made a career in fundraising, primarily in health and education. I had studied nursing, general and aged care, business administration and have a strong passion in youth, health and education, which is why I am incredibly excited to be working for such an iconic organisation as the Brotherhood.

"When not at work, I am a very proud mum of two fabulous young adults, I love to cook, spend time with family and friends, travel, all things French, long walks and have recently taken up golf. On the whole, I really enjoy life and get a buzz when it involves people helping those in need.

"I feel so blessed to be in this role where I can give people opportunities to connect and support the Brotherhood vision, to be an Australia free of poverty. Going forward, we have many exciting activities to include, thank and recognise you, our donors, and build our donor network to strengthen our future. I very much look forward to meeting you and together grow the Brotherhood's financial capacity to support our programs to help those in poverty build better lives." – Susie

If you would like to have a confidential discussion with Susie about making an impactful gift, or including the Brotherhood in your Will, pick up the phone today and phone Susie on 0428 102 903. She would be delighted to take your call.



Above Susie is excited to join the Brotherhood team.

Last minute Christmas gift idea

We all know someone who is tricky to buy presents for. Maybe they have everything, maybe they don't want anything! Brotherhood Books has a great range of books – covering everything from first edition classics to mainstream airport and holiday reading – and you'll also be further supporting the Brotherhood in its work to make lasting change. Books are in great condition and delivery is super-fast. We'll even sweeten the deal by offering you 20% off until 24 December. Just use coupon code **BBL20** at the checkout.

Visit brotherhoodbooks.org.au to see the range.



Did you know?*



2,921

Through our Community of Practice, the Brotherhood and its partners have assisted **2,921 young people** with their transition to work



2,591

Work, Economic Security and Social Inclusion supported **2,591 adults** who experienced disadvantage in their transition to employment



1,000

Over **1,000 energy accounts** were switched to cheaper offers through Your Energy Broker, saving Victorian households more than **\$200,000**



42

Our Research and Policy Centre **published 42** research reports, submissions and contributions to external publications

Thanks to you, we could make a positive difference to so many lives this year.

*FY18-19

David Scott School 2019

Maya - 20



Proudest moment this year: Completing all my certificates and getting out of my comfort zone.

Dreams for the future: To complete my course and get a job in aged care.

Favourite thing about the David Scott School: The teachers are always there for the extra help and encouragement.

I like the David Scott School because: We get so many opportunities, and everyone is willing to help with no judgement.

What would you say to someone who has supported Brotherhood programs? A massive thank you to everyone for putting in the time and effort to allow us all to have the best education.

Lachlan - 19



Proudest moment this year: Winning a VCAL award for excellence.

Dreams for the future: Getting into Sports Management and following my passion in the sporting world.

Favourite thing about the David Scott School: Being accepted for who I am and including everyone.

I like the David Scott School because: I have felt safe and never been bullied. The staff have been so incredibly supportive of my situation which has taken my stress away so I can concentrate on finishing Year 12.

What would you say to someone who has supported Brotherhood programs? I am very grateful for the opportunities that coming to the David Scott School has allowed me. Thank you!

Ben - 18



Proudest moment this year: Attending school basically every day and going on excursions that pushed me out of my comfort zone.

Dreams for the future: I would really like to have a family and settle down and pursue a career path in the construction field.

Favourite thing about the David Scott School: Staff in general and the freedom we get. It gives students the opportunities they wouldn't have got elsewhere.

I like the David Scott School because: I can come here and get my work done. It's stress-free and there is lots of respect for everyone.

What would you say to someone who has supported Brotherhood programs? Thank you for being so generous and giving us an opportunity.

Courtney - 17



Proudest moment this year: Overcoming my personal obstacles and still completing Year 12.

Dreams for the future: Getting a job and exploring various career options.

Favourite thing about the David Scott School: All the opportunities that I have had access to.

I like the David Scott School because: The opportunities the school gives the students to expand their skills and confidence.

What would you say to someone who has supported Brotherhood programs? Thank you for giving all students the opportunities to follow their interests and have the confidence to do so.

You can support refugee families to settle & prosper

Settling in a new country with a young family can be extremely challenging for anyone. Now imagine moving countries under deeply traumatic circumstances, with little to no support. Then imagine trying to get yourselves set up and learn to navigate Australia's complex system of services for children. This is a situation that many families from refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds face alone every day.

The Refugee Child Outreach (RCO) is an early intervention program designed to support newly arrived families with young children of refugee or asylum seeker background with the tools and support they need to set their children up for learning in Australia.

Connecting families to local networks and resources

"I am so excited, I can get Arabic books, I can read and so can my children" – RCO assisted a mother and her three young children to catch the bus and access their local library.

The program seeks to improve the life chances of young children from migrant backgrounds by focusing on their developmental needs and connecting them to early years support.

It also provides direct assistance to parents by building their parental capacity and linking them to employment and education opportunities and social networks.

Assisting with community integration

A family arrived in Australia, and within a few weeks, the RCO had linked them to the school holiday program at the local recreation centre. The support worker also accessed funding for the children to attend the centre two days a week after school. They connected the mother with a mentor volunteer on those days so she could practise conversational English.

Pathways to employment opportunities

"I could not even work out how to use public transport." – A mother said she felt so stupid when she arrived in Australia. She was a lawyer and suddenly felt like she was nothing as she can't practise in Australia.

"I will be in work again." – With the support of the RCO, this mother is more confident and has commenced the process of finding work with the Brotherhood's Given the Chance team.

Energising Social Change

Schneider Electric is a global leader in providing energy and automation digital solutions for efficiency and sustainability.

Through a partnership developed in 2018, the Brotherhood of St Laurence and Schneider Electric have been working on specific projects together designed to address fuel poverty for those most in need, and assist the Brotherhood on our journey to become carbon neutral.

Schneider Electric's specialist Energy and Sustainability Services (ESS) team are currently undertaking a review of the Brotherhood's energy bills across our 68 sites. This is the first stage of a project to reduce the Brotherhood's energy consumption, energy bills and overall carbon output.

Another upcoming collaborative project will assist low-income renters to access more affordable, sustainable energy and reduce fuel poverty in Victoria. Tam Johnston, Schneider Electric Foundation and Community Lead, says the partnership with the Brotherhood aligns with many of the values of the company. "We have a shared commitment to the idea that people



Thanks to generous support this year, the Refugee Child Outreach program has successfully:

- delivered weekly workshops to the Iranian Women's Group, which consisted of 12 women and 21 children (total 33 participants) to understand their early years' and family needs. The RCO support worker provided each family with an average of 12 hours support
- connected women and their children to many local support services, which included play sessions
- engaged and delivered intensive 1:1 case support to 12 families (17 children) across Hume
- referred 24 families and 38 children to 80 local social and health service providers
- commenced planning for school holiday and Christmas break activity programs.

If you're interested in supporting our Refugee Outreach Program, contact the Fundraising team on 03 9483 1301

should be able to access the energy they need to thrive. We believe that access to energy is a human right, and we support the Brotherhood because we believe in the program of work in energy equity."

The Brotherhood of St Laurence is proud to partner with Schneider Electric Foundation and is excited to continue to work together to energise social change for all Australians.

Schneider
Electric
Foundation



Above Some of the Brotherhood team celebrating post race.

Moving together in Anti-Poverty Week

On Sunday 13 October, the Brotherhood of St Laurence's staff, supporters and friends proudly banded together to take part in the Melbourne Marathon. Melbourne turned on the sunshine as over 70 of us took part. For the first time this year, we also had a few members of staff who ran the full and half marathon – an incredible achievement!

The event marked the start of Anti-Poverty Week, an awareness-raising week in which Australians are encouraged to take part in activities that aim to reduce hardship and address inequality. The Brotherhood of St Laurence is a key supporter. This year our focus was on children living in poverty. The occasion provided an opportunity to raise money for our children's programs.

Katrina Herbert, head of the Brotherhood of St Laurence's children's programs, addressed the crowd at the Brotherhood's Melbourne Marathon tent explaining that, "too many children are starting school behind. Victorian statistics show one in five children are developmentally vulnerable when they start school. Your support today will contribute to our collective efforts to break the intergenerational cycle of disadvantage and give children the best start at life. Early intervention is critical to this."

We were delighted with the interest from Brotherhood staff, friends and family in taking part through fundraising, walking and running the Melbourne Marathon. In total, we raised \$29,287. That is double the amount raised from 2018. It expresses a wonderful and generous effort from our fundraisers and supporters. We hope to build on this effort still further in 2020.

Thanks to our Sambell Oration 2019 supporters:

The Sambell Oration is the Brotherhood's annual signature event that provides a unique opportunity to be engaged in discussing important social justice issues affecting Australia.

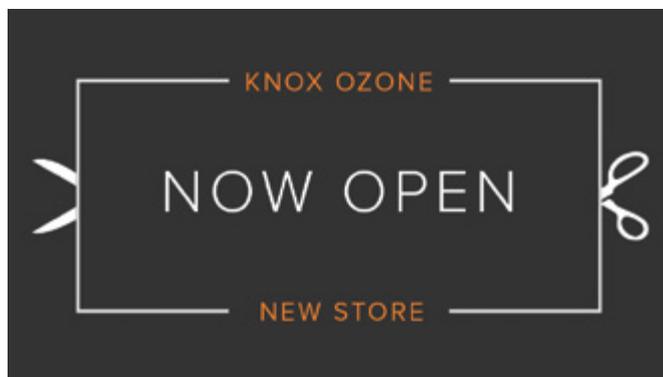
Primary Supporter:



Event Supporters:



For more information on the Brotherhood's corporate partnerships and event sponsorships, visit bsl.org.au/support/corporate-support



New Brotherhood Community Store has opened!

Located in Knox Ozone, the store stocks a wide range of high-quality second-hand goods including clothing, shoes, books, furniture and homewares.

With an abundance of shopping, dining and entertainment options on offer, you can plan a full day out when you visit us!

For further details visit brotherhoodstores.com



Brotherhood of St Laurence
Working for an Australia free of poverty

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Remember the Brotherhood in your Will