



# CATHERINE HOUSE CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER



## IT'S MY PLEASURE TO UPDATE YOU ON THE OUTCOMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF CATHERINE HOUSE OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS.

As you can likely imagine, 2024 has continued to see an increase in demand for our services. The effects of the ongoing housing crisis, increased rates of domestic and family violence, and the cost of living crisis continue to shape the landscape of homelessness across South Australia.

As the only women's homelessness and recovery service, it is no surprise that our accommodation services are full every night. This creates an ongoing waitlist of women who are often waiting on 'getting the call' from Catherine House to let them know we have a place available for them.

Currently, our waitlist times and client length of stays are increasing due to the lack of social, community and rental housing availability. As an organisation, we are always looking at ways we can increase our support based on the needs of women who are at risk of, or who are experiencing homelessness. We know that we can not control the supply of available homes, so we decided to tackle the issue from the other end by establishing our new Waitlist Support Service which commenced in April. This service provides additional support for women who are on our waitlist.

These women are most commonly sleeping rough, in their cars or sleeping on couches. We are really proud of this new initiative and I would particularly like to thank the Lang Family Foundation for funding this vital service. I encourage you to read more about it on page five.

Measuring the impact of our client services is vitally important and this is something we do consistently. On the following page you can read just some of the wonderful outcomes from women who have engaged with our service in the first half of this year. It was incredibly heartening to learn that **92% of 2024 client goals have either been achieved or are currently in progress**. This is a testament to the ongoing commitment women have to themselves and achieving their goals.

At Catherine House, we often talk to women about discovering or rediscovering their voice. For many clients, this may have been suppressed for quite some time, based on a variety of circumstances. I would like to acknowledge the women who have shared their stories for this edition of the newsletter. I have no doubt you will feel just as humbled by them as we do!

This year has certainly seen a shift in the community-wide understanding of the gravity and heartbreaking reality of domestic and family violence. More than 60% of the women who come to Catherine House, come as a direct result of violence. It is clear that this societal issue reflects a need for a significant change in our culture, and as an organisation, we are committed to doing what we can to see positive change. We welcome the recently announced Royal Commission and look forward to working with the wider sector to combat this issue together.

In the face of growing demands, we have been overwhelmed with offers of support from the South Australian community.

The past six months have seen a record number of community engagements, from workplace fundraisers, school activities, and individual challenges to corporate and in-kind partnerships. We are continuously surprised by the generosity and kind-hearted actions of our Catherine House supporter community! Catherine House simply could not exist without this support, and for that, we are truly grateful.

With the second half of the year now in full swing, I look forward to updating you in our next newsletter as we prepare for Christmas – it will be here before we know it!

**JULIE DUNCAN**

GENERAL MANAGER,  
CATHERINE HOUSE



# THIS YEAR AT A GLANCE

## OUTCOMES FOR WOMEN WE SUPPORT

Since January 2024, with your incredible support, we were able to achieve the following outcomes for women experiencing homelessness:

**54** women provided with safe and secure accommodation at any given time.

**296** enquiries were taken by our Intake Service Worker.

**344** clients worked with across all our programs and services.

**18,200** client case sessions entered into our database.

## FOOD SERVICES

So far in 2024, we have served **27,800** meals to our clients across all our programs.

We receive fresh, in-season produce year-round thanks to our partnership with Wills & Daniel, Adelaide Central Market and Adelaide's Finest Supermarkets - Pasadena & Frewville.

We'd also like to thank the following individuals and businesses who made a commitment to support our Kitchen Program:

- Air Diffusion Agencies
- Anne & Jegan Krishnan
- Eleanor Crawford
- ElectraNet
- Lord Mayor Jane Lomax-Smith
- Jeff & Toni Ellison
- Kathryn & Nick House
- Key Conveyancing
- Lucy Hood, Rhiannon Pearce & Nat Cook
- ORBE
- Paul & Michelle Stallan
- The Honourable Penny Wong
- Redarc Electronics
- Riedel SA
- Sandy Pitcher
- Simon & Monica Tiddy
- Stanley & Co. Lawyers
- Sylvia & Anthony Toop
- William Buck

## WOMEN'S CENTRE, EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

**225** activities, workshops and courses were delivered.

**1,296** individual attendances.

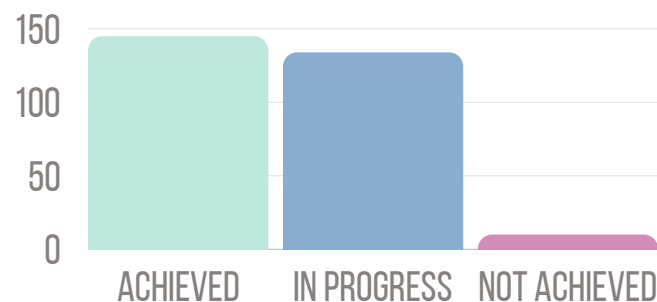
**22** women engaged with the Education & Employment Officer.

**127** grants were provided to women which were utilised for SIM cards, mobile phones, white goods, education, work supplies and rent arrears.

**304** individual goals have been set by women. (Goals include obtaining drivers licence, completing educational courses, managing finances and more).

## GOALS

**92%** of 2024 client goals have either been achieved or are currently in progress!



# HOLDING ONTO HOPE EVEN WHEN IT FEELS LIKE THE ODDS ARE STACKED AGAINST ME

-CATHERINE HOUSE CLIENT

**LOOKING BACK ON MY JOURNEY THROUGH HOMELESSNESS, IT ALL BEGAN WHEN I WAS JUST FIVE YEARS OLD, AND I WAS KICKED OUT OF MY FOSTER MOTHER'S HOME.**

**I SPENT THE NIGHTS AT THE SCHOOL FOR A FEW DAYS, UNTIL A KIND CLEANING LADY NAMED PENELOPE TOOK ME IN. I CONTINUED TO LIVE BETWEEN MY FOSTER MOTHER'S HOUSE AND PENELOPE'S HOME.**

Penelope was a very kind lady who taught me to meditate, which helped me feel calm. When I was 21 years old, I met a man through a Christian event. We started dating and soon after got married.

I moved in with him on his farm, where we had four kids together. I stopped working at a local butcher and spent my days looking after the kids and working on the farm.

My mother-in-law also lived on the farm in a separate house. She never liked me, and once I moved on to the property, she started to verbally abuse me, which turned into physical abuse.

My husband never helped me and always sided with his mother. He also began emotionally abusing me, putting me down and crushing my self-confidence.

One day, when I was pregnant with my daughter, my mother-in-law kicked me in the stomach. I went to the police for help, but they just advised me to stay out of her way, give her space, and not entice her. I started to feel very helpless and powerless.

After 11 years, my mother-in-law told me I needed to leave. I agreed because I was worried that the ongoing conflict in the home was starting to affect the kids, and I believed that everyone would be better off if I left.

I slept at a beach for three weeks, while my husband searched for alternative accommodation for me. With his help, I rented a room, and my marriage also ended.

After a few years, my foster mother fell ill and I returned to live with her to support her. During this time, I experienced my first mental health episode and was diagnosed with schizophrenia.

I didn't know much about the condition, and I wasn't connected to any services. I found it hard to obtain secure housing and went to stay in a supported mental health service in Glenelg. During this time I had another mental health episode after reacting to my medication and spent several weeks in a hospital.

**DURING THE HOSPITAL ADMISSION, I WAS CONNECTED TO CATHERINE HOUSE AND MOVED INTO THE PERMANENT SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION PROGRAM. I FELT VERY SETTLED AT CATHERINE HOUSE.**

**THE ENVIRONMENT WAS WELCOMING, AND I MADE GOOD FRIENDSHIPS WITH THE OTHER WOMEN. I COULDN'T IMAGINE LIVING ANYWHERE ELSE AND FEEL LIKE I HAVE FOUND MY FOREVER HOME.**

Reflecting on my marriage breakdown and leaving the family home, I found navigating the system was tough, especially when I didn't fully understand my rights with my kids, or my home.

It wasn't until I met a woman going through a separation that I understood I could seek support from a lawyer, but at this point, I felt very powerless, and my confidence was shattered. I was told I was entitled to half of the farm, but I just wanted enough money to buy a car, study a new course, and try to rebuild my life.

Through it all, I've held onto the belief, "Don't take the bad things on board, things can get better", even when it feels like the odds are stacked against me.

I feel rebuilding a woman's self-confidence after experiencing adverse life events like family violence is essential when supporting them into housing, as these experiences can shatter your self-confidence, making it challenging for women to find long-term housing.



# FINALLY FEELING SAFE TO REVEAL THE INTERNAL PARTS AND KNOWING THIS IS OK - A NEW NARRATIVE OF MY LIFE.

-CATHERINE HOUSE CLIENT

As a woman over 55, when reflecting on what my experience of homelessness has been like, I realise that historically, like many women, my ingrained beliefs have been that if my life isn't perfect, I shouldn't share it with others. I believed instead that I should keep it hidden as family skeletons are meant to remain 'in the closet'.

Women have always been used to being the nurturers and caregivers. It's part of our DNA, so it is harder to acknowledge when we do need support or are struggling and can't cope.

Even when I did have a safe space to do so, it was hard to open up for fear of being considered weak or like a failure for not being capable or seen as less than. We can be so hard on ourselves as women when society tells us that we should suck it up and get on with things.

This became my belief system without choosing or realising it, and I didn't seek help in my own time of crisis, which led me to the darkest time in my life.

**“ However, coming to Catherine House has challenged all of that, as I have been able to feel safe, respected, heard, valued, worthy and not judged for the issues I was dealing with. I didn't feel abandoned or like a freak if I needed help. I have received daily contact and support to face my personal struggles. Although it has been difficult and uncomfortable, I feel extremely empowered, grateful and ready to face what comes next in my life. ”**

Considering that women over 55 are the fastest growing population group experiencing homelessness in Australia, it is essential that we have services like Catherine House offering designated support, stability, companionship and helping women to know that they can have hope for a positive future with the potential for longer-term housing and mental health stability.

## NEW WAITLIST SUPPORT SERVICE

The current state of the housing crisis has placed significant strains on so many Australians. According to recent reports, only 3% of homes are affordable for households earning \$64,000.

Middle-income earners have been pushed into lower-income rental and purchase markets, leaving low-income earners with fewer and fewer options. The flow-on effects of this crisis have led to significantly increased demands for Catherine House services, with more and more women contacting us for support.

As a result of this increased demand, we recently began piloting a new service to better support women on our waitlist. We were delighted to welcome a new Case Worker to our Waitlist Support Service. This Case Worker now provides outreach support and referrals to services to women on our waitlist.

They also utilise brokerage funding to address identified needs to minimise personal hardship from their current experience of homelessness and, where able, divert from or shorten periods of homelessness.

**WE ARE DELIGHTED TO BE ABLE TO SHARE THESE POSITIVE OUTCOMES & FEEDBACK FROM CLIENTS OF THE WAITLIST SUPPORT SERVICE:**

*"I'm really happy to get support around updating my housing application, as it is a complicated and confusing process."*



*"Thank you for the personal alarm - it's so helpful, I have been wanting one for a long time for my safety"*

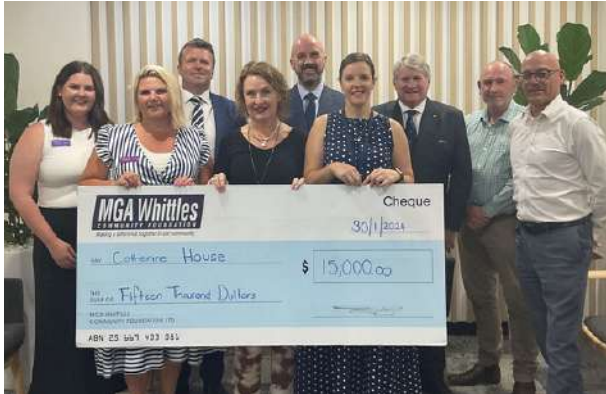
*"I'm so happy now I'm getting glasses, I'm finally going to be able to see. Thank you for helping me."*



*"I'm so proud of myself! I'm having a go at more and more things, speaking up and asking for what I'm eligible for and getting more confident. My hope is coming back."*

***This exciting new service would not be possible without the generous support of the Lang Family Foundation. Their ongoing commitment to Catherine House makes a significant difference in our ability to continue supporting women experiencing homelessness.***





## MGA WHITTLES GOLF DAY

Earlier this year, Jaylee and Molly were honoured to accept an incredibly generous donation from the MGA Whittles Community Foundation to support our Crisis Accommodation Service. At their 5th annual Charity Golf Day, they raised an astonishing \$25,814.50 which was split between Catherine House and the Black Dog Institute.

We are incredibly thankful for their support, and would also like to thank all the sponsors and organisations who donated prizes to this successful event.

## CONNOLLY WILSON CONVEYANCING

We are so grateful to have had the ongoing support of Connolly Wilson Conveyancing, who have donated a portion of every property settlement fee to Catherine House since 2022, with their lifetime donation tally now over \$11,600!

With back to back interest rate rises and a cost of living crisis, the number of women contacting Catherine House has reached unprecedented levels during this time. This provides more than two months of safe and secure accommodation for a woman experiencing homelessness. Trish, Mel and their clients should be so very proud of what they have contributed to.



## ADELAIDE'S FINEST SUPERMARKETS

Our kind supporters at Adelaide's Finest Supermarkets helped make Mother's Day extra special this year, with an incredible donation of 54 fresh floral arrangements from their Flowerbar - enough for each woman at Catherine House.

## CAMP CALLY SLEEPOUT

In June, Jaylee attended the We Care Cally Camp Out at Callington. This incredible event, which was an all-ages community fundraiser sleepout, was made possible by Australian Portable Camps to raise funds and awareness for people experiencing homelessness. The community enjoyed a great night, including live music and fire performers, camp fire songs, and even a mechanical bucking bull!

Australian Portable Camps organised a hugely successful online auction to raise funds for Catherine House. Jaylee was blown away when presented with a cheque for \$65,000 as a result of their fundraising auction!



## ST. PAUL'S OLD SCHOLARS FOOTBALL CLUB

The incredible community of the St. Paul's Old Scholars Football Club not only raised awareness for Catherine House at their most recent Ladies Day, they also rallied together to bring in much-needed in-kind donations, and an outstanding \$5,647!



## SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HOUSING ROADMAP

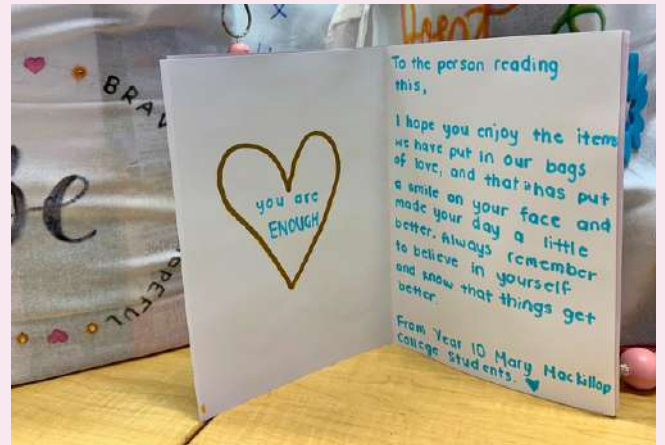
We were honoured to be the charity partner of the SA Housing Roadmap presented by Premier Peter Malinauskas. Thank you to all who purchased raffle tickets and donated, helping us raise \$11,000!

Thank you to Bruce Djite from the Property Council of SA, as well as industry bodies UDIA SA, HIA Insurance Services, Civil Contractors Federation SA, Master Builders SA and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, as well as our amazing team of volunteers who donated their time on the day to sell raffle tickets.



## SAPOL

The Adelaide Prosecution Services Branch of South Australia Police recently held a successful (and delicious!) soup day for a gold coin donation to support the work of Catherine House. Thank you SAPOL!



## MARY MACKILLOP COLLEGE

Thank you to the wonderful Year 10 girls from Mary MacKillop College who brought in these incredible 'Bags of Love', which were filled with much-needed donations and notes of hope.



## ST JOHN'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Year 12 Drama students at St John's lit up the stage to tell the story of 'The Book Of Everything'. Drama student Sasha suggested the performance should raise funds for Catherine House, and they ended up raising over \$1,000! Thank you to Sasha and all the Year 12 Drama students at St John's.

## INTERESTED IN FUNDRAISING FOR CATHERINE HOUSE?

We'd love to hear from you! Get in touch with our Fundraising and Campaign Coordinator, Molly Dyer, by emailing [MollyD@catherinehouse.org.au](mailto:MollyD@catherinehouse.org.au) or phoning (08) 8232 2282.



# COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

## 2024 COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR WELCOME

We couldn't have been more proud to officially welcome our 2024 Community Ambassadors. This dedicated group of individuals has committed to raising awareness and funds for our Crisis Accommodation Service throughout the year.

It was a heartwarming experience to see so many faces - new and returning - standing up to proudly support women experiencing homelessness in South Australia. We thank the Wyatt Trust Benevolent Institution for allowing us to host our Information & Welcome Sessions in their meeting space, *Inparrila*.



## STEFANIE'S RAISE A CUP FOR CHANGE

This sold out-event inspired a group of like-minded individuals to share their vision for a brighter, more inclusive future. After enjoying a cup of tea at Payinthe, guests heard from author and women's advocate, Carol Omer.



## SHERI'S WORKPLACE DRIVE

Sheri, along with the rest of the team from Goodman Fielder, celebrated International Women's Day by collecting and donating these much needed personal items for women at Catherine House. Safe to say we were blown away by their efforts!



## BEC'S SUNDAY SOIREE

Thank you to our Community Ambassador Bec Morse for holding her Sunday Soirée to support the work of Catherine House! A big thanks to our resident DJ Tania from Choons & Moovz who, despite the 37 degree heat, got everyone on the dance floor!



## VANESSA'S BUNNINGS BBQ

Earlier in the year, we were delighted to see one of our new Community Ambassadors, Vanessa, break our Bunnings BBQ record by raising over \$3,000!





## SARAH & MICHAELA: SARAH'S HEAD SHAVE

Throughout May, Community Ambassadors Sarah and Michaela had a goal to raise \$500, and if they did, Sarah would shave her head. Not only did they smash their goal within 24 hours, but they have now raised over \$1,500. Sarah now has a new fresh 'do for winter and we think she looks fabulous!



## LOUISE & LISA'S DINNER

Community Ambassadors Louise and Lisa joined together to create a private dinner experience. 'A Seat at the Table', was a gorgeous 3-course dinner with wine, lucky door prizes and a silent auction, raising over \$2,500. What a simple and brilliant idea. Thank you Louise and Lisa!



## WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE FUNDS RAISED BY OUR COMMUNITY?

With all this incredible fundraising, you might wonder how the money is utilised! We receive less than 50% of funding from the government to operate our Crisis Accommodation Service, meaning we have to raise the remaining amount to keep our doors open. **When we say we couldn't do this without you - we mean it!**

## TINA TURNER THE MUSICAL



Catherine House was deeply honored to have TINA The Musical AU dedicate two performances to women who have bravely walked through our doors. Like Tina, many of these women have experienced domestic and family violence.

**We acknowledge and admire the strength, courage and vulnerability it takes to make this step.**

Thank you to everyone who attended the performances and supported our work through a donation. Your generous support raised more than \$6,200 to support our Crisis Accommodation Service.

Thank you to Australian producers TEG Dainty and the Adelaide Festival Centre for working with us to raise much needed awareness of domestic and family violence and the need for services like Catherine House.

**We couldn't have done it without our hard-working team of volunteers who supported us on the day!**





**On May 9th, with the support of Nedd Brockmann, Catherine House joined forces with Victorian-based homelessness charity We Are Mobilise to launch Mobilise Pay.**

In 2022, Nedd set out to run across Australia in record time to raise vital funds. Running nearly 100km daily for 46 and a half days, Nedd raised over two million dollars for We Are Mobilise.

Through We Are Mobilise's brand new 'Mobilise Pay' program, a portion of Nedd's vital funds will be donated to Catherine House. These funds will provide three critical support packages to single-mother families facing hardship.

*"We Are Mobilise are incredibly proud to be able to work with a renowned organisation like Catherine House. We can't wait to see the significant impact that this support will make for the women of South Australia and we look forward to growing this collaboration in the future."*

**Noah Yang – CEO, We Are Mobilise**

**UP TO \$10,000 SUPPORT PACKAGES**

Packages will offer support to single mothers, including:

- Essential bill assistance
- Support for school-related expenses
- Access to extracurricular activities for children



*Nedd's 4,000km run that started it all.*



*Nedd & Noah interviewed by Bec Morse at Catherine House.*

Moving into a new home with children is a big challenge for anyone - let alone single mums recovering from the experience of homelessness. The multitude of disadvantages these women face often places them significantly 'behind the starting line', re-establishing their lives with an upward battle ahead of them.

Women who exit Catherine House and receive assistance from the Mobilise Pay program will have the opportunity to strengthen their financial independence whilst they continue to recover.

Supporting mothers through what is often the most challenging period of their lives will have generation-spanning effects on their family's personal and economic wellbeing.

The flexibility provided by Mobilise Pay to access funding based on their unique set of needs and circumstances aligns with Catherine House's recovery-oriented focus. This tailored approach will allow women to exercise choice and control, which is an important part of their recovery journey.

**THIS SUPPORT WILL BE LIFE-CHANGING, ALLOWING A WOMAN A FRESH START FOR HER AND HER FAMILY.**

Nedd is now looking forward to his next big challenge. Stay tuned as he is going bigger and better in 2024 with a target of \$10 million! Learn more about the challenge, or get involved at [neddsuncomfortablechallenge.com](https://neddsuncomfortablechallenge.com)

# THE ONE KIND VOICE IN SOMEONE'S DAY

Story by Rebecca Whitfield-Baker for *The Advertiser* as part of their annual *Blanket Appeal*.

For the past half a decade, Lois Brewis has arrived at work knowing there will be a pile of overnight emails and dozens more phone messages to respond to before she even thinks about the new day's to-do list. But far from being daunted by the formidable workload, her only wish is for the communication waiting in her inbox and voicemail to tell a different story.

The 67-year-old is the face behind the kind voice at Adelaide women's accommodation and support services Catherine House.

Her role as intake support worker means she is the first to hear the pleas for help from women in need of a safe place to call home.

*"Mostly women are crying and begging ... they are just looking for a roof over their head and will say things like 'I will just sit in the corner and not make any noise'," she says.*

*"Sometimes there will be 20 missed calls from overnight that I need to return before I even start my day.*

*"I never get a happy phone call, if people are ringing me, they are not ringing to say, 'it is a beautiful day, the sun is shining'".*

*"They are ringing me to ask for something that mostly they are very embarrassed to ask for, so many say to me, 'I have never been in this position before, I never thought I would be'."*

*"Some of the stories can be quite sad and I need to listen for things not being said."*

A social worker for 24 years, Ms Brewis says her unwavering priority is to be **"the one kind voice in someone's day"**.

She will get as many as 40 calls in a day, increasingly from women she wouldn't hear from previously – those with jobs.

"Yes, it gets heavy, and yes there are days that are hard but it still comes back to being the one kind voice in a person's day – that is what I aim for every day," she says.

"The thing I am finding is we are getting people who are working who have no home ... who are in tents. They are just so humiliated by the whole thing."

Amid the heartache and desperation, there are phone calls Ms Brewis looks forward to; the ones in which she gets to share the good news a room has become available.

*"A lot will cry but then they become very excited ... when you come from being on the street to suddenly being offered a bed, regular meals, toiletries ... it can be overwhelming," she says, adding women also get wide-ranging support, from someone to help them find a place to live to education opportunities.*

*"It's not just a room, (it) gives women an amazing new beginning."*

As well as being contacted directly by women, Ms Brewis also receives referrals.

Sadly, the waitlist for a room in the long-serving charity's crisis accommodation is usually at least three months with the current cost of living distress and affordable housing scarcity only driving up demand – both in terms of those seeking the service and the time it takes to find long-term solutions for those they do help, up from three months to five or six.

In response to the increased demand, a new Waitlist Support Service has been launched with funding from the Lang Family Foundation

Jaylee Cooper, Manager Philanthropy and Engagement, said the extended offering, allowing added support for those waiting for room, was critical.

*"Women often say for them a call (from Catherine House advising a room is available) is life-changing ... when they do get that call from Lois, it is a sense of, 'OK I can breathe again ... I have got somewhere now that I know I can stay and I can start to get support'".*



Photograph of Lois by Brett Hartwig

YEAR NINE STUDENT, EDEN, FROM ST DOMINIC'S PRIORY COLLEGE, WAS TASKED WITH INTERVIEWING 'LOCAL HEROES' FOR A SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT.

**EDEN CHOSE TO INTERVIEW JOY, AMANDA & MEGAN, LONG-SERVING CATHERINE HOUSE VOLUNTEERS.**

**What is your name?**

*We are known as 'JAM' because we are Joy, Amanda and Megan.*

**For how long have you volunteered at Catherine House?**

*About 18 years.*

**How often do you volunteer?**

*We volunteer most Wednesdays to sort all the items which have generously been donated, and to pack toiletry orders for the clients once a month. We also volunteer as required for fundraising functions.*



*Joy with the freshly packed monthly product orders.*

**What path or decisions led you to volunteer at Catherine House?**

*Megan taught at St Aloysius College in 1988 when Catherine House was founded by the Mercy Nuns, so has been a supporter of this great organisation since its inception.*

*Amanda and Joy are also teachers and so we come from a background of giving back and offering support. We are all retired and used to walk together for fitness, so now we work together for community.*



*Amanda, Joy and Megan purchasing underwear from funds raised through the annual 5AA Undie Drive.*

**What would you do on a normal day volunteering at Catherine House?**

We start by greeting and interacting with the lovely front office staff and then meet Amy who gives us our to do list for the morning. Having worked together for so long, we divide into our area of expertise, sorting and categorising and finding space for all the many donations, including everything from deodorant and personal hygiene items to cutlery and household items.

The clients receive a monthly Product Order Form, so we find the requested items and pack them into beautiful quilted bags which have been donated. When clients move from Catherine House to independent living, we pack bedding, kitchen and cleaning items for the Moving On Pack they receive to help them make a new home. It's lovely to be able to provide new items such as quilts and crockery for clients to start independent living.

From time to time we help organise the storage shed, the art and craft shed, and the gardening shed.

**Can you tell me a highlight of when you were volunteering? Maybe a really happy or special moment?**

We love being able to provide clients with something special, like perfume, for their birthday. We often receive sample products from generous donors such as Aesop so we love packing treat bags as a little surprise for the clients.

When we are packing bags of toiletry items for client orders, we gain particular pleasure when we are able to locate special request items, such as products for sensitive skin, from our donation supply.

A few years ago we were part of a group who volunteered to wrap Christmas gifts in the Mall for shoppers who would donate to Catherine House for that service. It was wonderful when a former client came and proudly told us her story about the wonderful life changes that Catherine House had enabled her to make, while we wrapped the gifts she had purchased.

**Are there any areas you find difficult or challenging about volunteering? If so, what are they?**

The number of client orders we pack has increased significantly over the years, and it's a challenge knowing that there are hundreds of women still on the waiting list. When the women arrive at Catherine House with nothing at all it's really disappointing when we are unable to provide them with all the basics they require.

Practically, it's always a challenge finding space for the donations in our very small JAM shed! We have become Jenga experts!



Joy, Amanda and Megan accepting an award from Catherine House, presented by Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC.

**Have you met any interesting women that you would like to talk about?**

We don't work face to face with clients but we are often invited to special Catherine House events where we have been fortunate to hear some the client's inspirational and deeply humbling stories. We have seen women stand up at functions, in front of hundreds of people, and bravely articulate the circumstances that brought them to Catherine House.

To hear about their achievements with study and gaining work is wonderful. We have heard the talented women's singing group perform so proudly and sing so beautifully. This makes our volunteering so very rewarding.

**What improvements have you seen in the people you help?**

Both the resources and the services that Catherine House provide help enhance the women's self esteem, skills and knowledge to build the resilience and courage to embark with hope on the next chapter of their lives.

**If you could say something to all of St Dominic's, what would it be?**

We have learnt that homelessness can affect anyone, so never judge someone for their circumstances. Our message of advice is: if life has been kind to you, give back and pay it forward. The rewards of volunteering are exponential.

**FROM THE BOTTOM OF OUR HEARTS,  
THANK YOU JAM. IT WOULDN'T BE  
CATHERINE HOUSE WITHOUT YOU.**



JAM in the JAM Shed.

International Women's Day celebrates achievements of women around the world and highlights the importance of women's rights, including the work that still needs to be done to create a more equitable society.

Women consistently experience inequality in so many areas of life. Opportunities and rights for women's education, health care and employment are not equal to men's. These are some of the factors that can often then lead to poverty and homelessness. Investing in women is long overdue.

Research shows companies are considerably more profitable and efficient when they employ more women in leadership positions. Despite this, female CEOs only run 7% of the world's largest companies. In 1995, that number was 0%.

But investing in women needs to go far beyond that - the decision to invest in women should not be based on a profit margin. Investing in women means teaching all children that women and girls must be respected. It means equipping women with adequate resources and empowering them to achieve their goals.

**DESPITE THE WORK STILL AHEAD OF US, THERE IS SO MUCH TO CELEBRATE. AT CATHERINE HOUSE, WE OFTEN SAY WE WITNESS SOME OF THE MOST DIFFICULT, BUT ALSO MANY OF THE MOST INSPIRING MOMENTS IN LIFE.**

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WAS AN INSPIRATIONAL SHOWCASE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S COMMITMENT TO WOMEN.**

## GALA DINNER - CAN YOU HELP?

Our annual Gala Dinner, curated by Out in the Paddock, is just around the corner **and we need your help!**

We are looking for individuals or businesses to support our major live auction, online auction, wine wall and raffle.

### What do we need?

- Accommodation
- Dinner vouchers/experiences
- Gift baskets/gift vouchers
- Use of corporate boxes
- Sporting/event tickets
- Experiences

If you can help, please get in touch with our friendly fundraising team by emailing [fundraising@catherinehouse.org.au](mailto:fundraising@catherinehouse.org.au) or phone 8232 2282 - option 2.

All funds raised from this year's event will go towards a new and very exciting Catherine House project!

## STAY WARM WITH OUR NEW HOODIES!

Stay warm and show your support for Catherine House with one of our new hoodies. Choose between charcoal & lilac or go all out with pink on pink!



As a way to say thank you to our wonderful supporters, we are offering you \$10 off your first order. Enter the code **SUPPORTER24** at the checkout.



**SCAN THE QR CODE TO PURCHASE, OR VISIT:**  
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We are very proud to present our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), and to acknowledge the ongoing commitment from Catherine House and Housing Choices towards reconciliation. This document builds on the learnings from our inaugural Reflect RAP and sets out our actions over the next two years, with a focus on:

- developing and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and peoples;
- engaging staff and stakeholders in reconciliation;
- developing and piloting innovative strategies to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

SCAN TO READ OUR  
NEW INNOVATE RAP



Noongar woman, artist and Housing Choices resident, **Leslie Pickett**, is the artist behind the beautiful artwork featured on the cover and throughout our Innovate RAP.

## IN MY NEW HOME WITH OTHER WOMEN, I'VE FOUND EVERYTHING I EVER LONGED FOR AND MORE.

### MY STORY BEGINS IN A HOUSING TRUST UNIT IN HENLEY BEACH, WHERE I RESIDED FOR 20 YEARS, STRUGGLING WITH UNDIAGNOSED MENTAL HEALTH AND FINANCIAL ISSUES.

My family moved interstate two years after I moved into my unit. I was not connected to any services and had limited interactions with other people. I became isolated and withdrawn and felt nervous about being around others.

My memory is a bit foggy around this time of my life, but after twenty years, my physical and mental health declined, and I was admitted to the hospital. I stayed in the hospital for six months; during this time, I received a diagnosis of schizophrenia.

I felt relieved hearing the diagnosis because I always felt like something was wrong with me, but I now had an understanding of my mental health challenges. During my stay at the hospital, I was told that I could not return to my home and that I would be going to live at Catherine House.

The transition was unexpected and challenging, but I felt relief knowing that I wouldn't be alone anymore and would be relocating to a new supportive environment.

It has been ten years since I arrived at Catherine House, a service for women seeking supported accommodation. From the moment I arrived, I was greeted with warmth and compassion. I receive support to access the community, from visiting the beach to the beautiful Morialta Falls.

Engaging with the Catherine House Women's Centre provided not just a space for art, but also connection and opportunity. Reflecting on my journey, I can't help but wonder how different things might have been with earlier access to mental health support and intervention.

Over the years, my perception of "home" has changed. When I was younger, securing my own home in the community seemed like the goal, an image of living alone. However, now in my 50s, I see home in a different light, among a community of women, sharing our lives in a communal setting. In Catherine House, I've found everything I ever longed for in a home and more.

**-CATHERINE HOUSE CLIENT**

# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

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