

Connections

Your Christmas Supporter Newsletter · December 2020



“Christmas last year, when we were all together again, the kids woke up in my house and the level of excitement on their faces was better than all the presents under the tree.”

- Emma, mother of two

Emma's Story

Emma has rebuilt her life and her family after experiencing years of domestic violence and drug use, which led her to lose custody of her children. Her story of courage and resilience is testament to her commitment as a mother to beat her addiction and reunite with her children.

Emma's story is shared here with her permission.

“Because I'd had abuse for so long, it became normal to me. He didn't like the fact I had a lot of friends, there'd be this level of jealousy that became pretty deadly. If stuff started to fall apart or he hit me in front of the kids, I'd ring someone to come over with me because I knew it was going to end in tragedy.

It's hard to see the violence when you're in it. Because you had love for that person, and you have children with that person, and they aren't who they were when you met, but you get stuck. So I started using a little bit of drugs to forget about the violence just for a moment. It's the scariest way to live.

The level of shame I feel now for the life I put my children through is absolute. When you're so entrenched in addiction and it's all you know, you just keep going. I don't know how I lived such a terrible existence for 17 years. I just went through the motions.

I'm nearly two years sober. It's taken a long time to be proud of that because I was so ashamed of everything that happened. When my two girls were removed, I stopped using drugs that day.

Having nobody and feeling that level of grief and shame and anger and disappointment and hurt and broken heartedness, and having to reflect on all this stuff to get myself better, to get myself into a position to get my kids back – it was beyond hard work. It was the fight of my life.

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Emma's cover story continued...

"Linking in with Samaritans was the best thing I ever did. The day I got my girls back, you couldn't wipe the smile off my face.

One of my biggest strengths after being sober for this long would be the positive influence I can have on someone else. After living the life I've lived, and surviving it, the most invaluable thing I can pass on is to mentor people through addiction. To say to them that they can get better, because I got better.

I didn't know that I could be the person that I am today. I didn't think I had it in me. I didn't think life could be good. I heard stories of other people doing it but I thought I was too far gone.

But I did it and I'm so proud.

Christmas last year, when we were all together again, the girls woke up in my house and the level of excitement on their faces was better than all the presents under the tree.

No one really wants to ask for help, people can judge you, but Samaritans has never judged me. Nothing but arms open. You can't help but think highly of these people."

*If this story has raised concerns for you, support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, through Lifeline on 13 11 14, or the National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling service 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732, or Family Drug Support on 1300 368 186. *A stock image and alias name has been used to protect the author's privacy.*

From our disability services: David's sky-high experience

David lives independently and Samaritans supports him with some aspects of his daily life. Recently he spoke with us about his Samaritans support and a special part of last Christmas.

"The weekend before last Christmas Samaritans drove me up to the airport and I went skydiving. Oh, it was a rush. I knew what to expect because I've seen it before. But they did admit at the airport that I was the first blind man that they've had skydiving. I tandem jumped, the bloke behind me controlled the parachute. We jumped out of the plane at 3000 feet and in 40 seconds we'd travelled 10km and landed on the beach. These are things you won't forget."





Generosity from our youngest donors

Recently we were very grateful to receive a donation from year 1 class at Bishop Tyrrell Anglican College who collected goods for people less fortunate in their community.

The year 1 students collectively decided that for their Global Citizens Project they wanted to help people experiencing homelessness. Samaritans received food and toiletries to distribute throughout our region to people in need.

A big thank you to Bishop Tyrrell Anglican College, and to all of the schools, parishes, community groups and individuals who have generously donated in 2020.

From our Executive

Sharing goodwill among all people

It is easy to forget the positive difference that the way of Jesus has had on billions of lives. We've grown accustomed to it over decades and centuries. Yet countries and communities haven't always presumed the importance of kindness and generosity towards all people. It was a way of living that changed because of Jesus' life and teaching.

For the last 2000 years, people across the globe have been inspired by Jesus' way of love and compassion. They've recognised the powerful difference that comes from feeding the hungry, providing shelter for the homeless, and supporting people in need. People were important to Jesus. He found ways of caring for them and he encouraged others to do the same. He encouraged everyone to pursue pathways that promoted justice and mercy for all people.

The Anglican Church follows the way of Jesus. Across the world it is committed to responding to human need through loving service. It works hard to challenge the unjust structures of society. Locally, we do this through *Samaritans*.

This Christmas, we invite you to join this work - to share good will among all people. You can do this by making a donation to help make Christmas better for the people in our region who are struggling! You can do this by writing to your local member of Federal parliament encouraging them to make sure that Jobkeeper is a fair system. By working together, we can make a difference!

With Christmas blessing,

+Peter

President of Samaritans

Anglican Bishop of Newcastle



Samaritans at Christmas

This year, Christmas feels that little bit more special. Everyone has been impacted by the events of 2020 in one way or another. Samaritans is honoured to be able to continue our special Christmas assistance to locals in need at the end of what has been a year of challenging times.

Samaritans Christmas Toy Warehouse, Christmas Day lunches and extra Christmas assistance is all possible thanks to the generous communities we work within.

Thank you to the generous donors, sponsors and volunteers for helping us to continue to spread joy and hope to hundreds of families this Christmas.

Already donated? Thank you!

If you haven't yet donated to the Samaritans Christmas Appeal, it's not too late.



Three ways to donate

1

Mail this form back to us

2

samaritans.org.au/donate

3

1300 656 336

I would like to donate

☐ \$50☐ \$100☐ \$150☐ My choice of \$

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible, your receipt will be mailed to you.

My details

Name: Address: Phone: Email:

My payment details

☐ Paying by credit card - or -☐ Paying by cheque/money order (payable to Samaritans Foundation)Card type: ☐ Visa ☐ MastercardName on card: Card number: Card expiry: / (MM/YY)

I/we hereby authorise Samaritans to debit the selected credit card with the amount specified.

Your signature:

Extra ways to help

☐ I would like to become a monthly supporter and give to people in need regularly throughout the year. Please charge the listed credit card \$ each month.

I would like information on:

☐ Leaving a gift in my will☐ Volunteering☐ Donating food and goods

Mail this form to

PO Box 366
Hunter Region Mail Centre
NSW 2310

SAMARITANS FOUNDATION ABN 38 574 464 524

Samaritans is one of the largest regional welfare organisations in Australia but is truly local to your region. As the welfare arm of the Anglican Church, we deliver over 100 programs and community services to thousands of individuals and families each year.

Samaritans would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal Australia.

1800 270 738

For information visit
samaritans.org.au

Anglican
Church Newcastle

Samaritans