# CaritasNews **CHANGE STARTS WITH YOU**

#159 | AUTUMN 2020

# GLOBAL COMMUNIT

### NOW MORE THAN EVER

Shirley: Overcoming discrimination in the Philippines

Barry: A story of true strength and resilience

**Caritas Australia in the** community: Together for peace, justice and sustainable development





# **THANK YOU**

In times of a global health crisis, we cannot underestimate the collective strength of working together and supporting each other. Project **Compassion is a powerful demonstration** of faith in action across our nation. Let's Go Further, Together.

Through your generosity, Caritas Australia supports vulnerable communities around the globe where the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) represents a growing risk on top of their already significant challenges.

Yet, the commitment of our Australian supporters continues to inspire us daily. I was recently at a school in Goulburn, NSW, and after I spoke about Project Compassion, a year nine boy came up to give me his pocket money for the week.

Later that day at a primary school, another little boy came to give some money he had found on the footpath to support those in need.

I'm humbled and inspired by the generosity of our supporters, young and old, across Australia during Project Compassion and the difference that it makes in changing lives globally.

I hope you are also inspired by the six dynamic stories of change we are sharing in this special edition of our Caritas News. These stories are examples of the difference you're making to those most at risk in times of hardship. They are proof that when we work together, we can create a better world for all of us.

Thank you once again for your support during Project Compassion. This Lent, let's Go Further, Together.



With gratitude,

Kirsty Laberton

**Kirsty Robertson Chief Executive Officer Caritas Australia** 

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#### Writer/Editor: Daniel Nour

Design: Three Blocks Left All photos Caritas Australia unless otherwise stated. Cover: Shirley and two of her children outside their home before leaving for the local school which is close to their Manide community in Camarines Norte, Philippines Photo: Richard Wainwright, Caritas Australia

## CATHOLIC **SOCIAL TEACHING** PRINCIPLES

Look out for the CST icons throughout this edition.



**Dignity of** the Human Person





The Common Good

# CARITAS **IN THE LOOP**





Shirley with her community in the Philippines. Photo: Richard Wainwright,

Caritas Australia

## **GOING FURTHER TOGETHER**

This year Project Compassion invites us all to work together in support of the world's most vulnerable by putting community, love, compassion and faith into action.

Together we can help shape a better future for all because when we Go Further, Together in Solidarity the whole world thrives. Visit lent.caritas.org.au today.

**CHANGING LIVES IN THE PHILIPPINES** 

Passionate about community development, Florida Rafer has been working with vulnerable communities in the Philippines for more than 20 years.

Florida is the Program Officer for Caritas Australia's partner, Socio Pastoral Action Center Foundation Inc. (SPACFI) in the Philippines. With your support, Caritas Australia's work strengthens the capacity of indigenous people to lead lives of dignity, grow in self-esteem and attain sustainable livelihoods.

This year, as a Project Compassion speaker, Florida travelled the country, sharing highlights from her 20 years in partnership with

Caritas Australia and in community self-empowerment programs.

Thank you, Florida for sharing your inspiring story!

> Read more about Florida's work on page 6.

## **PROJECT COMPASSION ALL OVER AUSTRALIA**

For Project Compassion in 2020, Shrove Tuesday (February 25th) events all over the country have ignited the spirit of Going Further, Together. Here are just a few events held during the first week of Lent:

In Sydney, a school's launch at St Mary's Cathedral forecourt, brought students together to enjoy freshly made pancakes and was followed by a mass celebrated by Bishop Terry Brady.

In Brisbane, Project Compassion was launched at St Stephen's Cathedral with a Liturgy of the Word by Bishop Coleridge; attended by 600 teachers and students.

In Melbourne, the Project Compassion launch was hosted by Catholic Regional College (CRC) Caroline Springs. Archbishop Peter A. Comensoli, dignitaries, community members from the Filipino community and 200 school students and teachers also joined in the event.

In the wake of the nation-wide Australian bushfires which took over 30 lives, destroyed over 2,000 homes and killed millions of animals, our prayers are with the communities affected as they chart a path to recovery.





Subsidiarity and Participation









# HAVE YOUR SAY

### **TO:** CARITAS AUSTRALIA **FROM: ADAM, 36, Q QUEENSLAND**

As a Catholic father and husband, working long hours outdoors to provide for my family each day can make it difficult to find time to fulfil other important requirements of living the faith.

Supporting Caritas Australia financially is one real and practical way to answer Christ's call.

#### TO: ADAM FROM: CARITAS AUSTRALIA

Adam, it's only your support which enables this life-enhancing work. Thank you for your generosity and your kindness.

### TO: CARITAS AUSTRALIA FROM: PETER, 76, **Q** SYDNEY

Dear Caritas Australia,

I read, with interest your story in the Summer 2019 edition of Caritas News, entitled Recovery in Jordan on 9th anniversary of the Syrian Conflict. I was humbled by the resilience of Syrian communities in the face of great challenges and was reminded of the importance of education. The poor and the vulnerable are empowered by Caritas Australia and this is a worthy ideal.

I hold human dignity throughout the world as a core belief and Caritas Australia exemplifies this with its programs, assisting the poor and needy in many countries, where people are denied justice, with regards to accessing even basic goods and services.

### TO: PETER FROM: CARITAS AUSTRALIA

#### Dear Peter,

We are so pleased to hear that Majda's story of recovery resonated with you. Like you, at Caritas Australia, we know that education is the way to lift people out of difficult circumstances and this is why it is a key component of many of our international programs.

### TO: CARITAS AUSTRALIA FROM: COL, 72 **VICTORIA**

I became a Caritas Australia donor over 25 years ago out of a sense of wanting to do something positive. During my lifetime, I've had the opportunity to observe incredible poverty in some parts of the world. I'm comforted by the fact that through Caritas I can actually make a difference.

The shining light for me is how Caritas Australia operates through partnerships enabling local people to help themselves. It's not only the best way to transform lives but also the most economically efficient. The way Caritas transforms lives with minimal overheads, utilising the church network and a community of volunteers, is nothing short of remarkable.

#### TO: COL FROM: CARITAS AUSTRALIA

### Col,

Thank you for your belief in the importance of our work. Caritas Australia has one of the lowest administration costs in the Charity sector.

Total administration, including fundraising ratio (as a percentage of total income), has averaged around 10% over the past 5 years, one of the lowest in the sector.

Additionally, Caritas Australia works with existing local overseas partner organisations to maximise its impact and its efficiency.



We would love to hear from you! Have your say published here by writing a letter to questions@caritas.org.au or by calling 1800 024 413.

# shirley, philippines, week t **GOING FURTHER IO TACKLE CLASS IO TACKLE CLASS IOSCRIMINATION**



In the Philippines, life is tough for the country's 17 million Manide, an indigenous community who face discrimination and displacement from ancestral lands. →

> Shirley is pictured walking through her Manide community whilst conducting home health visits in Camarines Norte, Philippines. Photo: Richard Wainwright, Caritas Australia.

> > CARITAS NEWS -

# Shirley, 36, is an indigenous Manide woman living in a remote province of the Philippines.

Mother of four and the sole breadwinner of the family, as her husband is sick, Shirley was struggling to support the whole family and keep her children in school.

ndigenous minorities in the Philippines face regular discrimination and disadvantage, limiting their access to education, employment and healthcare. Thanks to Caritas Australia's supporters, Shirley has been able to transform her life. She is now leading her community to take a stand against discrimination, improve health and education, and pave the way for a better future.

Unequal access to health services means that many indigenous children and families cannot access basic medical care. Preventable diseases, such as tuberculosis, dengue fever and measles are common among their community, and there is a high maternal and newborn mortality rate.

With Caritas Australia's support, Shirley trained to become a Tribal Health Care Worker and a leader in her community. She has learnt to supplement her income and is able to feed her family. The program has also helped Shirley's children with school fees, uniforms and supplies.

"I became the voice of my tribe to have their needs heard," Shirley says. "As a trained health worker, I am confident to talk, to mingle with non-indigenous people, even with government employees."

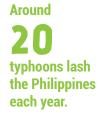
Shirley says there's still a long way to go to fight for better employment opportunities for the Manide tribe and to reduce discrimination, but that by working together they'll get there.

Thank you for your support which is life-saving for people experiencing poverty and oppression. This Lent, you can help more people like Shirley gain confidence and respect within their community and help improve the conditions of indigenous people around the world. Let's Go Further, Together. +

# **CHALLENGES IN THE PHILIPPINES:**

Around **2.8** million children in the Philippines do not go to school.





# STAFF PROFILE

# (ATE PIDE)

I've been working with **Caritas Australia for** almost 14 years and with Socio Pastoral Action **Center Foundation Inc.** (SPACFI) in the Diocese of Daet for 24 years. I'm inspired by Caritas Australia's support for those most marginalised in the Philippines and particularly the indigenous people, who are discriminated against and are much less fortunate than others.

As far back as 2006 we were providing shelter, access to water, livelihoods (support) and also the education of the children who are now encouraged to have their schooling in their own communities.

There are good signs the lives of many have changed, particularly the next generation of the indigenous people!







PHANY, CAMBODIA, WEEK 2 **GOING FURTHER JOBUILDA BUILDA** 

Phany with her husband Seiha and daughter Phally at their home in Pursat District, Western Cambodia.

Photo: Richard Wainwright, Caritas Australia.

# Phany, 27, lives in a village in western Cambodia.

Struggling to earn a living as a rice farmer, she was forced to leave her daughter behind in the village, to take up construction work in the city.

"We weren't earning much income, our meals lacked nutrition," Phany says.

### "We had no technical skills in vegetable and animal raising, I just farmed in the traditional way. We had debt with a high interest rate."

When Phany's daughter was two, Phany and her husband had to leave her with family in the village to find construction work in Cambodia's capital city, Phnom Penh. For five years, Phany worked long hours, carrying heavy lime and bricks. Conditions were dangerous, wages were low, and she was often paid late. But it was the only way she could provide for her daughter.

# <sup>Over</sup> 70 percent

of Cambodia's population live in rural communities – and farming families living in poverty are the most food insecure. 13 percent of Cambodians live below the poverty line, while 35 out of every 1,000 babies die due to malnutrition.

Then in 2016, Phany joined a Caritas Australia supported program, learning more productive farming and irrigation techniques. Her community learned to work together for better water management, to combat drought.

The Caritas Australia supported 'Upholding Community Dignity Together' program enables communities to reap more from their vegetable crops and to conserve water for drier periods. Phany herself also learnt how to grow vegetables and raise chickens and ducks.

Phany's family is now able to afford a small house, they have enough food and clothes and can afford to send their daughter to school. Phany has become a role model for other farmers, and her whole community is benefitting.

"I am proud that I was a farmer who had no skills and now I can earn and improve my living, share my knowledge and also improve solidarity in the family and amongst our neighbours," Phany says.

"I live better than before, I'm not as tired. I can earn and live in the village, I don't need to go to city to find job."

**LEARN MORE** about Phany's challenge as a woman living in rural Cambodia by watching a short film about her experience at www.bit.ly/3bmx26L With your help, mothers like Phany can continue to uplift their communities and provide food for their families. A brighter future for women, men and their families can start today. Let's Go Further, Together. +



Phany feeds her chickens at her home in Pursat District, Western Cambodia. Photo: Richard Wainwright, Caritas Australia.



- I found it inspiring that w have to fulfil the duties which God had given us and to respect and to be kind to everyone."
- Luke, Year seven,
   St Paul's College
   Greystanes, Sydney.



# BARRY, AUSTRALIA, WEEK 3 GOING FURTHER TO HEAL THE HURT

Father of four, Barry embodies resilience and strength. Growing up in a tough environment, he had to look inside himself to make the right choices for himself and his family.



A 2018 evaluation of the Red Dust Healing program demonstrated that it improved participants ability to express deep seated emotions, to make better choices and consequently changes in their lives.

As part of the Red Dust Healing program, Barry has been empowered to become a trainer, supporting others in their healing journey. Photo: Richard Wainwright, Caritas Australia.

Barry, a Gamilaroi man originally from western NSW, remembers his early years as a time of enormous hardship and was primarily raised by his grandparents.

"My mother went through a tough period in her life. I sort of moved around a lot as a young boy," Barry says. "I had a lot of bad periods and I then lost my younger brother in a car accident."

Barry became a father in his late teens and was suddenly faced with responsibilities for which he wasn't ready.

He started drinking heavily, attempting to cope with the stresses he was under.

Thankfully Barry, and others like him, were able to take part in Red Dust Healing – a cultural healing program supported by Caritas Australia, which encourages participants to examine their own personal hurt and allows them to heal from within. The program addresses rejection and hurt from society through discrimination and abuse as well as family and personal relationships.

"I don't think I'd be where I am today without the program," Barry says. "It's taught me to deal with my problems and addictions. I can't change what I've lived through, I can just make myself a better person today."

Your support is empowering men like Barry to overcome the pain of past hurt and to make better choices and consequently changes in their lives. Let's Go Further, Together. #



Barry plays with his daughter (7) in Bateman's Bay, Australia. Barry currently lives in Bateman's Bay. Photos: Richard Wainwright, Caritas Australia.

"It's a cultural healing program written from an indigenous perspective, but it is for everyone no matter what your background is."

Tom Powell,
 Red Dust Healing Founder

# SAKUN, INDIA, WEEK 4 **GOING FURTHER TO OVERCOME THE BARRIERS OF DISABILITY**

Thirty-two-year-old Sakun lives in a village in central-east India. She developed polio as a child and has difficulty walking.

Once isolated in her community and unable to earn a living, Sakun now participates in village decision-making, her progress motivating other community members to reach for their goals. Photo: Patrick Hansda, Caritas India.

ntil now Sakun, an indigenous Gond woman, has been isolated in her community, unable to earn a livelihood and without knowledge of government schemes that could help her.

Sakun lives with her sister in a rural area of Chhattisgarh, India's poorest state. Home to 26 million people, with 10 million living in poverty.

Life is hard in this region, and even harder for the state's indigenous people. Sakun belongs to the Gond tribal community which is amongst India's officially designated Scheduled Castes and Tribes. They face higher poverty rates than other parts of India. "Being physically challenged, I was incapable of doing any kind of work. I felt disregarded in my community," Sakun said.

In 2018, Sakun joined a Caritas Australia-funded program, which is implemented by Caritas India and its local partner, Samarthan. The program aims to improve the incomes of vulnerable farmers and the most marginalised people in the community, including women and people living with disabilities. It also focuses on strengthening traditional village leadership to improve access to government entitlements.

Now, Sakun feels empowered and able to make the best choices for her wellbeing. "I can move around my village, visit community members and talk to them, I feel happy and my social life and network has improved," Sakun said.

**35,000** people have benefited from the program so far with agricultural innovations such as collective farming techniques.

With your support, Caritas Australia can help uplift more vulnerable communities, including people living with disabilities and indigenous peoples around the world. Let's Go Further, Together. +



# TAWONGA, MALAWI, WEEK 5 GOING FURTHER TO OVERCOME UNJUST STRUCTURES

Tawonga was born with a disability and walks with the aid of crutches. She often had to miss school because she was too sick from hunger.

n Malawi, a country where an estimated 2.4% of youth are living with a disability, Caritas Australia is working alongside local communities to improve their outcomes.

Tawonga is a 10-year-old girl pursuing her dreams with her community's support. She was born with one weaker leg and walks with the aid of crutches. For most of her life, she has faced discrimination and challenges because of her disability.

The family cut back on their meals, sometimes going without food for four days and they were excluded from food distributions, as community members favoured more vocal and better-connected households. "People living with disabilities were not regarded as important and they thought they did not deserve such things," Tawonga's mother, Agnes says. "We were considered as people who cannot contribute anything to the development of the community."

Tawonga was often sick due to hunger, a lack of safe drinking water and poor sanitation.

"Sometimes we had one meal per day. And when we are hungry, we do not attend classes," Tawonga says.

In 2016, Tawonga's parents heard about the A+ program, run by Caritas Australia's partner, Catholic Development Commission in Malawi (CADECOM). They learnt irrigation farming and were given fertiliser and high-yield seeds which almost tripled crop production. The program has also helped spread greater acceptance of Tawonga's disability.

### "I would like to thank the people of Australia. Your support has brought a positive change in my family and community," Tawonga said.

Thanks to your support, Tawonga can now continue her education and her family can better provide for her. Let's Go Further, Together. \*



With your help, this transformational program can continue to empower vulnerable women, men and children, and strengthen the communities around them. Photos: Pilirani Chimombo.

Although Malawi's food security has improved, in a country of 19 million people, 6 million still need food aid. (UN)

# DOMINIC, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, WEEK 6 GOING FURTHER TO END FAMILY VIOLENCE

Caritas Australia and its PNG partners are helping communities turn challenging life circumstances and relationships into more positive and harmonious ones with their Centre of Hope. Photo: Richard Wainwright, Caritas Australia.

Dominic, 47, is a former teacher and father of six living in Madang province on the north coast of mainland Papua New Guinea with his wife and children. Two of his children live on their high school campus where the costs are high and Dominic is struggling to afford their expenses.

Forty percent of the PNG population are living below the poverty line and there is a high level of domestic violence.

Dominic faced enormous challenges in getting an education himself. Intent on completing his diploma in teaching, Dominic moved to Port Moresby and looked for work to complete his education. With fortitude Dominic eventually qualified as a high school teacher.

In 2016, Dominic was invited to join PNG's Safe House program, Centre of Hope, soon after turning his difficult life circumstances around. The centre provides gender-based violence prevention training, counselling services and safe accommodation for women and children survivors of violence. It also provides support for income-generating projects and life skills for young people.

Dominic and his wife, Christophylda, took part in the "Family Anonymous" program which helps people tell their stories confidentially, supporting them to transform their behaviour.

"After entering the Caritas Australia program, I have actually changed some of my bad attitudes. It has really opened my mind and heart to see where my weaknesses are and I'm trying to improve," Dominic says. You can support initiatives like the Safe House project and help bring greater harmony to families in Papua New Guinea. Let's Go Further, Together. +

PNG is one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a woman or girl, with an estimated

70 percent

of women experiencing rape or assault in their lifetime.



Dominic took part in gender-based violence prevention training, with Caritas Australia's support. Photo: Autu Autu.

# **OUR COMMUNITY**



Sue Lomi with Maitland/Newcastle Parish Liaison Patricia Banister and Caritas Australia's Project Compassion speaker, Florida Rafer.

# THANK YOU, SUE!

Sue Lomi is Caritas Australia's Community Participation Leader and Diocesan Director for Sydney and has worked with our Community Engagement team for six months. In that time, she has met with many school and parish communities to promote and highlight the work of Caritas Australia.

As one of the newest members of the Caritas Australia family, Sue spoke of the way that her personal experiences have affected her work.

"From a young age my migrant parents and grandparents from the Pacific Islands instilled in us a love for the most marginalised, no matter how jarring it was for me as a pre-teen to sit next to the homeless people mum and dad always picked up off the streets to share a meal with before we drove them to a nearby homeless shelter," Sue says.

To live like Christ in a concrete way is important for me. I am passionate about serving the vulnerable globally, not only overseas but here in our office, at home, in my community - everywhere. I am happy to add my voice to the mission of Caritas Australia."

Thank you Sue, for your work to 'End Poverty, Promote Justice and Uphold Dignity' with Caritas Australia. #

"I am passionate about serving the most marginalised, not only overseas but here in our office, at home, in my community - everywhere."

– Sue Lomi

## WALKING IN SOLIDARITY IN THE DIOCESE OF SANDHURST

Raising awareness and funds through solidarity is the aim of this annual event for year seven students at Catholic College Wodonga.

All 220 students participated in Caritas Ks, a sponsored walk, where each student carried buckets to fill at a nearby lake then on to another park where they watered newly planted trees and finally back to school, a five km round trip.

Back at school, a debrief and interactive presentation expanded student's knowledge. Learning that the average distance women and girls in some countries in Africa and Asia walk to collect water is six kms, Isobel said,

## "I just don't know how they do that every day".

Thank you Diocese of Sandhurst and Catholic College Wodonga for **Going Further, Together this** Lent. <del>‡</del>



For other exciting school and parish fundraising ideas visit www.lent.caritas.org.au

# A HOW TO GUIDE FOR CARITAS KS



### STEP 1

REGISTER TO HOST A CARITAS KS EVENT WITH YOUR SCHOOL, OR AS A FAMILY ACTIVITY IF YOU HAVE TO STAY AT HOME.

### STEP 2





RUN YOUR FUNDRAISER ONLINE, INDOORS OR OUTDOORS. MAYBE YOUR FAMILY CAN CREATE A STEP GOAL FOR A DAY IN THE HOUSE?



STEP 4

STEP 3

YOU DID IT! SHARE YOUR PICS ON YOUR PAGE WITH THE HASHTAG #PROJECTCOMPASSION AND INSPIRE OTHERS.

## SHALOM COLLEGE'S COLOURFUL FOUR-LEGGED FRIEND

Shalom College in Bundaberg, Queensland is turning techni-colour for Project Compassion through their annual colour run.

One of this year's star runners is Milo the dog: the school's community's canine companion, who will wag his way to the finish line. For teacher Claire Stallard, the race is an inspiring demonstration of the student's commitment to social justice work.

"We began Shalom Colour Fun as an annual event in 2014 as a fun and colourful new way to raise for Project Compassion," Claire said.

Shalom has a very long tradition of supporting Caritas Australia's Lenten Appeal and this was a new way to raise awareness, come together, raise some money and have lots of fun doing it.

As well as being immersed in techni-colour as part of the race, the students have raised over \$26,000 for Caritas Australia's programs and fundraising works and they look forward to adding to that total at this year's event.

Shalom means peace and Shalom College has planted seeds of peace all over the world, by partnering with Caritas Australia.

Thank you for helping us to **Go Further**, **Together**, Shalom College.

Milo the dog is an active runner in Shalom College, Bundaberg's annual Project Compassion running event. Photo: Shalom College.







Students turn techni-colour at Shalom College, Bundaberg. Photos: Shalom College.

 MIX logo

 Image: Second Secon



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Caritas Australia is a proud member of CAN, a group of eleven Church-based overseas aid and development agencies committed to empowering people and providing avenues for them to overcome injustice and poverty.

### FOR THE LATEST UPDATES HEAD TO:



www.caritas.org.au

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A brighter future for communities experiencing poverty and discrimination can start today.

## Let's Go Further, Together!

Please give generously today.



## YES, I WILL HELP WITH A GIFT TODAY!

Below are some examples of how your donation can help:

**\$45** can buy vegetable seeds for home gardening to increase food nutrition and provide income for a rural family.

- $\square$  \$125 can provide beekeeping training to young people, giving them a potential income source and a brighter future.
- **\$215** can provide vulnerable communities experiencing water and food scarcity with a borehole, giving them access to water.

My choice of: \$\_

## **YES, I WILL BECOME A MONTHLY SUPPORTER:**

I would like to provide ongoing monthly support as part of the 'Caritas Neighbours' program:

			OR My choice of: \$	per month
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### **MY PAYMENT DETAILS**

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Card number: / / / /			account identified below on the 15th of each month. Acting on my written instructions the user may, by prior arrangement and advice to me, vary the amount for future debits.	
Expiry date:	_/			
Name on card:			Account name:	
Signature.			BSB: Account no	
Date: /			Signature:	
			Date: / /	
	SFER to Caritas Australia –		Before payments commence, Caritas Australia will provide you with a full Service Agreement and confirmation of your details regarding this arrangement. Payments will be deducted on the	

15th of the month or the next normal business day.

### **MY CONTACT DETAILS**

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Title: Name:	Phone:						
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I would like my receipt sent to my email address to help save administration costs and make sure more of my donations goes where it is needed most. I would like to receive information about leaving a Gift in my Will to Caritas Australia. Please tick here if you do NOT want to receive Caritas News in the future.							
onations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible.	DD						

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