

Compassion Heroes

BALLARAT

NOVEMBER 2022



Compassionate Heroes Ballarat

A collaborative project between
Compassionate Ballarat and Loreto College Ballarat

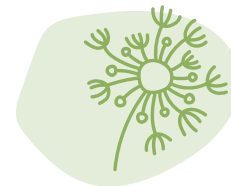


November 2022

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Preface

Compassion has been defined as the willingness to see the humanity and suffering in others, including those not like us, with a preparedness to take action to heal that suffering. Compassion science is examining what motivates humans to care for one another, and how this positive motivation can be extended to improve the whole of humankind.

As part of the Loreto College year 12 religious education curriculum, Compassionate Ballarat has again collaborated with three year 12 students, Ella, Davin and Hailey to compile stories of compassionate action initiated by primary and secondary school students across Ballarat. These Loreto students gathered poignant stories from their peers, who have actively responded to suffering they have encountered.

The stories in this book have been collected to share across our city and to other cities across Australia and the world via the global Charter for Compassion.

The new science of compassion tells us that compassionate action supports us in being helpful rather than harmful, and these stories provide a community-wide story of the ways in which compassion is being demonstrated in Ballarat by this City's future leaders.

Introduction

We are Ella, Davin and Hailey, three Year 12 students at Loreto College Ballarat. Through our RE class, we were given the opportunity to give back to the community in hope to make a difference to those in the Ballarat region.

We chose to take part in creating this book alongside Compassionate Ballarat to share inspiring stories and replicate the success seen in the 2021 'Compassion Heroes' eBook from Eliza and Chloe.

We believe that sharing stories of kindness is so important in creating a positive impact in the Ballarat community, and in the world. Following the ongoing Covid-19 related challenges many people in our Ballarat community faced, we believe it is important to celebrate acts of compassion. The stories collated in the following book highlight that every act of compassion, no matter how small can have a profound impact on the lives of others. We hope that these stories will encourage people to follow the lead of the Ballarat students and demonstrate kindness. We appreciate the opportunity to work with Compassionate Ballarat and hope readers can find the same inspiration in these stories.



A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees - Amelia Earheart.

Each act of compassion, big or small is important, and this is what we want this book to portray.

November 2022



The Importance of Stories

We are at heart social beings, our lives enhanced by touch and togetherness.

© Dr Karen Spannon

At birth we are welcomed into the arms of our parents, and as children we often hold hands with friends. We greet those we care about with a hug, and our hands and arms are lifelong instruments of expression: a hand on the arm for concern, a finger to the lips for silence, a traditional gesture of blessing in a liturgical setting. Touch is the means by which we carry out the physical work to support families and loved ones. And it is this primary need and function that has been deeply affected by the current pandemic with its necessary precautions of masks and social distancing.

However, as well as social beings, we are also innovative. The widespread adoption of Zoom as a means of contact and collaboration has been extraordinary; people coming together on screen for work, teaching and social purposes. In the thick of the pandemic people physically donned a mask, social distanced and continued on in the safest manner

possible. These may seem everyday occurrences to us now, and some naysayers say these measures kept people apart. And, it is true, the loneliness occasioned by the pandemic cannot be underestimated. But look closely and you will see the human need for connection at work, measures taken as a means of maintaining our relations with others. During the lockdowns we called on our innate kindness and compassion, and relied on letters, cards, and technological means in attempts to mitigate distress. Paradoxically, the serious nature of the pandemic opened our eyes more fully to those around us.

The pandemic also reconnected many of us with our immediate environment. At first it was chalked messages of encouragement on concrete and teddy bears and stuffed toys in windows, but then people turned to their own backyards and focused on the beauty of nature, some even

developing a passion for gardening. For some, the beauty of Spring blossom was seen fully for the first time. Others went straight to the kitchen; a metaphor for the early days of the pandemic could be sour-dough bread!

Much of our modern life is lived in constant movement, our focus on end goals, the next project, and the next entertainment. The pandemic tipped us into an unpredictable world with new and challenging choices. Our medical experts developed vaccines and labored in uncomfortable, protective gear for all our benefits. With varying degrees of acceptance and success, measures were put in place in attempts to keep us safe.

The initial concern of whether or not to be vaccinated quickly changed as we realized that lives, including our own, depended on them. Vaccination became a social responsibility, a means by which we protected the vulnerable. Some balked, citing attacks on personal freedom, but others looked inwards instead of outwards for clues as how best to navigate this new territory, and found that when we made our choices kindness and compassion presented themselves as trusty guides.

The key point in all this is that humanity didn't simply give up. Finding a way through a maze or labyrinth is never easy; a series of two steps forward followed by one backwards, interspersed with periods of going around in circles and ending up where we started. But we kept going, and this in itself is no small miracle.

Kindness has always been with us. From the early seventh century BCE comes Aesop's famous quote, "No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." A few centuries later Sophocles declared that "Kindness is ever the begetter of kindness." Fast forward close to two millennia, and the Romantic poet Wordsworth writes, "The best portion of a good (sic) life is it's little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love."

The virtues of kindness and compassion ring down through the millennia as clear as a bell. We do well to listen to History. It is a good teacher.

We have choice. We can lament the events of the last three years, or we can look up and out and see how humanity has done its best. Nothing has been perfect, but we have tried and keep on trying. We have called on our compassion and forbearance to guide us through uncharted waters. We have been brave, innovative, and caring. We have seen the very best of humanity.

The writing of this book is another example of connection at work; deeds and words the way in which we move forward in a spirit of compassion. Each writer has chosen action over inaction, power over powerlessness and, most importantly, kindness over disregard. Turning a blind eye is easy but, as the Modern poet T.S. Eliot wrote, "To do the useful thing, to say the courageous thing, to contemplate the beautiful thing; that is enough for one (sic) life."

Story Telling For Wellbeing

We have each other

Emma Dallamora

PhD Candidate, Federation University Australia



When my grandparents first came to Australia, they were fleeing the effects of war. Violence, displacement, fear, loss, hardship, and uncertainty; my family was forged by these individuals who were each the victims of intense suffering.

Australia has opened its arms to refugees and migrants for generations, but now more than ever we see humans forced to move far from their homes into the uncertain embrace of other countries all over the world. On top of that, we have spent years now in a global pandemic that has completely upturned our way of life and caused us to lose loved ones along the way. The effects of climate change have also been punishing, with Australian's suffering at the hands of fires, floods, and droughts of increasing severity. Our lives today

are filled with turmoil, disruption, uncertainty, and suffering. We are sad and we are tired.

But we have each other.

To show compassion to someone is to acknowledge in that moment, that they are suffering. It requires us to incorporate their lived existence into our own, and to not look away. But it also requires more than just an affirmation or a few words of solace. To show compassion is to act; to really see and be moved to help. The reason we do this is to relieve the suffering we see, or at least to reduce the struggle for that person at the time. In these acts is the implicit acknowledgement of the value we share - that each life is

worthwhile, that no person should have to suffer. In this way, the stories you read within this book are important because they demonstrate the promise that acting with compassion towards others will improve lives without question.

Not only do we improve the circumstances and well-being of others when we lend someone a hand, but science is now showing us that we improve our own lives, starting with our health. Cardiologist Jonathan Fisher explains that our emotions affect the physical health of our heart, with difficult emotions exacerbating the risk of cardiovascular stress, heart damage and severe trauma to the heart such as cardiovascular disease and heart attack . This tells us that when a community suffers, the effects can have long-lasting ramifications for its collective health.

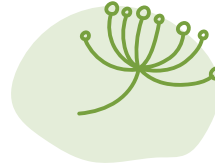
However, the news isn't all bad. Fisher also explains that maintaining positive emotions, such as gratitude, optimism, and empathy, will have the opposite effect, improving our heart health and reducing stress and anxiety. When we help others, when we show empathy and are moved to compassion and positive action, we increase our own well-being. And so even though it may seem counter-intuitive, the concept is clear that we can lessen our own anguish by reaching out to support other people. This has huge implications for how we move forward in the face of global unrest.

The stories put together in this book set an example for us that improving the lives of others near to us in our community is possible and rewarding. Whether it's reaching out to say a quick hello to a newly arrived migrant or refugee, doing some

shopping for sick or elderly neighbour, or choosing to be gracious to a friend who is depressed and unable to show up: each single act of compassion will benefit each person we show up for. It's these seemingly small acts initiate a larger impact, improving the well-being and connectedness of our community by establishing a common atmosphere of shared responsibility and lived experience.

In times like today when we are so confused and distressed about so many things, we need to have compassion foremost in our hearts. If we stop and look at our own experiences, if we think about what it's like to suffer ourselves, we can understand how valuable a helping hand can be. When my migrant grandparents began to rebuild their lives and start families of their own, it was their community that brought meaning to their lives and helped relieve the complex pain that only the effects of war can bring. If they had lacked in people who had chosen to reach out, to really look and say, 'I see you', I don't know that their lives would have been as rich and safe and meaningful as I can proudly say they have been in this beautifully diverse community that we live in.

When I read this book, I can't help but feel hope and pride in the young people of our community as we see them reaching out to those around them as if it's the most natural thing in the world. We belong together, and these young people demonstrate how we can move forward as a collective by choosing to connect compassionately and foster well-being for one another, helping us find deeper and genuine meaning in Ballarat and beyond.



Student Stories



Building Confidence in Younger Students

Noah

What suffering did you see?

The suffering that I saw was primary or secondary students unable to express themselves through conversation, to focus on the task that was put in front of them, or to complete the work to the standard of their year level.

What action did you take?

The action I took was to ensure that I committed myself to tutor and continue to help the disadvantaged students whenever I could. This included taking the trip to Melbourne fortnightly to tutor for a couple of hours, helping primary or secondary students, with homework or study.

What prompted you to take this action?

I was prompted to take action because the opportunity to help another person, someone you don't necessarily know, allowing them to gain an understanding of something that they may have never understood before, with little to no expense to me. I took this action because I know it is important to help other people, in a way that will allow them to benefit greatly.



What difference did that make to you?

The difference that this made to me is building connections/friendships between the students that I tutor. It has also allowed me to gain an understanding of how fortunate some people in this world are, and how unfortunate some are, through no fault of their own. I was also able to see how extraordinary some students are, through their skills and their abilities.

What difference did that make to those who received it?

The difference it made to those who received was they gained an understanding of something that they didn't know or struggled to comprehend before the tutoring session by gaining confidence and knowledge in the area of study.

Expressing the Suffering of Refugees in Poetry

Nivash

What suffering did you see?

I have experienced firsthand the pains and struggles of trying to find a safe place to call home as refugees, many people go through this, but often they are afraid to do so.

What action did you take?

I started expressing how I felt through poetry, hoping to create change in both my life and in the lives of others who are also in similar situations as my family.

What prompted you to take this action?

One day at school we were learning how to write poetry and our topic was "a key issue today", I chose to do mine on refugees and their struggles which enabled me to find my voice and my love for poetry.



What difference did this make to you?

To me it helped me find a voice and be a voice for others, this made me feel empowered and better than ever before.


What difference did this make to those who received it?

I helped change a lot of minds through my poems while help build awareness to the refugee struggles, which helped refugees find refuge in my poems.

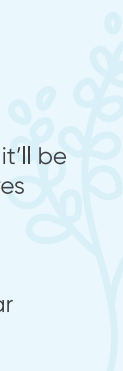


Souls *by Nivash Neil*

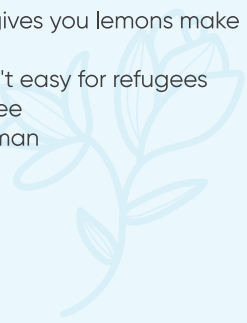
They say cities have 10 million souls
These souls have a key
Hidden on their path to find
Freedom
Education
Love
Knowledge
Safety
No one told the souls how hard it'll be
They survived the roughest waves
And the driest deserts
Just to find their key for
Freedom
Finally escaping ten years of war
Their key for safety
No more fearing
No more asking
When's the next attack
No more dead kids
Lying motionless
In fields of Destruction
On the side of the road
Let's hear your intention
What are you going to do



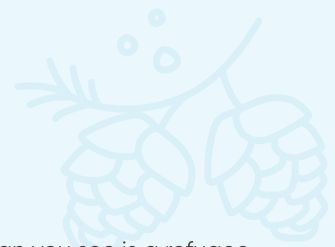
For too long we have lived to believe
There are 196 different people
Just because there are 196 different
countries
Let life be equal
This ain't illegal
We live with the gum trees
For goodness sake.



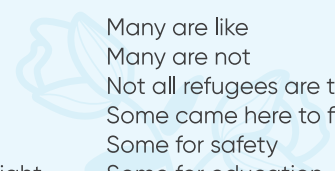
Tiananmen square
Anti-Iraq war protest
We fight for them both day and night
When they finally come
We chase then away with pitchforks
Booing
Telling them to go back
Have we forgotten we fought for them
Have we forgotten they fought for us
Do we remember the times
We fought together




When life gives you lemons make
lemonade.
But this ain't easy for refugees
Well, you see
There is a man



The man you see is a refugee
He came by boat
He said this year
I hope to vote
Without fear



Many are like
Many are not
Not all refugees are the same
Some came here to find a job
Some for safety
Some for education
But all by boat
Just because there's family
Popular in media
Without a job
Without answers
To their prayers
Doesn't mean there the only ones



Once again let's be equal
Don't get caught up in political
tantrums Come on we know better
With that in mind let's unite
And welcome refugees
The souls who flee

Making Room to Feed Families

Millie

What suffering did you see?

Post Covid-19, hundreds of local families were left battling crisis, having to make the difficult decision between keeping a roof over their heads, and the ability to put food on the table. This was, and still is a difficult time, a time that results in hundreds of school-aged children going to school hungry and lacking vital sources of nutrition to fuel their body and their needs.

What prompted you to take this action?

Coming from a fortunate family, who have thankfully never had to experience this, after becoming aware of these struggles, and ongoing financial crises of those around me, I was honestly shocked. It saddened me so much to become aware of how difficult the repercussions of the pandemic were, and still are now, two years later. As most of us are, I was obviously aware that these devastating situations existing within our society, but I was far from educated on the extremities of these conditions, or the massive population this crisis effected, especially within my school community.



What action did you take?

After learning of this, I had instantly made the decisions that I was going to do something about this. From then, I spent numerous hours researching organisations, and companies who strive to help those in financial crisis, and becoming more inspired than ever before to make a difference locally. After a few days, I came in contact with 'Uniting Care', who run a nationwide 'Food for Families' food drive, where you are supplied with all of the promotional images and information to create your own food drive fundraiser. A few emails were sent back and forth, but before you knew it, I had donation boxes scattered throughout my School, Phoenix College, and was giving presentations to students in all year levels

on what this fundraiser was, and how they could make a difference within our local community. The support I received blew me away, it was fantastic, within two days of me dispersing the boxes, and they were over-flowing, with canned and packed goods. From cereal to soup, students were bringing in bags full of non-perishable. I was over-joyed. Every day for 2 weeks, I was bringing home baskets full of food, collecting a total of roughly 4 thousand items. There was so much that I had taken up a whole bedroom in my house, simply dedicated to counting, sorting and packing these items ready to be donated, and dispersed directly to local families within our Ballarat area.

What difference did that make to you?

After the initial donation, I was flooded with emotions. The team at Uniting were blown away when we opened the boot to showcase all the boxes, having to inform them that we will be back to deliver the next load as they all hadn't fit. I felt so accomplished and proud of myself, and everyone at Phoenix. I found myself smiling for days as I knew in my heart that I had made an impact, that from this food, someone wasn't left hungry, or a family could for the first time in 2 years, sit down together and share a meal.

What difference did that make to those who received it?

As this donation was purely anonymous, leaving it in the hands of Uniting Care to distribute the items to families in

need, I am unable to make a comment on how it affected each individual directly. But hearing some of the stories of those faced with financial crisis, and the ongoing, crippling stress that comes with financial instability. Always putting the needs of your children before your own, often parents and carers tend to overlook themselves and their needs, being so overwhelmed with stress and financial pressure that it



doesn't always cross their minds. Being a common occurrence that they will often go hungry. So it is my hope that these boxes of foods can ensure that not only children can receive vital nutrients and can feed their brains at school, leaving them ready to learn, but it is my hope that this food was also enjoyed by parents, and carers. Giving them a mental reminder that it will be ok, and that support is coming and these crises won't last forever.

Ensuring No One Feels Alone in the World

Bo

What suffering did you see?

I saw people who feel unsafe in the environment that some places have made.

What prompted you to take this action?

It's important to me to make sure no one feels like they are alone in the world and should always have a group to fall back on. I work on making a safe space for my sincerity people and keep an eye out for them when they need it. Some people don't have that person they can go to and talk about the important things, and I want to be that person to whom ever it will be

What action did you take?

I spoke in sincerity a lot not as a leader but just a member. The two leaders last year saw that I would be a great fit for



the role of sincerity. After the new year started I gained the helping hand of leadership in teachers and the library who have given me the open space for the group.

What difference did that make to you?

It felt like a step in the right direction so widening the sincerity community. Sincerity being run by student was very stressful so getting the support of teachers took a lot of the stress off.

What difference did that make to those who received?

Having the teacher there helped bring in ideas and funds to have fun days at school. I feel that I made a safer and fun space for LGBTQIA+ students at Loreto!

Caring for the Special Needs of Homeless Women and Girls

Eve



What suffering did you see?

That not only do homeless women and girls not have a safe place for shelter, but also no regular access to sanitary or comfort items. This suffering is not just local, but worldwide.

What prompted you to take this action?

For a personal inquiry at school, I wanted to research and learn more about how I could support homeless people, particularly during Covid and winter. My initial idea was to create first aid kits for the homeless, but through research,

I found that homeless women and girls didn't have regular access to sanitary items. I didn't think that this was fair for homeless women to pay for items, that was out of their control.

What action did you take?

I created a fundraising page for Share the Dignity and collected approx. \$1200 of money that they will use to buy products to create Period Packs to share around Australia. I also collected donations of sanitary items at school, collecting nearly 200 items which I will be delivering to the Soup Bus to hand out to women and girls in need. The link is: <https://www.sharethedignity.org.au/fundraisers/blakecurran/eve--s-fundraiser-to-share-the-dignity-with-homeless-women->

What difference did that make to you?

It made me realise how much I can help people in need than just not doing nothing. It has also allowed me to start conversations about the topic that sometimes others may find embarrassing. I would like to continue to help women and girls in need annually by continuing to collect donations and money for Share the Dignity.

What difference did that make to those who received?

I haven't personally interacted with the women in need, but the Soup Bus staff were very grateful for the donations to pass on. I think it's also made a difference to my friends and other kids at school for them to see what action can look like.

A Gratitude Wall for First Responders

Phoenix College Students

What suffering did you see?

In early 2022, as part of a whole of school initiative, Phoenix College Ballarat students were working on a resilience project, and focusing on gratitude, empathy, and mindfulness.

What Action Did You Take?

Phoenix College's student leaders came up with an idea to write a short message of support to front line workers at Ballarat Base Hospital in recognition of the extraordinary work they do. From this, students from Prep – Year 12 developed a Gratitude Wall with messages of support to staff at the Hospital.

What Difference Did that Make to those

The staff at the hospital were delighted to be recognised by the students and received the Gratitude Wall at a presentation in the main hospital entrance. Seeing the Gratitude Wall as they entered the hospital was a significant morale booster for the hospital staff.



Joe Thompson
(Year 4) and Eliora Dakla (Year 4)
present flowers to Claire Woods (Chief People Officer, Grampians Health)

What Difference Did that Make to You?

The Phoenix College students were recognized for their thoughtfulness, gratitude, empathy and ultimately, Compassion.



Sean Robinson (Year 12), Karen Snibson (Principal, Phoenix College), Joe Thompson (Year 4), Claire Woods (Chief People Officer, Grampians Health), Eliora Dakla (Year 4), Joshua Boon (Learning Specialist, Phoenix College) and Isla Edyvane (Year 12).

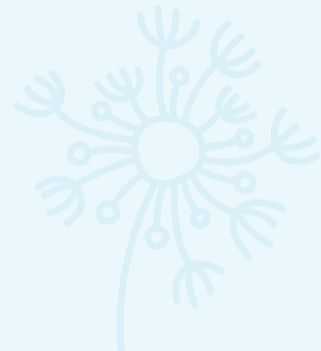


Honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

Ashleigh

What suffering did you see?

At the beginning of 2022 I was a new student at Damascus College. I am a proud Gunditjmara girl. While sitting in class looking out the window, I noticed the absence of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags next to the Australian flag which is currently flying. I felt a little disappointed – a part of my heritage was being ignored.



What prompted you to take this action?

I spoke about this with my mum, who is a past student of the College and my dad who is an Aboriginal man. I already had experience in other Aboriginal heritage projects, like NAIDOC week, and my mum suggested that I write a letter to the acting principal, Mr Grant, about the need to acknowledge Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people.

What action did you take?

I wrote an email to the principal about having a conversation around flying the flags in which Mr Grant replied explaining the College was forming a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) group and that this could be a way forward with my proposal.

The principal also explained that he had many discussions before my email about flying the flags on campus. My family and I accepted the invitation and we have now attended all RAP meetings this year. We have been working through a

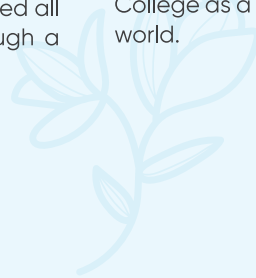
range of actions that will strengthen relationships, respect, and opportunities in the classroom, around the school and with the community.

What difference did that make to you?

I experienced a sense of joy at receiving the reply and being invited to join the RAP. I accepted nominations for the Damascus College Social Justice Award and for the Ballarat Youth Positive Leader Award, which I could not have imagined being nominated for at the start of the year.

What difference did that make to those who received it?

I am hopeful that the RAP will make a difference for the whole school community (students, staff, parents, even past students) and that the flags will be flying soon at Damascus College as a show of respect to the oldest living culture in the world.



Growing Vegetables for the Soup Bus

St Aloysius Students

What suffering did you see?

Seeing that the homeless can't survive but if we do something small like donating herbs and veggies that really helps out by being kind to the homeless.

What prompted you to take this action?

St Aloysius is a school that gives fresh food to people in need, and everybody deserves to be treated kindly. Just imagine if you were homeless and you would want all the care you could get. They have less than we have, and they have a very tough life. It's important because all people deserve to have a happy life - so they can have a smile on their face. They don't have a lot like us and helping will put a smile on their faces, and everybody deserves to be treated kindly. Because we should all be equally treated.

What action did you take?

Tending and looking after the garden - every day after fruit break, we put the scraps into the compost. As we look after the garden the gardeners take herbs and veggies and donate it to the Soup Bus.



What difference did that make to you?

It feels good to give back and it makes me feel very happy to see others have food. I feel really good about the Soup Bus. Seeing all the beautiful fresh vegetables grow, smelling of us freshness. It puts a smile on my face that because of us looking after the garden it helps hundreds in Ballarat. It feels really good to be in the veggie garden. I felt special that I helped others. It makes me feel very proud that we are making some other people's lives better. It feels good that I'm helping the homeless by donating to the soup bus. It feels really good to do something good for people. It feels incredible - we all need to show kindness. It feels great because I am giving to other people. It makes me feel like I am really a part of the community. I'm proud of myself for helping others. I feel proud to be able to share the garden products. It makes me feel happy to do that. It feels great to know that you are helping people in need. I feel happy that I am helping others.

What difference did that make to those who received it?

It helps by giving other people fresh food and providing them with a happy, healthy meal. It helps by making someone's health better. It is very important to help others less fortunate.

Building the Future together

St Alipius Year 6 Students



What suffering did you see?

In finding out about homelessness and how it affects people - especially women and children, we realised that anxiety, depression, and stress were feelings that people commonly felt. When you feel like that, it's really easy to lose hope. It's not right that any people, especially children, should feel unsafe and hopeless.

What action did you take?

The Year Six Leadership Team (which is all Grade Six students at St Alipius) have decided to run a 'Great Christmas Raffle' so that we can raise money to give to Compassionate Ballarat to establish a Ballarat Sleepbus for up to 20 of our homeless people, many of whom are women and children.

What prompted you to take this action?

At St Alipius, a lot of our learning is inspired by the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching. This teaches us, that it's up to all of us, wherever we are in the world to do something about letting people know about children's and adults' rights so that we can build the future together! In October, we were able to focus on supporting children in Ethiopia as part of Catholic Mission Month; but we also wanted to do something

for people in Ballarat. Our teacher found out about Compassionate Ballarat's fundraiser for a sleepbus and proposed that as something we could support.

What difference did that make to you?

We thought we knew a little bit about homelessness but the more we found out, the less we realised we knew. It would be really easy to feel like there's nothing you can do but when you start to talk about it with other people and look at what other people have done or are doing then you feel more hopeful and positive. Everyone deserves to feel safe while they sleep and not have to worry about whether they are going to wake up in the morning.

What difference did that make to those who received it?

We're not sure yet, but we hope that every person who gets a chance to sleep in the sleep bus will feel safe and know that they are not on their own. We want people to know that there are people who do care. And, we want the Ballarat Community to know that not all people are treated fairly; not all people have a home and the basic things they need, and this is a serious problem.

Connecting with Others on the Buddy Bench

St Aloysius Students



What suffering did you see?

The buddy bench is a seat where if you are sad or lonely you can go there, and someone might help you. I once saw a little ½ sitting on the seat and I sat with them and cheered them up.

What prompted you to take this action?

I once really hurt my leg and went on the seat and people would ask how I felt, and it really warmed my heart that people cared.

What action did you take?

I sat with a student as they were sitting alone and had no one to talk to. I sat with students and talked about their day. I (and my friend) have helped lots of people. I showed kindness to others on the Buddy Bench.

What difference did that make to you

It makes me feel really good and happy inside. It made me feel amazing inside and bright and happy.

It felt good and they really helped me.

What difference did it make to others?

While I was sitting alone someone came and sat with me and it made me feel happy and not alone. It did make me feel like someone wanted to play with me. You don't feel like you are the only one feeling alone. I hoped that someone would stop and chat and when they did, I felt better.

Bringing Sunshine into Isolated Lives

Beth



Photograph:
SolStock/
Getty Image

What suffering did you see?

It can become lonely in nursing homes and having grown up around a large elderly population as a child, I had connections to these nursing homes and to elderly people in general. I know firsthand the difference a young child's smiles can make to somebody, even if it means suffering through 10 minutes of violin playing and then a good chat.

What prompted you to take this action?

I loved her very much, she was a lovely lady from our hometown who lived by herself.

What action did you take?

When I was younger, I would visit the nursing home to play violin to her. On many occasions since, including a 5 day music tour to Queensland with Loreto in 2019 and a small choir during Walkathon, I have had the privilege to play/sing for elderly people in nursing homes to help brighten their day somewhat.

What difference did that make to you?

I felt grateful to hear their stories, old people do happen to have quite a lot of wisdom stored up their sleeves. I was contented knowing that I could assist someone in some small way to feel a little brighter.

What difference did that make to those who received?

I'd like to believe that I have brightened the days of people whom I have met throughout the years at nursing homes and retirement villages. There is nothing quite like bringing music and laughter into the lives of others, it is gratifying, humbling and delighting, and a little bit sad. One lady told me to "never stop singing", and I still remember her smile when I would visit her.

About the Charter

The Global Charter for Compassion

The Charter for Compassion is a document and worldwide movement designed to restore not only compassionate thinking but, more importantly, compassionate action, to the centre of our lives. The Charter for Compassion provides an umbrella for people to engage in collaborative partnerships worldwide. Its mission is to bring to life the principles articulated in the Charter for Compassion through practical action in a myriad of sectors. The Charter for Compassion's mission is to promote and cultivate the principle of compassion and a compassionate way of life, for compassion to characterize all human societies and relationships.

Australian Compassion Council

In Australia, the Charter for Compassion is governed by the Australian Compassion Council (ACC). This Council takes overall responsibility for setting strategic directions in how Australia can evolve as a continent for compassion. Applying compassion to a continent allows for a move away from political limitations to encompass Australia as a landmass. In this way, compassion can cut across many of the racial, economic, social and political factors that can divide Australians. The Australian Compassion Council imagines our own stories of compassion across the Australian continent; develops resources and projects; and links these stories and projects for national and global collaboration and impact.



Compassionate Ballarat

Compassionate Ballarat is focused on developing and nurturing the shared social connections that bind our community together. The new evidence base of compassion shows that, as a motivation, compassion can harness and strengthen the positive qualities of our minds. The work of Compassionate Ballarat is overseen by a Steering group, auspiced by Ballarat Health Services (BHS) to develop and implement a strategic approach to creating Ballarat as a Compassionate City and to contributing to the global Charter initiative. CB is a network that connects the compassionate work occurring across our city and provides educational resources, organizing tools, and avenues for communication. The City of Ballarat formally signed the Charter in October 2019 and in doing so Ballarat joined other Charter cities in over 50 countries and 430 cities around the world. **The Steering Group of Compassionate Ballarat comprises:**

Ben Kelly - COO, Hospitals, Grampians Health

Dr Lynne Reeder - Adjunct Research Fellow, Federation University Australia

Annie De Jong - CEO, Ballarat Cemeteries

Dr Mary Hollick - Elder, Ballarat Central Uniting Church

Sam Luxemburg - Practicing Psychologist

Dr Kerrie Shiell - Senior Clinical Neuropsychologist Grampians Health

Acknowledgements

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Australian Charter for Compassion:
www.charterforcompassion.com.au

Compassionate Ballarat:
www.compassionateballarat.com.au

Global Charter for Compassion:
www.charterforcompassion.org

Loreto College:
www.loreto.vic.edu.au

The Ad Group
www.theadgroup.com.au

Share the Dignity
<https://www.sharethedignity.org.au/fundraisers/blakecurran/eve--s-fundraiser-to-share-the-dignity-with-homeless-women->

Uniting Care Ballarat
www.unitingcare.org.au

The Soup Bus
www.ontrackfoundation.org.au

The Sleep Bus
<https://www.sleepbus.org/>

Federation University Australia
www.federation.edu.au



We would also like to acknowledge and applaud schools and teachers across Ballarat who provide role models for and support the value of compassion in their students. The following schools and their students contributed to this book:

Ballarat Grammar

Damascus College

Loreto College

Mount Clear College

Phoenix Community College

St Aloysius Primary School

St Patrick's College

St Alipius Parish School