



COMPASSION HEROES

BALLARAT

DECEMBER 2023

COMPASSIONATE HEROES BALLARAT

Compassion Heroes is an annual project of Compassionate Ballarat which gathers stories of compassion in action. This year these stories were collected from schools across our city.



COMPASSIONATE
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DECEMBER 2023

www.compassionateballarat.com.au

www.charterforcompassion.com.au

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PREFACE

Compassion invites us to reflect on what motivates us to care for one another, and how we can extend this positive motivation to improve the whole of humankind.

In this extremely unsettled world, the science and spirituality of compassion is necessary because as Director of the Compassionate Mind Foundation, UK, Prof Paul Gilbert writes, '.... a motivation of compassion pushes us to understand how we have structured the world, and to ask, how can we structure it better, not because we may suffer, but because others are suffering'.

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.

The stories in this 2023 book come from school projects that promote compassion in action. It's wonderful to see the depth and breadth of the activities with which the students in Ballarat are involved.

At a time of local, national, and global unrest we can be overwhelmed by the sadness and conflicts in the world – so this year it's even more important to see and be inspired by the kindness and caring that surrounds us.

Compassionate action supports us in being helpful rather than harmful, and these stories provide a community-wide narrative of the ways in which compassion is being demonstrated by this city's future leaders.

The stories in this book will be shared across our city and to other cities across Australia and the world via the global Charter for Compassion.

INTRODUCTION

NOAH QUICK:

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE -
COMPASSIONATE BALLARAT



In today's world, kindness, compassion, empathy, and enthusiasm are all important attributes to have. They help ensure that people all over the world, no matter race, gender, or their identity are all heard, included and valued. They ensure all people are being treated fairly and justly. Many people worldwide value these attributes, and throughout this book we focus on compassion.

Compassionate Ballarat aims to recognise students who have shaped themselves by this attribute. This book presents these students and their schools' stories about how they have contributed to the greater good.

Whilst in the past, Compassionate Ballarat has focussed on individual students as 'Compassion Heroes', this year we focus on school-wide efforts. A famous quote, by Helen Keller, said "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." As a group, and as we will read in this book, the outreach and impact we are able to have is immense.

In this ever-changing world, many of us are affected by the increasing cost of living, homelessness, bullying, mental wellbeing and isolation, so please take the time to read and be inspired by these school projects.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TELLING STORIES

NIVASH NEIL
MT CLEAR COLLEGE

From grandmothers telling bedtime stories to children, to friends sharing tales around a campfire, stories have always been a part of human communication.

They have been a means of connecting with one another, sharing our experiences and emotions, and passing down lessons and knowledge from one generation to the next.

The power of storytelling lies in its ability to transport the listener to another place and time, to evoke emotions and spark the imagination. It is a universal language that rises above cultural and linguistic barriers, and can be shared by anyone, anywhere, in any form.

Whether it's through a book, a movie, a podcast, or a simple conversation, stories have the power to inspire, educate, and entertain. They can teach us valuable life lessons, challenge our beliefs, and offer new perspectives on the world around us.

In today's fast-paced, digitally driven world, storytelling remains just as relevant as it has always been. In fact, it has become even more important in a world where we are often disconnected from one another and seeking ways to connect and understand others.

So, the next time you hear a story, whether it's from a friend or a stranger, take a moment to appreciate the power and importance of storytelling. It is a timeless tradition that has the ability to bring us together, teach us valuable lessons, and enrich our lives in countless ways.

Just like the stories shared with us...



COMPASSION & CARE AWARD

BALLARAT YOUTH AWARDS - 2023 WINNER



Enabling connectivity and access for children with disabilities from low socio-economic backgrounds, empowering them to connect with our world through the provision of iPads.

STRENGTHENING SUPPORT FOR THOSE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES - LOCALLY & GLOBALLY

What suffering did Keeley see?

Keeley witnessed and personally experienced the profound challenges faced by children from low socioeconomic families, especially those on the autism spectrum and have intellectual disabilities. She observed the struggles they encountered in accessing quality education and the barriers hindering their ability to communicate effectively. Keeley's deep empathy for their suffering inspired her to establish Keeley's Cause, aiming to alleviate these hardships and create positive change in their lives through innovative solutions and in creating inclusive and equitable education for children living with disabilities.

What motivated Keeley to continue to take action?

Keeley's motivation stemmed from a passionate commitment to addressing the injustices and challenges she observed. Fuelled by a profound empathy for children in low socioeconomic families facing autism and intellectual disabilities she recognized the urgency to make a difference. The desire to provide equal educational opportunities

and improve communication resources for these children became a driving force for Keeley. Her relentless dedication to creating positive change and a better future for these individuals motivated her to take continuous action through the establishment and growth of Keeley's Cause.

How is that action expanding beyond Australia?

Keeley's Cause is expanding its impact beyond Australia through strategic partnerships, global outreach initiatives, and leveraging technology to bridge geographical boundaries. By collaborating with international organizations, the cause is extending its reach to low socioeconomic families worldwide, ensuring that children with autism and intellectual disabilities receive support regardless of their location. Additionally, the organization utilizes online platforms and digital resources to provide educational tools, communication aids, and support services globally, thereby making a meaningful impact beyond the borders of Australia. This proactive approach enables Keeley's Cause to extend its mission and create positive change on a global scale. This has begun in Uganda and will soon commence in Bangladesh.



How did this experience impact Keeley?

Keeley's encounter and her own experience with the challenges faced by children particularly those living with autism and intellectual disabilities, profoundly influenced her. This experience kindled a deep sense of empathy, propelling her towards a passionate commitment to instigate positive change and address the observed injustices which became the driving force behind the Charity and her steadfast dedication to enhancing the

lives of these children. The impact on Keeley is unmistakable in her resilience, unwavering determination, and the substantial growth of the organization. This transformative experience shaped her into a dedicated advocate, compelling her to continuously explore innovative solutions and broaden the scope of Keeley's Cause. The result is a legacy of enduring positive change in the lives of those she set out to uplift and support.

- ### What positive changes did your actions bring to those who received her help?

Through Keeley's Cause, positive changes have been transformative for those it supports. Children in low socioeconomic families, especially those with autism and intellectual disabilities, have experienced improved access to quality education and enhanced communication resources. The organization's initiatives aim to break down barriers, providing tools and support that empower these individuals to reach their full potential. Families have witnessed positive shifts in their children's lives, including increased educational opportunities, improved communication skills, lowered meltdowns and anxieties, and a sense of belonging within their communities. Keeley's Cause fosters a supportive environment that goes beyond immediate assistance, creating a lasting impact on the overall well-being and futures of those who receive its help. The organization's commitment to innovation and inclusivity reflects in the positive changes it brings to individuals and families facing challenges.



STORIES OF COMPASSION FROM OUR SCHOOLS

PHOENIX COMMUNITY COLLEGE – P-12

NOURISHING HEARTS & SOULS

What suffering did the students see?

In the heart of Phoenix P-12 Community College, the Year 7 students witnessed a stark reality within their local community: food insecurity. Families in their neighbourhood were grappling with the daily challenge of putting meals on the table, and the young students couldn't remain indifferent to their neighbours' plight.

What Action did the Take?

Motivated by empathy and a strong desire to make a difference, the Year 7 students at Phoenix P-12 Community College embarked on a transformative journey during their Volunteers Day event. They understood the profound impact a nutritious meal could have on someone's life, not just in terms of physical nourishment but also in providing a glimmer of hope and warmth amidst difficult circumstances.



What Motivated them to take this Action?

With determination and compassion, these students organized a working bee within the college grounds, beautifying their surroundings and fostering a sense of unity and community pride. However, the core of their efforts lay in the school kitchen, where they dedicated their time and energy to cook over 60kg of pasta bakes. These savory creations weren't just meant for themselves; they were destined for the local Soup Bus, an initiative that serves the community by providing warm meals to those in need which Phoenix proudly partners with on similar projects yearly. The Phoenix P-12 students realized that a good meal could make a significant difference in the quality of someone's day. Their baking efforts became a symbol of hope and

solidarity, showcasing the power of compassion and collective action. The event was more than just a charitable act; it was a profound lesson in empathy and kindness that left a lasting impact on the entire school community.

What Difference did that make to the students?

The experience was transformative for both the school and the students involved. It instilled a sense of pride and fulfillment among the young volunteers, knowing that their collective efforts would alleviate hunger and provide comfort to numerous families. The event also cultivated a spirit of empathy and solidarity within Phoenix P-12 Community College, fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by others and the power of unity.

What positive changes did this action bring to those who received that help?

Through their cooking efforts, the students at Phoenix P-12 Community College brought nourishment to the bodies and souls of many struggling individuals. Families who once faced the anguish of going to bed hungry were now able to enjoy a warm, hearty meal, courtesy of the students' kindness. Beyond the physical sustenance, the act of receiving a meal from thoughtful minds can bring a sense of dignity and hope to those who are suffering. The positive changes brought about by the Volunteers Day were not just limited to full stomachs; they extended to uplifted spirits and a stronger, more compassionate community. Phoenix P-12 Community College had not only nourished bodies but also nurtured a culture of empathy and kindness, leaving an indelible mark on everyone involved and inspiring future acts of generosity and goodwill.

BALLARAT CLARENDON COLLEGE – SENIOR SCHOOL

COMING TOGETHER FOR POSITIVE CHANGE


What suffering did your school see?

Throughout 2023, Ballarat Clarendon College's students continually exercised their compassion by identifying opportunities to support individuals and charities less fortunate than themselves. With the opportunity to support, also came possibilities for the Clarendon community to unite, bringing together students from the 3-year-old Early Learning Centre through to Year 12, staff, families, Old Collegians, and friends of Clarendon.

What motivated your school to take action?

Students at Clarendon are motivated by influencing positive change. Recognising the diversity within the community and the challenges faced, students understood that their leadership in driving initiatives required an inclusive and collaborative approach. Their approach was to have a much farther-reaching impact on as many individuals, groups, and charities as possible than that, of an approach





to focus on one issue. Their motivation and desire to create opportunities for the community to come together in support of a common goal has left a lasting legacy of compassion, empathy and unity for future generations of students at Clarendon.

What action did your school/grade take?

Students from all year levels furthered their leadership skills through driving community service, Reconciliation Action Plan and sustainability initiatives. These included collaborating with Ballarat Grammar School for a 'Coming together for Beyond Blue' concert, conducting a Reconciliation Action Plan survey, working with the Tangoroo Blue Foundation to remove and prevent marine debris, donating and purchasing second-hand books to raise money for the Ballarat Winter Appeal and volunteering weekly for Food Is Free and the Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council Homework Club.

How did this experience impact the school/ students involved?

Although raising funds for local charities is a rewarding component of service to others, students were determined to educate the Clarendon community and raise awareness of local issues. Whether that be encouraging walking as a healthy habit for mental health during the Senior School

Walkathon for Headspace or attempting to remove fear around blood donation in preparation for a Red Cross Blood Drive, students maximised opportunities to unite their community as one that is positive, cooperative and supportive, both inside and outside of the school gates.

What positive changes did your actions bring to those who received your help?

Through raising awareness of local issues and providing avenues for volunteering and monetary support, Clarendon students felt the weight of their efforts and impact. Whether that be helping a student to understand a mathematics question during homework club or encouraging friends and family to donate blood, students felt empowered to continue their work within the community as positively influencing individuals.

Through engaging in many inward and outward facing initiatives, students continued to expand their personal and Clarendon communities with a sense of the real impact they can have on those less fortunate than themselves. The values gained in working together, despite their differences or challenges faced, are values that will see students put others before themselves and strive to make a positive impact in all areas of their lives.



BALLARAT GRAMMAR – SENIOR SCHOOL

KURT HAHN

SLEEP OUT - THE EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

What suffering did your school see?

A group of 35 Senior School students participated in the Kurt Hahn Sleep Out 2023 on Friday, August 25. They came prepared to spend an uncomfortable night, walking in the shoes of a homeless person for 14 hours. After a simple meal of soup, the group listened to Jeremy from Uniting Care, about the people of Ballarat who have found themselves homeless and the obstacles they face daily.

What motivated your school to take action?

Kurt Hahn, the pioneer of the Round Square movement (of which our school is a member) and who maintained the philosophy of 'learning through experience,' believed that each of us has more courage, more strength, and more compassion than we would ever have fathomed. This event enables our students to understand factors that lead people to homelessness or to sleeping rough.

What action did your school/grade take?

After a rough night trying to sleep, being moved at 2am, and then sleeping again in another of the two school gyms, the group donated a large amount of sleeping gear and personal items to the Street to Home program at Uniting Care, Ballarat.

How did this experience impact the school/ students involved?

Students reflected the next morning and shared, from the experience, their understanding, compassion, and empathy for the plight of those less fortunate than many of us.

What positive changes did your action bring to those who received your help?

We hope that our donations of sleep gear and personal items are of value to those people living rough or homeless in the surrounds of Ballarat.

BALLARAT GRAMMAR – SENIOR SCHOOL

DO IT FOR DOLLY - THROUGH HOPE & UNITY



What suffering did your school see?

Members of Grammar's Hayhoe House became aware of the suffering caused by bullying, particularly online. Our students learnt that there were many students across the country that are experiencing emotional distress, social isolation, and even depression due to the harmful effects of bullying. The tragic case of Dolly Everett, a young girl who took her own life as a result of bullying, was a heartbreaking reminder of the suffering that bullying can cause.

What motivated your school to take action?

The motivation to take action came from a deep sense of empathy and a desire to prevent such tragic incidents from happening within our school and community. The loss of Dolly Everett prompted us to address the issue of bullying head-on. We wanted to create a safer, more supportive environment for our students and raise awareness about the consequences of bullying.

What action did your school/grade take?

To address the issue of bullying and support the 'Do it for Dolly' charity, Grammars' Hayhoe House organised several initiatives: Sausage Sizzle and Soup: We organised fundraising events like sausage sizzles and soup sales to raise money for the 'Do it for Dolly' charity. The funds collected were used to support anti-bullying programs and initiatives. Muster wellbeing activity: We encouraged all middle and senior school students to complete a wellbeing activity where they wrote something nice for a peer. These activities were designed to promote mental and emotional health and strengthen relationships. This helped create a more positive and inclusive school environment. Wearing Blue Ribbons: Students and staff were encouraged to wear blue ribbons on their blazers as a symbol of solidarity and commitment to the cause. This not only raised awareness about the 'Do it for Dolly' charity but also fostered a sense of unity among the students.

How did this experience impact the school/ students involved?

Increased Awareness: The initiatives helped raise awareness about the harmful effects of bullying. The hope is that students became more conscious of their actions and words, promoting a kinder and more empathetic school culture.

Empowered Students: Students who actively participated in these initiatives gained a sense of empowerment, knowing they could make a positive difference in the lives of their peers and contribute to a safer school environment.

What positive changes did your actions bring to those who received your help?

Our actions made a positive impact on those who received our help, including students, parents, and the 'Do it for Dolly' charity:

Support for Victims: The funds raised were used to support anti-bullying programs and initiatives. These efforts provided resources and assistance to those who had been affected by bullying and its consequences. **Awareness and Prevention:** By raising awareness about the issue, we contributed to the prevention of future incidents of bullying. **Knowledge and understanding of the problem are crucial steps toward its eradication.** **Emotional Support:** The activities and events created a more empathetic and supportive school environment, offering emotional support to students who had previously felt isolated or bullied.





BALLARAT GRAMMAR – SENIOR SCHOOL

DAYS FOR GIRLS - IMPROVING THE LIVES OF YOUNG WOMEN ACROSS THE WORLD

What suffering did your school see?

The impetus of the project has always been, that we are all committed to this initiative because it is not only about education but the very fact of being a woman. And what we propose is a practical way of making a difference to girls in developing countries whose education is so vital to their own futures and that of their families and communities. Education is at the very heart of a successful working life for women and girls all over the world. We know that in many countries girls do not get the education they need to start them on the path to a successful working and personal life. Schools may be remote from where they live; parents may not see the value of education for a girl or at all; even where school is free, the costs of uniform, book, insurance and even photocopying may be passed on to children and make it impossible for them to go to school – and where a choice has to be made between sending a boy or a girl to school, the girl invariably loses out. What most people do not know, though, is that many girls are kept out of school either permanently or every month because they do not

have the skills nor the materials to cope with something as ‘fundamentally female’ as menstruation. Days for Girls raises awareness of this obstacle to girls’ education and produces and distributes sustainable feminine hygiene kits. By addressing the menstruation issue, Days for Girls deals with a taboo subject to help girls with period management and education as a key to social change.

What motivated your school to take action?

With the school’s key links to the town of Ainaro in Timor-Leste and the important community connections of our School fostered by Rob Gray, it seemed an obvious choice to make the small, low-income community of Ainaro our recipient of Days for Girls kits.

What action did your school/grade take?

BGS has been working with student and parent volunteers from Year 7 to Year 12 to create as many kits as possible here in Ballarat. We started with 50 kits and now annually make 150 kits that are sent to help 150 girls in Timor-Leste.

Students in Ballarat Making the kits.



Girls in Ainaro receiving the kits.

How did this experience impact the school/ students involved?

The atmosphere around kit production is always convivial, different generations working and learning new skills along the way and getting the opportunity to make a difference. They have received visual feedback from the recipients of the kits in Ainaro that expresses the joy of receiving these valuable menstruation kits.

What positive changes did your actions bring to those who received your help?

Since 2018 we have consistently, with our efforts, helped at least 150 girls from the Ainaro district each year. We have also encouraged the personal development of five young women from Ainaro, Timor Leste who have become menstrual coaches (Days for Girls Ambassadors). These young women deliver the kits and at the same time deliver menstrual health education to the young recipients in the town of Ainaro demonstrating the personal growth that can come out of projects such as this.



LORETO COLLEGE – YEAR 12

BOTANIKIDS IN NATURE - FROM KINDERGARTEN TO AGED CARE

What suffering did you see?

As a cohort the Year 12 VCE/Vocational Major Class of 2023 have been recognised and celebrated, as they have embodied the school spirit of Justice. The class have made a significant contribution to the Ballarat Community in a variety of ways. The students wanted to give their time and talents to improve the lives of others in the Ballarat Community, whether that was making food for those who were less fortunate than themselves or giving their time and skills to help the learning of young children or providing companionship to the elderly.

What action did they take?

They have partnered with the Botanikids, by creating a pre-school nature-based craft program at the Little Flower Church campus where the senior students teach young children the joys of nature. The class have also supported those experiencing food insecurity in Wendouree West by

cooking food for the Exodus Group. Also, as part of their VCE Media studies, the students created a documentary for Exodus to capture the history of Exodus and celebrate their valued service to the community. The VET Sport and Recreation class have run sport and recreation workshops for a range of Primary Schools in Ballarat and supported fundraising for mental health through Dolly's Dream. Together, they have run activities with those in our community living with dementia; supported the Year 10 Community service projects, cooked for the soup bus, and engaged with Nazareth House and Primary Schools, along with the Pinarc disability support group. In addition, these students have volunteered for Food is Free, hosted a sustainable lunch for the Committee for Ballarat highlighting Corporate Social Responsibility and constructed 'Tiny Houses' which were auctioned for charity for Grampians Health. Alongside all this work, they have been available to assist with school activities such as our School Production and Arts Festival.



What prompted the action?

Loreto College has five important values, Justice, Freedom, Verity, Felicity, and Sincerity. The students are always encouraged and supported throughout their time at school to live these values and act on them by giving of their time and talents to improve the lives of others in the community.

What difference did the that make to you?

The whole school celebrated the success of the Class of 2023 VCE/Vocational Major class and their on-going support of the Ballarat Community. The students grew

as individuals as they often put themselves out of their comfort zone to reach out to others improving their own personal and communication skills.

What difference did it make to those who received it?

For those who often go without food, the food made by the students for Exodus and the Soup Bus it provides essential nourishment. For the young children and mums/grandparents and carers who participate in the Botanikids program the students provide fun learning opportunities for the pre-schoolers and most importantly it's a

place for all generations to come together to share the joy of nature and the companionships of others when often it is isolating to be at home caring for children. By visiting Nazareth House, Pinarc and other Ballarat schools and organisations the VCE/VM students spread their sense of Felicity or joy and good will, with people of all ages and stages of life within the Ballarat Community. In doing this amazing work, we acknowledge their teachers led by Jill Wheatland for all the support and assistance behind the scenes.

SEBASTOPOL PRIMARY SCHOOL – PRE-YEAR 6

A MESSAGE OF PEACE FOR OUR WORLD

What suffering did you see?

We see world wars in Israel, Gaza, Russia and Ukraine that means suffering for everyone, especially children. The war between Russian and Ukraine has gone on for a long time and people are without food, water and their homes. Kids are being forced to work on farms that farm cocoa, using child labour to make them rich. Children suffer doing this with long hours and no schooling. At the war between Israel and Gaza people are so sick by dehydration and they have not been able to escape in time. We were upset to see premature babies without special care equipment. We worry if they will live and how their parents are feeling.

What motivated you to take action?

When we signed the UN Peace document, we wanted people to know that children at Sebastopol Primary School care. We also felt strongly about the Yes vote at Sebastopol Primary School as we are allies for 20% of our First Nation people who are part of our school community.

What Action did your school take?

We shared the Peace message at assembly, in our newsletter and on our school Facebook page. The signed document was also shared in the Department of Education's Central Highlands school's bulletin.

How did this experience impact the school students involved?

It affected people to some degree. Some of our students did not realise how many countries are affected by war. When there is war people take sides, and then food and water are in short supply. People that read this will know that we want more peace in the world and people know we choose peace at Sebastopol Primary School.

What positive changes did your action bring to those who received it?

We increased awareness we feel a bit helpless, but we can be kind and stop conflict at school and at home. We want to help people who need it, and try to stop the war with the help of kids from other schools.

UN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE - 2023 MESSAGE

As we mark this International Day of Peace, people and our planet are in crisis.

Conflicts driving record numbers of people from their homes.

Deadly fires, raging floods and soaring temperatures.

Poverty, inequalities and injustices.

Mistrust, division and prejudice.

This year's theme reminds us that peace is not automatic.

Peace is the result of action.

Action to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and ensure that no one is left behind.

Action to end the war on our planet and its natural gifts.

Action to uphold and protect the human rights and dignity of every person – especially as we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

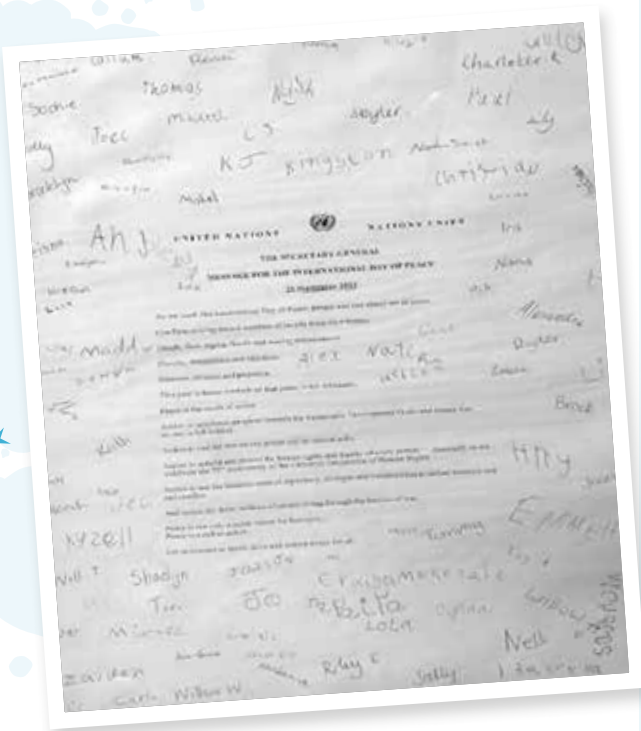
Action to use the timeless tools of diplomacy, dialogue and collaboration to defuse tensions and end conflict.

And action for those millions of people living through the horrors of war.

Peace is not only a noble vision for humanity.

Peace is a call to action.

Let us commit to build, drive and sustain peace for all.



At the end of Term 3 the students of Sebastopol Primary all signed the 2023 UN Message for the International Day of Peace.

It was read in classes by class captains and then signed by all students Prep - Year 6 on 15th September 2023.

ST COLUMBA'S PRIMARY SCHOOL YEARS 5- 6

MARKET DAY FOR ST VINNIES - SUPPORTING THOSE IN FINANCIAL NEED

What suffering did your school see?

Our community recognised the cold Ballarat winter and how it affected people within our community. With the financial crisis, many people are unable to pay bills such as water, electricity, and gas. People were having their heating cut off and had no way of having a warm shower or cooking a hot meal.

What motivated your school to take action?

Our theme for our term was generosity. Listening to Kathy from St Vincent de Paul, and being inspired by the amazing work she does, helping local people every single day, motivated us into action. The bible story of the 'widow's offering' also inspired us to be more like the widow and be truly generous even though we have not got much to share ourselves.



What action did your school take?

We thought about a way to make money for St Vinnies and, as we were also studying business and economics that term through our passion projects, we came up with the idea of a Market Day. We turned our interests and passions into stalls for the Market Day, making and selling our own products, providing services and putting a whole lot of work into making the day possible. We helped out at home and did the dishes, mopped floors, mowed the lawns, washed the car, took out the bins, vacuumed and even did the dirty stinky laundry to raise money for our 'start up funds' for our businesses. We approached local businesses to help us with donations, created logos, learnt how to track our money and worked hard to advertise. Our market continued for three hours and was exhausting.

How did this experience impact the school/ students involved?

Hearing first-hand about how tough some people in Ballarat have it, made us more determined to make our Market Day a huge success. It gave us more purpose. We were generous with our time, money and our efforts. We were also able to learn so much about business through the process.



What positive changes did your actions bring to those who received your help?

\$4315 dollars was raised from our Market Day! By donating this money to St Vinnies, people could receive money to help pay their bills and get groceries. Some clients, assisted by St Vinnies, were also given vouchers to receive hair-cuts at no cost. The people who received our help also hope to get through their current struggles and see that their local community does care. It made them feel warm on the inside and out.

BALLARAT GRAMMAR – JUNIOR SCHOOL

CONNECTING ACROSS THE GENERATIONS – THROUGH CRAFT, GAMES & CHATTER



What suffering did your school see?

We did not see suffering, but we saw a wonderful opportunity to visit an Aged Care facility and spend time with people who may be lonely.

What motivated your school to take action?

Calvary Kelaston is a residential aged care which is situated close to our junior school and within walking distance. One of our school values is Compassion and we thought that this cross-generational venture would provide our students with insight into how they could enact this core value in their everyday lives.

What action did your school/grade take?

Over the years (but not the COVID years), teachers Susan Davidson, Mandy Polkinghorne, Alicia MacLean and Sharon Cuff have liaised with staff at Kelaston. Students sign up for



a term and accompany staff residents to visit the residents and spend some time engaging in conversation, playing board games and doing some craft. A few years ago, the students hosted a Christmas concert and this community connection is ongoing.

How did this experience impact the school/ students involved?

Students always look forward to their afternoon visits to the care home and they talk to their school friends about their positive experience. As a result of this positive contagion, students are always eager to volunteer their time. We have seen some students grow in confidence and others develop great listening as they are regaled with stories from past years. One of our current Year 6 students visited when she was much younger and she has stayed in contact with one of the residents. Many students enjoy the genuine interest which the older people show in them and their enthusiasm to play traditional games. The students also enjoy the friendliness of the residents and for students who do not have grandparents, or grandparents living nearby, the visit is a highlight of their school week.

What positive changes did your actions bring to those who received your help?

We hope that the happy and friendly personalities of the young people as well as their lively chatter helps to brighten the lives of some of the older people living in our Wendouere community.





BALLARAT GRAMMAR – JUNIOR SCHOOL

CARING FOR NATURE - WITH THE BALLARAT SPECIALIST SCHOOL

What suffering did your school see?

Mike O'Neill, our Mt Rowan Co-ordinator, contacted Ballarat Specialist School with a view to Year 4 students, who enjoy the natural surroundings of the School's Mount Rowan Campus, visiting the school to spend some time with students. 'To whom much is given, much is required' is a phrase which sits at the heart of our view of wellbeing and community.

What motivated your school to take action?

Through experiential learning, students further develop an understanding of the importance of taking care of the environment and people. Growing and donating plants is a part of the outdoor curriculum at the campus and taking tangible action, through visits and having conversations with a different learning community, were additional, motivational factors.

What action did your school/grade take?

The Year Four students are involved with growing vegetables, herbs and other plants and bushes. They originally decided that they would like to donate 70 plants to the Ballarat Specialist School. A further idea was realised when students visited the Ballarat Specialist School so that they could assist with planting and mulching the plants with the students there.

How did this experience impact the school/ students involved?

Understandably, there was a little initial shyness, but once the garden spades and forks were taken out and students got going with digging holes and planting, the conversation flowed, and so did the jokes. The students worked together on the group project and some students took the lead in



their groups. From our perspective, we noticed that a few of the students really relished this opportunity, worked very hard and beyond what was asked of them. They have reflected that this was a beautiful and humbling experience and one which many of them shared with their families.

What positive changes did your actions bring to those who received your help?

Ballarat Specialist School now has a beautiful new area that blocks out a lot of industrial park. The trees were all native and provide food and shelter for local wildlife. The students also had to practice how they were going to welcome us and how they were going to introduce themselves. A further opportunity to practice communication skills was realised with one student from each of their classes sharing an acknowledgement of Country.

BUNINYONG PRIMARY SCHOOL

FOOTY COLOURS DAY - THE BUNINYONG CUP



What suffering did your school see?

Through our relationship with the Mphatso Children's Foundation our school became aware that children in Malawi face challenges related to poverty, food insecurity, and lack of resources. Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world. The Mphatso Children's Foundation have 13 nursery schools they operate along Lake Malawi. Each school day, more than 1,000 children are given a bowl of porridge through the feeding program. For many of the children, this is the only food they will have for the day. Our school and students recognised the need to help alleviate the suffering of children being hungry and having very limited access to food.

What motivated your school to take action?

Our school has had an ongoing relationship with Mphatso for many years. A former parent of Buninyong PS, Robyn Casey, established the foundation in 2004. Their mission is to Feed The Children, Grow The Community & Impact The Future. A bowl of porridge costs only five cents and provides a child with a meal for the day. We recognised that we are fortunate to have access to basic essentials like food and running water. We were motivated to take action in our effort to alleviate the suffering of underprivileged children in Malawi. We also wanted to help ensure that children received good nutrition to develop physically and academically in order to reach their full potential.

What action did your school/grade take?

We organised a fundraiser called the "Buninyong Cup" on Footy Colours Day to raise money to support the Mphatso Children's Foundation. Students dressed up in their favourite team colours and collected as many coins as they could to

bring along and "vote" for their favourite team. Five cent coins to represent a bowl of porridge were encouraged but all coins were welcome! The sporting team at the end of the day with the most coins won the Buninyong Cup and all proceeds went to Mphatso. Students eagerly embraced the initiative and dressed up in their favourite team colours. A parade was held to showcase the wonderful school spirit and added to the festival atmosphere. Collection jars overflowed with donations, and we hosted a staff versus student dodgeball game. At the end of the day, over 100kg of coins had been collected. And if you're wondering... Geelong Cats were the most popular team on the day and took home the Buninyong Cup!

How did this experience impact the school/ students involved?

This experience positively impacted the school and students by fostering community engagement, empathy, and social responsibility. It provided an opportunity for students to learn about the difficult conditions in Malawi and actively contribute to a cause, raising awareness about the challenges faced by underprivileged children in other parts of the world.

What positive changes did your actions bring to those who received your help?

The generosity of our school community resulted in a remarkable \$1196.30, equivalent to providing 23,926 bowls of porridge for the children who are part of the feeding program at Mphatso. This significant contribution helps to ensure these children receive vital nutrition, impacting their immediate wellbeing, and potentially enhancing their long-term health and educational engagement.

ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE BALLARAT

CHAMPIONING THE COMMON GOOD

What suffering did you see?

SPC students, through our educational programs as well as through general news and information services, are aware of injustice and suffering. Awareness of our world is to witness many negative situations within our community, and our responsibility as students is to become informed about what is really going on, and what solutions truly promote the common good. Challenges include the quality of aged care homes, homelessness, or worldwide events such as the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East.

What prompted you to take this action?

Our Catholic faith urges us, on the basis of the inalienable human dignity of every person, to be informed and aware of the suffering of others, and to act. SPC is a Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition. Blessed Edmund Rice saw suffering and injustice amongst the poor in Ireland during the 18th century. He set up schools for the poor in a direct response to what he saw and established the Congregation of the Christian Brothers to provide a solution that transformed the situation. We continue his mission. Students feel compelled to give back due to the fortunate position we are in, and to educate through the creation of personal connections to causes.

What action did you take?

SPC students have taken many actions. Our whole school Walkathon raised money for our partners in justice: Edmund Rice Centre - St Albans; Edmund Rice Foundation Australia; Edmund Rice Camps; Caritas. Our Faith in Action student volunteers have run several food stalls during the year and the money raised is used to support various causes. These same students also promote a variety of causes and collect donations for appeals such as Caritas's Gaza appeal and Legacy's Poppy appeal. Faith in Action student volunteers visit the elderly in Nazareth House and help tutor younger students at Siena Primary School on a weekly basis. We run an Easter Egg Drive and a Winter Food Appeal. The Easter eggs are distributed to patients at Ballarat Base Hospital, bringing a moment of joy and comfort to them, and joy to our students as they meet the patients. The food and groceries collected during the Winter Food Drive is donated to Ballarat's St Vincent de Paul chapter. Our environmental justice group, SAGERS (Student Action Group Environmentally Resource Smart) has raised awareness of living simpler, less environmentally impactful lives. SAGERS ran a Nude Food Day (food without disposable wrapping) to reduce plastic waste. We have also been involved in local Landcare tree planting, as well as helping to run the



paper recycling scheme at the College. Finally, our SAGERS students participated in a UN model General Assembly with a dozen other schools, where issues such as world hunger and potential solutions were discussed.

What difference did that make to you?

Participating students recognise how fortunate and lucky we are to be in a position where we can freely and responsibly give back to our communities. We also see it as an opportunity to make connections and friendships. We also believe in the power of altruism as a force for good when we choose to do something positive and worthwhile.

We are encouraged by the often-strong support we receive, encouraging us to endure in our efforts to give to those in need. It is very humbling, and we are grateful, to see that our actions are having ripple effects within the community. The difference this makes to those who received is very positive. Through our fundraising, mentioned above, the community has received food for those who need it, whilst we are also helping boost the well-being of people within our community, such as the residents in Nazareth House. The recognition of the dignity of every person also offers the community hope – it shows that there is someone who truly cares, and that there are people who worry about the wellbeing and future of those who are disadvantaged.

ABOUT THE CHARTER FOR COMPASSION

Global Charter for Compassion

The Charter for Compassion supports the emerging global movement that brings compassion to life. The Charter is a global network connecting people, cities, grassroots organizers and leaders to each other. It provides educational resources, organizing tools, and avenues for communication. The Charter for Compassion provides an umbrella for people to engage in collaborative partnerships worldwide, and its mission is to support the emerging global movement of compassion by co-creating transformation at all levels - connecting, cultivating, and encouraging networks of compassionate action.

Australian Charter for Compassion

The aim of the Australian Compassion Council is to facilitate a substantial and nationally resourced movement to advance the vision of Australia becoming a Continent for Compassion, to walk in partnership with, and complement the work of global Charter for Compassion. Deep Dreaming Australia: A Continent of Compassion acts as a conduit to both recognise the good work already undertaken by many Australian organisations, and add to that through its three key activities: Australian Compassionate Cities and City Initiatives - Compassion in Sectors - The National Day of Compassion.

Compassionate Ballarat

Compassionate Ballarat encourages the compassionate work occurring across our city by cultivating compassionate attitudes and actions within homes, workplaces and communities. Our Steering Group provides compassionate resources, including educational and community forums, as well as training resources and our publications to assist all those in Ballarat wanting to create a more flourishing and compassionate city. For those looking for help with shelter, food and other well-being support, our website provides a focal point for you to find those resources. And importantly, we engage and support our city leaders in applying compassion within their organizations by providing them with the latest evidence from compassion cases studies in other Charter cities and from university studies around the world.

Compassionate Ballarat Steering Group

Ben Kelly (Chair), Dr Lynne Reeder, Dr Mary Hollick, Annie De Jong, Michelle MacGillivray, Noah Quick and Madonna Quixley.

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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

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

Ballarat Grammar School
<https://www.bgs.vic.edu.au>

Keeley's Cause
<https://keeleyscause.org.au>

St Columba's School
www.scballarats.catholic.edu.au

St Patrick's College
<https://www.stpats.vic.edu.au/>

Mphatso
<https://www.mphatso.org/>

Ballarat Clarendon College
<https://www.clarendon.vic.edu.au/>

Buninyong Primary School
<https://buninyongps.vic.edu.au/>

Sebastopol Primary School
<https://www.sebasps.vic.edu.au/>

Mt Clear College
<https://mountclearcollege.vic.edu.au/>

Good Karma Network
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ballaratsgoodkarmanetwork/>

Tangaroa Blue Foundation
<https://www.tangaroablue.org/>

Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council
Homework Club
<https://www.brmmc.org.au/brmmc-july-2022-program-and-service-update/>

Food is Free
<https://www.foodisfree.com.au/>

Do it for Dolly
<https://fundraise.dollysdream.org.au/>

SAGERS (Student Action Group
Environmentally Resource Smart)
<https://www.stpats.vic.edu.au/news/sagers-environmental-action-group-update/>


St Vinnies Ballarat
<https://www.vinnies.org.au/vic/shops/vinnies-wendouree>

Landcare
<https://www.landcarevic.org.au/groups/corangamite/ballarats-env-network/>

Pinarc
<https://www.pinarc.org.au/>


Kurt Hahn Sleep out
<https://www.roundsquare.org/educational-insights/ballarats-grammar-sleep-out/>

Edmund Rice foundation
<https://erf.org.au/>



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Mt Clear College
Phoenix Community College
Sebastopol Primary School
St Columba's Primary School
St Patrick's College Ballarat



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Compassion and Care Award – Keeley's Cause