



2016 / 17

# WE CARE UNITING Report 2016-17



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double again in 2017/18

6/12/2017

## LEADERSHIP



What a year! We started from a great base when Share the Love handed over the baton to us, and we've been sprinting ever since. We Care has doubled in size in a year, and will double again in 2017/18.

We focus on the positive; making a difference to the lives of hundreds of vulnerable children, enabling wonderful people on the Central Coast to reach out to help those in need in our community in a tangible meaningful way by sharing children's clothing, linen, cots, prams and the list goes on. And wonderfully donating time volunteering with us to say "no" to poverty and injustice. A huge thank you to everyone!

Our idyllic Central Coast also has a dark side, poverty and need. Whatever the causes the bottom line is that children should not have to suffer for deficiencies in our society. We Care has no barriers, if you are a child and you are in need then enough said.

We have achieved a great milestone, gaining recognition as a specialist children's support program. And children are our focus, children in need. Every donation goes to an individual family in need as part of a total package of care, and we ensure that the support we pass on is of the highest quality. Being poor doesn't mean you get second best.

Thank you everyone for your overwhelming support, and together we will have huge impact.

Derryck Klarkowski Program Coordination

Welcome everyone.

It has been almost one year since we started *We Care Uniting*, and what a year it has been. From humble beginning to what we have today, which is overwhelming, but in just a good way.

Our volunteers, and we always need more, are the most marvelous people you would wish to meet. Nothing is too difficult or out of the ordinary, they all just get in and get the job done. Without our volunteers, we wouldn't have been able to achieve everything we have achieved.

The reason I am involved is because even though people said I was too old to volunteer, you are never too old to volunteer. If we don't help these mothers and their children, who will? Jesus said "Suffer the little children to come unto me." Mark 10, 14





#### Gloria Chesterfield Operations

What an amazing year. We never thought that we would come so far so fast, and now there are just not enough hours in the day to do all that we would like to do!

I am so proud of what we have achieved. Starting with piles of clothes in great heaps, we hit the ground running, although often not knowing what direction we were supposed to be heading. The first thing was to get the word out there, to let people know that we even existed, and so we plunged into the world of those wonderful caseworkers who provide so much support to our Central Coast families. Interagency meetings, phone calls, setting up Facebook, phone calls, getting a fantastic webpage going, phone calls, meeting with sponsors, phone calls – and all the while sorting, picking up, cleaning, packing up, putting out appeals, setting up fund-raisers –

it has been full on.

But now the word is out and welfare agencies all over the coast are enabling us to help so many families through the fantastic generosity of our donors and supporters. The service has never stopped growing and it has been really hard work, but such rewarding fun!

#### Annette Locchi Communications

We held our very first donation day in September 2016 on the Toukley Green. We put the call out for community donations for prams, high chairs, cots, clothes, nappies, anything baby related. It was a great success, not only bringing in more community donations, but also expanding awareness of our program in the local area.

Our next event was our December Christmas Twilight market. With over 40 stall holders, live entertainment, an appearance by Mr and Mrs Clause on Harley's, raffle prizes, a petting zoo, face painting, the local fire and police support; it was an amazing event. We raised much needed funds for the purchase of baby equipment for families in need.

Our latest fund raising event was in conjunction with 101.3 SeaFM for Feb-U-Hairy. All funds raised are to support Elandra, our local refuge on the Coast for vulnerable women and children.

We have many more events coming up, including focused donation drives for the month of May. One of our major events will be May-B-Baby where, for the month of May and with the help of David Harris MP, we are hoping to have a huge amount of donations, and another great opportunity to tell people about our program. As we grow we need more and more community donations for vulnerable families on the Coast.

#### Jo Collins Events



**We Care Uniting** was launched on Easter Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2016, continuing the Share the Love program started in 2013. We opened our program at the beginning of May 2016.

This is a one-year report May 2016 – April 2017. There will be a 2016/17 report in July this year.

## Needs Snapshot



28% of Wyong households classified as low income, having a combined income of less than \$600 per week



8.5% unemployment, and 15.5% for people aged 15-24 years, for Wyong in the March quarter 2016. Youth unemployment rates are higher than other regions with Sydney (LMIP, April 2016)



The main areas of disadvantage are: Wyong, The Entrance, Toukley, Gorokan, Long Jetty, San Remo-Doyalson, Watanobbi, Lake Haven, Ettalong and Woy Woy.



36% of people had experienced times in the last 12 months when they were short of money to meet every day needs. The level of financial stress is higher in Wyong (CCQOL Survey 2012)



One parent families are more prevalent in Wyong (14.5%)



There is a high incidence of families in stress with high notification levels for child abuse and domestic violence. Of the 82,087 children aged 0 to 19 years within the Region, there are over 15,000 reports of child abuse and neglect with over 4,000 children at risk of significant harm (FACS, 2015)



Assault-domestic violence related offences, Wyong has a rate of 545.9 per 100,000 population compared to 390.1 per 100,000 for Gosford and 388.7 per 100,000 for NSW (NSW BOCSAR, 2015)



Significant increases in median rents and purchase price for houses over the last five years

*Central Coast Council data*

## Response



From May 2016 to April 2017 we have supported 346 vulnerable children distributing 6,610 children's care and safety items free of charge to over 30 community support groups and agencies.



Everything we distributed has been donated to us by the community. The new purchase cost to beneficiaries would have been over \$70,000 based on equivalent purchase costs at Kmart, Aldi and similar.



To achieve this our volunteers have donated 2309 hours of time and effort.



The program has doubled in size since May 2016, and continues to grow. Projections for 2017 are to at least double again.

## Nuts and Bolts

*We Care Uniting* is a not-for-profit program supporting children living below the poverty line and in other vulnerable situations across the Central Coast with clothing, nappies, bed linen and essential care and safety items & equipment. All support is given as part of a total package of care by trained case and community workers; the program distributes items free of charge on request to over 30 community support groups and welfare agencies.



*case worker collecting a request*



The program has 30 categories of size/gender clothing, 12 categories of accessories, 20 categories of shoes, 6 categories of nappies, 6 categories of children's essentials, 4 categories of mum's essentials, 20 categories of bedding linen, 20 types of equipment, children's books and a range of miscellaneous.

From May to February we have received over 10,000 donated items from continuous drop-off community donations including 3 large single donations. Donation Day at the Toukley Village Green, The Nappy Collective, Shoebox Revolution, and Share the Dignity.

We added a second string to the program in May 2016, partnering with the Toukley Neighbourhood Centre to cook meals for the hungry. Each week our volunteers prepare and freeze wholesome meals for distribution to those in need. The program has prepared over 2000 meals over the last twelve months.



With funding support from the Uniting Church (Uniting Councils) we have added cupboard and shelving for storage and organization. In addition, we have had to rent extra commercial storage space to accommodate bulky items such as nappies, cots and prams.

Sorting and classifying is volunteer intensive and we have a current team of 10 volunteers, and the work is growing. As the program grows we are continuously improving our systems. The critical success factor is storage space to enable not only storage but stock management efficiency.

There is an abundance of no longer needed children's clothing and care & safety items available across the Central Coast that can be accessed with Donation Drives. The challenge is transport; getting the items from the collection points to our operational centre. Program planning is to seek funding for Pantech truck hire (or similar) to fill this gap.

As the program grows we are addressing time and skill resources. Volunteers are the heart of a community program and a structured paid coordination position will enable us to add value to this enormous contribution. We will also be adding an Advisory Board to our program to input an additional range of management skills.

## Step by Step

As with many community programs it began in a garden shed in 2013 with a few people sharing their no longer needed children's clothes with families in need. As the word spread more and more people brought their gifts and more and more families in need received a helping hand. Clothes expanded to nappies and then to cots and prams, and the range continues to increase. The program grew into a comprehensive program *Share the Love*. In March 2016, the program was handed over to the Toukley Uniting Church changing its name to *We Care Uniting*.

<b>March 2016</b>	<b>Change of program to <i>We Care Uniting</i></b>
<b>April 2016</b>	Relocation to new operational base. Networking with the Toukley Neighbourhood Centre, Together 4 Toukley, and Greater Toukley Vision Inc. Facebook launch
<b>May 2016</b>	Program reopened to community support groups and agencies. Partnership with the Toukley Neighbourhood Centre – Cooking for the Hungry Program.
<b>July 2016</b>	Major nappy delivery from The Nappy Consortium
<b>September 2016</b>	Donation Day at the Village Green, Toukley
<b>October 2016</b>	Grant funding from the Uniting Church (Uniting Councils) for web site development, promotion and storage cupboards/shelving Grant funding from the Uniting Church (Stamp Committee) for gazebo and donation drive banners.
<b>November 2016</b>	Supplementary nappy delivery from The Nappy Consortium
<b>December 2016</b>	Christmas Twilight Market promotion and donation drive - over 30 local

	business sponsors. Christmas present support.
<b>January 17</b>	Web site launch Share the Dignity major donation handbags and hygiene products.
<b>February 17</b>	101.3SeaFM radio station Feb-U-Hairy donation drive for vulnerable women, proceeds to <i>We Care Uniting</i> . Addition of support to children affected by family domestic violence. Networking with Zonta International (Central Coast), Rotary, David Harris MP. Addition of supplementary off-site storage capacity.
<b>March 17</b>	Supplementary nappy delivery from The Nappy Collective Presentation to Rotary. Networking with the Wyong Neighbourhood Centre, Red Cross Society. Central Coast Council Grant application

## The Next Steps

There are more than 9000 children in need across the Central Coast and there is much more to be done to reach more and more vulnerable families.



For 2017 onwards we will accelerate program growth by:

- ❖ Increasing the support we give to case workers caring for individual families in need.
- ❖ Expanding to short-term crisis support for families seeking help from Neighbourhood Centres
- ❖ Expanding special needs support for children affected by family domestic violence
- ❖ Expanding special needs support for family reunification, vulnerable children with added burdens such as ASD.

To enable growth, we will need to increase our storage capacity, seek more volunteers, increase access to our program by major community support groups and agencies, and increase the number of donations drives.

There is also an equally important growth opportunity – the program as a community platform. The *We Care Uniting* program provides the opportunity for many other community groups to add to the program. For example, we will be seeking clubs and other groups to take on a specific project such as providing school equipment for children displaced by family domestic violence and similar. This is a win-win increasing the support we can provide, and enabling the partnering community group to reach children in need through the established *We Care* program platform.

A further opportunity is increasing corporate sponsorship and support as the program develops and increases in impact.

Above all program growth will be driven by the energy and motivation of our donors, supporters and volunteers.