



A much-needed break for the whole family at Wesley Disability Services

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Tina's story: People deserve to have a place to call home

Tina was 40 when her partner died, leaving her without a safe place to call home. She moved in with her cousin temporarily, but was forced to leave when her cousin started using drugs. At the same time, Tina also faced serious medical challenges, including brain surgery that left her physically debilitated.

With nowhere to go and no one to turn to, Tina found safety at Wesley Edward Eagar Lodge but was determined to find a long term home of her own.

"Right away, I knew I wanted to work towards getting my own place and started racing around with my case manager on that. I hit the ground running to get my own place, as I knew I could only stay at Wesley Edward Eagar Lodge for a maximum of three months."

Wesley Edward Eagar Lodge is located in the heart of Sydney and provides short term emergency accommodation for both men and women. It was the first residential facility in Sydney to provide individual lockable rooms, providing privacy, dignity, personal space and secure storage for belongings.

With the help of her Wesley Mission caseworker, Tina was able to rent a one bedroom unit of her own. She moved

in with no furniture except a bed, but gradually collected the household basics. She was even able to give some items back to Wesley Edward Eagar Lodge to help more people transitioning out of homelessness.

"I do the same with my annual Christmas hamper—if there's more than I can eat, I donate it to help others. I'd hate for anything to be wasted," Tina said.

Now settled in a safe and secure home, Tina is committed to helping others. She is working on compiling her collection of healthy, low budget recipes as a resource for others who are moving into their own accommodation, and she energetically assists in organising events for socially isolated women who have been homeless.

Tina has retained a strong connection with Wesley Mission, regularly visiting Wesley Edward Eagar Lodge with a



Tina is committed to giving back to the community and helping people who are experiencing homelessness.

batch of her famous brownies to thank the staff who helped her when she was most in need.

"I've been through the works. But I've made it through. And I'm grateful for the support. If someone helps you, you try to give back. That's just how I was raised," Tina reflected. "It's definitely important to support Wesley Mission. People deserve to have a place to call home."

In the past year, Wesley Homeless Services provided 73,735 nights of accommodation and assisted 1,696 people, like Tina, to escape homelessness and take the first steps towards a better life. 🏠

Name and photo have been changed to protect privacy.

Starting the conversation about problem gambling

Responsible Gambling Awareness Week, which ran from 23-29 May 2016, raises awareness each year of the devastating impact problem gambling has on both the individual and on friends and family. This year, the campaign focused on encouraging friends and family members to talk openly about problem gambling.

Financial stress, bankruptcy, homelessness, relationship breakdown and suicidal ideation are very real consequences of problem gambling. For every problem gambler, up to ten other people are directly impacted.

Les, who recovered from his destructive gambling addiction with the help of Wesley Mission, knows from first-hand experience how difficult it can be to talk to loved ones about problem gambling.

“The hardest part about coming clean about my gambling addiction was admitting all the shame and guilt I was carrying about my past,” he reflected.

Sharon Hill, gambling counsellor at Wesley Gambling Counselling, offered some practical advice for people who are concerned that a friend or family member may have a problem with gambling. “I would recommend people to get help early. If you notice behavioural changes that make you suspicious, such as spending more money or time invested in gambling activities, don’t dismiss these early warning signs,” she said.

Established in 1997, Wesley Gambling Counselling provides free, confidential counselling to friends and family as well as to individuals

who are struggling with problem gambling. This includes educating family and friends on strategies to stop enabling gambling behaviours.

“Family and friends often enable their loved ones. When gambling results in being unable to purchase the basics such as groceries, it is only natural that friends and family members step in. The unfortunate consequence is that it often prolongs the gambling behaviour,” Ms Hill explained.

In the past year, Wesley Gambling Counselling provided vital support and counselling to 636 individuals and their families to help them overcome the destructive and all-consuming influence that problem gambling has on their lives.

For more information and support, please contact Wesley Gambling Counselling on 1800 827 638 or Gambling Help on 1800 858 858. 📞



Problem gambling can result in financial stress, bankruptcy, homelessness, relationship breakdown and suicidal ideation.

Zachary and Susan’s story: A much-needed break

Susan always knew that her son Zachary was a little bit different from most children. “He was very fast and very busy and his sister and I struggled to keep up with him. He was out the door if you didn’t lock it. He’d just run, and there was no fear of water or of the road.”

His challenging behaviour began when he was a toddler and increased as he grew older, and Susan struggled to find support and an accurate diagnosis. She was constantly stressed and worried for Zachary’s safety and wellbeing. The effect on the whole family was clear. “It was a struggle. We all just tried really hard to keep sane or hide in our rooms. Everyone needed to be away from each other,” Susan remembered.

It was only when Zachary was in Year 5 that someone suggested that Susan could approach Wesley Disability Services. She had never heard of the service before and was relieved to finally get the support her family so desperately needed. “I couldn’t believe that there was just this opportunity where we could have a rest from one another and regather our thoughts,” she said.

Wesley Mission has been providing respite services for children and adults with disability and their carers since 1996. Wesley Disability Services provides a nurturing, individually focused environment for children and adults with disability, while giving carers and other family members the opportunity of a much-needed rest.

There is much less tension in the family now that Zachary is regularly spending time in respite care from Wesley Disability Services. Zachary’s relationship with his older

sister, in particular, has improved dramatically.

“They each have their own time to recoup, regather, start fresh. Zach might go to respite and we’re all cranky with each other, and by the time he comes home we’ve all missed each other,” Susan said.

Susan is extremely grateful for the support that her family has received from Wesley Disability Services and the big difference it has made to Zachary and to the whole family. “If Zach wasn’t going to respite care, we would be frazzled. I think the little things that we can deal with would become bigger things. Wesley Disability Services was just a saviour, for all of us, including Zach,” she said. 📞



Wesley Disability Services gives Zachary and his family the opportunity to rest, regather and start fresh.

Khale and Keira-lee's story: Finding a family home

Becoming a parent for the first time is never easy, but Khale and Keira-Lee faced a challenge that most of us could not even imagine. The young couple had no safe place to call home while they adjusted to parenthood and cared for their infant daughter.



Khale and Keira-lee were proud to achieve their goal of living independently as a family.

Khale and Keira-lee were homeless and had been couch surfing since their early teens in overcrowded accommodation before they came to Wesley Youth Accommodation Support (WYAS) for help in early in 2015.

“Many young people in this region turn to couch-surfing with friends or extended family because of serious issues in their home. Family violence and relationship breakdown are both big motivators,” said Meena Johnson, program manager at Wesley Youth Accommodation Support.

Khale and Keira-lee wanted to provide the best possible home for their young daughter and to live on their own as a family. A low supply of affordable accommodation in Nambucca Heads, their young age and lack of rental history made this goal almost impossible. They were forced to couch surf, lodging temporarily with different friends and extended family, for the first year of their daughter's life.

“There are number of factors that make it very difficult for

young people to secure stable housing in this region. One is housing affordability and availability; there aren't a lot of rental properties available, especially in certain areas. When 20 or

30 people are showing up to an inspection, a young couple with no rental history don't stand a chance,” Ms Johnson said.

When Khale and Keira-lee were referred to WYAS, however, the young family's situation began to improve. The Transitional Housing Project provided a safe family home for their daughter and the ability to build a rental history.

The couple have used their strengths and worked hard to maintain their transitional accommodation, growing as a family along the way. Over the past 12 months, they developed budgeting skills, independent living skills, and the knowledge to sustain and maintain a successful tenancy and a strong rental history.

With the support provided by Wesley Youth Accommodation Support and glowing references from their time in transitional housing, Khale and Keira-lee were recently able to achieve their dream of moving into a private rental property with their daughter. 🏠



The importance of mentoring

So often in my years at Wesley Mission I have seen in such tangible ways that mentoring is a crucial part of so many of our programs, not least in the work with children and young people. Whenever I visit our programs, talk with our staff or wrestle with a challenge in the delivery of our work, I am drawn to consider the enormous value we place on the process of mentoring. When I look back at my own life, I don't know what I would have done if it hadn't been for some of those people who helped to mentor me.

A mentor is not to be someone upon whom a person becomes dependent, but rather to enable another to be more equipped to be able to look after themselves and explore new areas of life.

We see this dynamic played out in Wesley Aunties & Uncles, a program where positive role models offer practical care to children and young people who are growing up in challenging home environments. By simply spending time together, the 'aunties' and 'uncles' help the children face the challenge of life in difficult circumstances.

Similarly, in Wesley Foster Care we have an education mentoring program for children who are in out of home care. The challenges that children in foster care experience due to trauma,

attachment dysfunction, grief and loss, can have a deep impact on their education. Volunteer teachers and fourth year teaching students work with these children providing one-on-one tutoring and support them in their educational achievement.

Perhaps you have considered becoming a mentor to a young person. If so I can tell you there are many ways to serve in this way. You may already be a grandparent, aunt or uncle and you can approach your relationship with your family more intentionally. Within our wider communities, there are a myriad of opportunities: coaching sports teams, leading scout groups or volunteering at the local school with one-on-one literacy to name a few. Or perhaps you would like to serve as a mentor to a young person in one of Wesley Mission's community services. If so, please contact Wesley Volunteering by emailing volunteering@wesleymission.org.au or by calling 02 9263 5551.

Mentoring a young person can truly be a life-changing experience for all involved—you reap the reward of positively impacting a developing life and that young person is strengthened to grow, create, explore and become all that God intended for them to be. 🌱

Upcoming events



Do all the good you can at the 2016 City2Surf

14 August 2016

Whether you're a competitive runner or a leisurely walker, we invite you to join Wesley Mission's City2Surf team on Sunday 14 August 2016.

You can improve your fitness and enjoy some of the most beautiful scenery in Sydney while fundraising for the Wesley KickStart Program, which helps young people to successfully transition out of care by enabling them to move to independence in a stable, secure environment and find meaningful employment.

For more information visit wesleymission.org.au/city2surf, call 1800 021 821 or email events@wesleymission.org.au

Serve the city at Wesley Urban Mission

26-30 September 2016

In the upcoming September school holidays, Wesley Mission offers a five day mission trip for high school aged students across New South Wales to come together to serve those most in need in the heart of Sydney. The mission trip runs from 26-30 September 2016 and participants will travel from basecamp to the places most in need and discover what it means to love and live like Christ, putting others first.



For more information visit wesleymission.org.au/wesleyurbanmission or call Caitlin on 0438 157 565.

Recently at Wesley Mission

Wesley Doves

On 3 May 2016, a network of generous and caring women came together for the third annual Wesley Doves fundraising luncheon at the historic Queen Victoria Building Tea Rooms. The event raised nearly \$13,000 for Wesley Disability Services to provide much needed support to people with disability and their families.



Sports United

Held on 14 May 2016, this 2016 Sports United annual fundraising luncheon brought together well-known sporting personalities, corporate sponsors and business professionals to raise much-needed funds for Wesley Homeless Services. Together, guests raised more than \$100,000 to support people who are homeless.

Connect with us



Get involved

To volunteer, donate or leave a bequest visit wesleymission.org.au

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**Do all the good you can
because every life matters**

