

Spring 2024 Community in Mission

Supporting families in crisis

Uniting's CRIB program in Ulverstone, Tasmania works closely with families experiencing or at risk of violence, while identifying and responding to other challenges they may be facing, including housing insecurity or financial crisis.

"Our CRIB program offers a wide range of support to families such as prevention, early intervention, harm reduction and ongoing education and support," says Uniting's Family Services Manager for Tasmania, Nicole.



Devonport, Penguin, Burnie and Wynyard Uniting congregations on Tasmania's northwest coast have long offered vital support to the program in the form of donations such as financial contributions, knitted items, bedding and children's toys.

But the program's case worker, Deb, says some of the congregations' most valuable support has been their advice and compassion.

"I meet bi-monthly with representatives from the congregations," says Deb. "We talk about some of the challenges that our families are facing, and they offer practical solutions and spiritual support.

"The stories and the advice they provide, you couldn't get from a textbook. Just beautiful things that align with Uniting's mission and values."

Generous donations from the St Andrew's Foundation and the CockerTwo Trust have been pivotal in keeping the program running.



Uniting is the community services organisation of the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania.

Uniting

Cooking with compassion

Traralgon Uniting Church cooking group.



In July, Uniting partnered with Traralgon Uniting Church to establish a cooking group for those in the local community living with chronic illness, mental health issues or disability.

Uniting Senior Manager for Child, Youth and Families, Toni, says despite the program's infancy it has already been a great success.

"The cooking group is designed to create capacity building or reablement for those who are unable to prepare their own meals," says Toni.



"It provides easy to make, budget friendly, nutritious meals while also offering group members the opportunity for social connection that many may miss due to mental or physical health preventing them from participating in community."

Carer Support Coordinator Angus, who runs the program says, "it's hard to pack up at the end of the day, participants don't want to leave."

"There were lots of happy tears from one participant. She lost

her husband a few years back and he was the chef of the house.

"She herself never did much cooking, so to be brought into a space like this, free of judgement has been so important for her confidence."

Toni says the Traralgon Uniting Church has been very welcoming and supportive of the program and they are excited to watch the service grow over the coming months.

The small congregation with a big heart

Pictured: Preston High Street Uniting Church's final service, 12 June.



After 172 years of being a worshipping community, members of the Preston High Street Uniting Church sadly closed its doors on 12 June. However, the congregation's mission will live on through their generous spirit and contribution to family violence intervention.

"We got down to six people in the congregation," says congregation member, Roslyn.

"We felt our use of resources wasn't good stewardship of God's kingdom. So, that's when we decided to close and direct resources to the wider work of the church."

The Preston High Street congregation donated a generous \$50,000 to Uniting's family violence intervention programs and will donate a further 50% of the property's proceeds once sold.

Family violence prevention has been a long-standing missional priority of the church since 1992, when the congregation began the MEND (Men Exploring New Directions) program.

This program, run through the church's Preston Creative Living Centre, aimed to break the cycle of violence through educating and counselling men who were at risk of perpetrating violence.

"You can't help the women and children if you don't help the men change their understandings and behaviour. You need to break the cycle of violence," says congregation member, Pauline.

For UCA members, Roslyn and Pauline, looking within their own church's resources to illicit change was crucial.

"You need to be brave and take a chance. If it's right, God will intervene and make it happen," said Roslyn.

Manager, Mission and Ethos

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Winter blanket appeal

Your donations have made a significant impact, offering not just physical warmth but also hope and compassion during these past harsh winter months. Your kindness has truly made a difference in the lives of many, ensuring they have the basic comfort of a warm blanket and winter clothes during the coldest nights.



Coffee Cup Challenge

Join our compassionate community in donating the cost of a cup of coffee each week between 1 October and 4 March to support those experiencing crisis, hardship and disadvantage. Your small, regular contributions can make a big difference in someone's life.



Register today at unitingvictas.org.au/coffee



Our volunteers are our greatest strength

Many Uniting Church members have a long history of volunteering in their church and local community as a way of participating in God's restorative project in this world. Providing pathways for church members to volunteer for Uniting's local community programs is a priority for us, and we would love to hear from you. Visit unitingvictas.org.au/volunteer/