

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



GOOD SAMARITAN INN

MAKING A HOME FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

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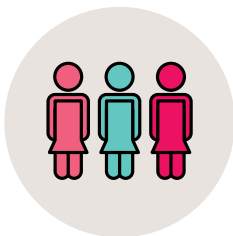
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GOOD SAMARITAN INN

MAKING A HOME FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

2019/2020 Financial Year Snapshot



101 WOMEN
SUPPORTED



89 CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE
SUPPORTED



3,165 BED NIGHTS



AVERAGE LENGTH OF
STAY OF 17 NIGHTS



24 YEARS OF SERVICE



19 STAFF
EMPLOYED



802 VOLUNTEER
HOURS



\$1,585,067
GOVERNMENT
FUNDING AND
GRANTS



\$80,379
DONATIONS



4 STUDENTS
PLACEMENTS
SUPPORTED

From the Chair

Hospitality, hope, compassion, respect, and community are core tenets of the Good Samaritan Inn (GSI). These values are voiced in our new Mission and Vision Statement. This statement captures who we are, what we are and what we strive to achieve.

Recover, regain, and empower are our foundational pillars.

Our vision is to support women and children to:

- Recover from the trauma of family violence and homelessness
- Regain their personal strength and sense of self
- Be empowered to make clear and informed decisions about their next steps.

We will continue to grow and develop our accommodation services to better meet the needs of the people we serve.

2020 has been a challenging year for GSI. We have continued to offer our service during a pandemic and have ensured that the women, children and our staff have remained safe and well. The impact of COVID-19 on the staff and management has been considerable. They are to be commended for the way they have monitored the risk and ensured that we remain compliant with the Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) requirements.

In our 2019 Annual Report, I wrote that GSI was restless to explore ways to do more to support women and children who experience homelessness and family violence. Faithful to this commitment, we have continued to explore ways to achieve this end. Our crisis accommodation facility provides support to women and children as they begin the journey to recovery. The subsequent steps that each woman and child take are contingent on the availability of longer-

term housing and support options. Given that we now have a successful full-time service, we believe we have the capacity and capability to extend our service offerings.

Throughout 2020, we have focused our attention on sourcing a second facility that will accommodate women and children for between 6 and 12 months. During this time, we want to help them to successfully transition into permanent housing and to build their confidence for personal safety and economic self-sufficiency. We hope that 2021 will see the expansion of our service into this second facility.

The GSI Board has responsibility for the oversight of GSI, ensuring it is faithful to the Inn's mission and abiding by the responsibilities assigned by Corporations law. I value and appreciate the support of the Directors who bring a range of skills and experiences to their governance responsibilities. All Directors are committed to the work of GSI and are generous with their time. They willingly collaborate to ensure GSI remains a quality and connected service to the women and children we serve.

Key to the work of the GSI Board are the sub-committees that support the work of the Board. I am grateful to all committee members of the Development, Governance and Standards and Finance and Risk Committees, and to the Chairs of each of the committees who report to the Board.

The Board also expresses its appreciation to the Victorian Government, through the DHHS and Family Safety Victoria, for its financial support of GSI over the past 12 months.

Central to our ability to support and care for the women and children who walk through the door of GSI are the staff who work with them on a 24-hour basis.



Their dedication and commitment to making a difference are at the heart of who we are and what we do. I wish to acknowledge all staff and the work of Felicity Rorke, our Executive Director. Felicity's extensive experience in the sector is a great asset to GSI. She is a skilled practitioner and provides quality leadership to her management team and staff. Her passion, commitment and drive for furthering the service are commendable and very much valued by the Board.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the volunteers, all of whom provide invaluable support and service to the women and children. Without their support, our service would be diminished. They bring good humour, food, friendship and a faithful commitment to GSI.



We continue to undertake capital improvements to our facility. We are in the final stages of refurbishing the bathrooms (including one with disability access) and constructing a fence to further secure the property. Other improvement projects are planned for 2021. We thank the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne for their assistance with these projects.

The Inn strives to live out the mission of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan. We are mindful that our ministry connects back to the Sisters' first ministry in Australia. We are appreciative of the support that is given by Sr Patty Fawkner sgs, the Congregational Leader, to the Trustees, and to Sr Marella Rebgetz sgs, the Chair of Members.

Patricia Bergin
Chair of GSI Board

From the Executive Director

Despite our current global-wide shared experiences with the pandemic, we know that the Coronavirus discriminates. It is impacting those already disadvantaged socially, economically and by race and gender and those at their most vulnerable in terms of age and disability. The divisive politics that we are seeing in the United States and the shockingly high levels of the virus in the most disadvantaged groups in that country alone, provides us with evidence that we all do not share the one humanity despite what some of us think and want to believe. We know that the pandemic has caused us to examine how we treat the older members of our community and if we continue allowing profit to supersede quality care, we will put more elderly and vulnerable people at risk.

Once again family and domestic violence has been highlighted as an issue impacting many people. It is one of the many negative social consequences of the pandemic, along with increased unemployment, homelessness, poverty, isolation, and declining mental health. It is a critical time to consider how we channel our namesake and are 'good Samaritans' to all those struggling and needing our empathy, compassion and support.

At the Inn we reduced the number of women and children staying with us to ensure that we could appropriately apply physical distancing to keep people safe. The early call to 'isolate and stay home' has been heeded by many women and they have been remaining at home despite the inherent danger that they may have been in by not leaving an abusive partner. Possibly even when their instincts told them to leave. We know that during this global pandemic violence increased for many women. What may have been controlling behaviours, emotional or financial abuse, became for the first time, physical violence. This has made it very difficult for family violence specialists to deal with. Women not feeling able to leave during a pandemic but experiencing increased control and increasing levels of physical abuse. COVID-19 is being used as a weapon, according to specialist practitioners, with men keeping their partners locked away and not allowing them to go outside because they will bring the virus back with them or threatening to give them the virus as they supposedly have it. With the additional pressure

of having to home-school children, resulting in further challenges to find the time and privacy to contact support services, it has been the 'perfect storm' for increased levels and complexity of family and domestic violence.

In 2019 GSI closed our doors for six weeks to become fire safe and had assistance from a number of professional services and trades to progress the complicated business of installing fire sprinklers into the old building as well as a fire panel and detector systems in each room. The massive undertaking was complemented with a makeover including painting most of the internal spaces. Thanks to a very generous donation from the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, new furniture and furnishings were purchased for all the guest bedrooms, and a new sitting space with comfortable chairs and bookshelves upstairs. We decided that prior to reopening we would invite external partner agencies and supporters to tour the refreshed look of the Inn. It was a competitive space amongst the staff to see who could accompany the various Sisters of the Good Samaritan upstairs and watch their faces as they saw their old bedrooms converted into modern, light spaces that wouldn't look out of place in a 4-star hotel.

We had around 40 people from referring and partner organisations, our neighbouring schools, the Parish Priest, Bishop Terry Curtin, DHHS, the Sisters, and Board and Committee members come to share lunch to celebrate the new fire safe and refurbished building. A few days prior to the reopening, as the paintwork was drying, and we were starting to accept referrals of women and families for the next week, we received the news that DHHS were increasing our funding to fully cover our organisational operations. For the first time in GSI's 23-year history, we wouldn't have to ask referring organisations to pay for their clients to stay at the service. This would mean small organisations with limited funding would now be able to refer women and families without being concerned about how they could afford to pay the fees. It meant that there would be no further discrimination regarding women and children with no Permanent Residency (PR) in Australia, and consequently often no access to income.

We have supported fewer women and families due to our six-week close down for the fire safety works and then the impacts of the Coronavirus meant that we were required to reduce our numbers to keep our guests and our staff safe from infection. Our responses to the virus have been immediate and comprehensive. Laura, our Finance & Risk Manager, has been actively synthesising every relevant piece of information gleaned from DHHS, the state government, and our peak body DV Vic, to ensure that our COVID Business Continuity Planning and COVID Action Plan have been dynamic and sensitive to our specific needs and circumstances.

GSI staff have been incredibly responsive to such a changing landscape. Direct service staff have continued to operate the Inn, working with fewer supports and having to encourage sometimes unwilling guests into abiding by the new rules we are now having to live by. Regular house meetings were set up to ensure that everyone was informed and reminded of what was required. Management and leadership staff relocated to home-based work and this has meant adapting to new ways of communicating using Zoom and Teams for work and social catch ups. Our committed volunteers have had to cease activities at the Inn but have maintained their presence with us through being part of working groups, providing online content onto our Facebook page, and responding to our surveys and generally staying connected.

As the previous financial year ended in June, we prepared to close for another six-week period to undertake renovations to our bathroom amenities. We plan to install a fully compliant disability bathroom with a new bedroom dedicated to women who have mobility issues downstairs. We are updating all the toilets and bathrooms and have been fortunate to have the assistance of Architects Without Frontiers (AWF) to do this work to support us. AWF has engaged Hayball Architects to create a plan for these works and has also assisted us with plans for a new security fence, a new portable activity room and a lift to gain easy access to the first floor. These works will be undertaken gradually over the next 12 months with the bathrooms and fence being completed during the August to September period. We are also undertaking works to the kitchen to keep the space safe for children whilst we are

closed. Our staff will use this time while we are closed to undertake training and capacity building and we will also be providing critical risk assessment work to safe steps, the 24/7 telephone crisis service, who have experienced increased demand on their service due to the pandemic.

Despite these interruptions, our staff have still been working hard to continue providing women and children with effective responses. We continue to keep women and families at the service until a safe, appropriate next step is found. We have secured access to a transitional property where we are able to support women and families for longer periods of time enabling women with no PR and no income, to be provided with rent-free accommodation and assistance to gain the visa that they require to access an income. Creating new transitional properties in the service system is something that GSI is considering given the chronic shortage of all types of housing and, for some women and families, supported accommodation is critical in their pathway to a life free from violence and through to self-sustained living. We are very committed to supporting women and children beyond the immediate crisis response that we currently provide. We are investigating our impacts through following up with women several months after they leave the service. This allows us to consider how we can more effectively support women for the next part of their journeys.

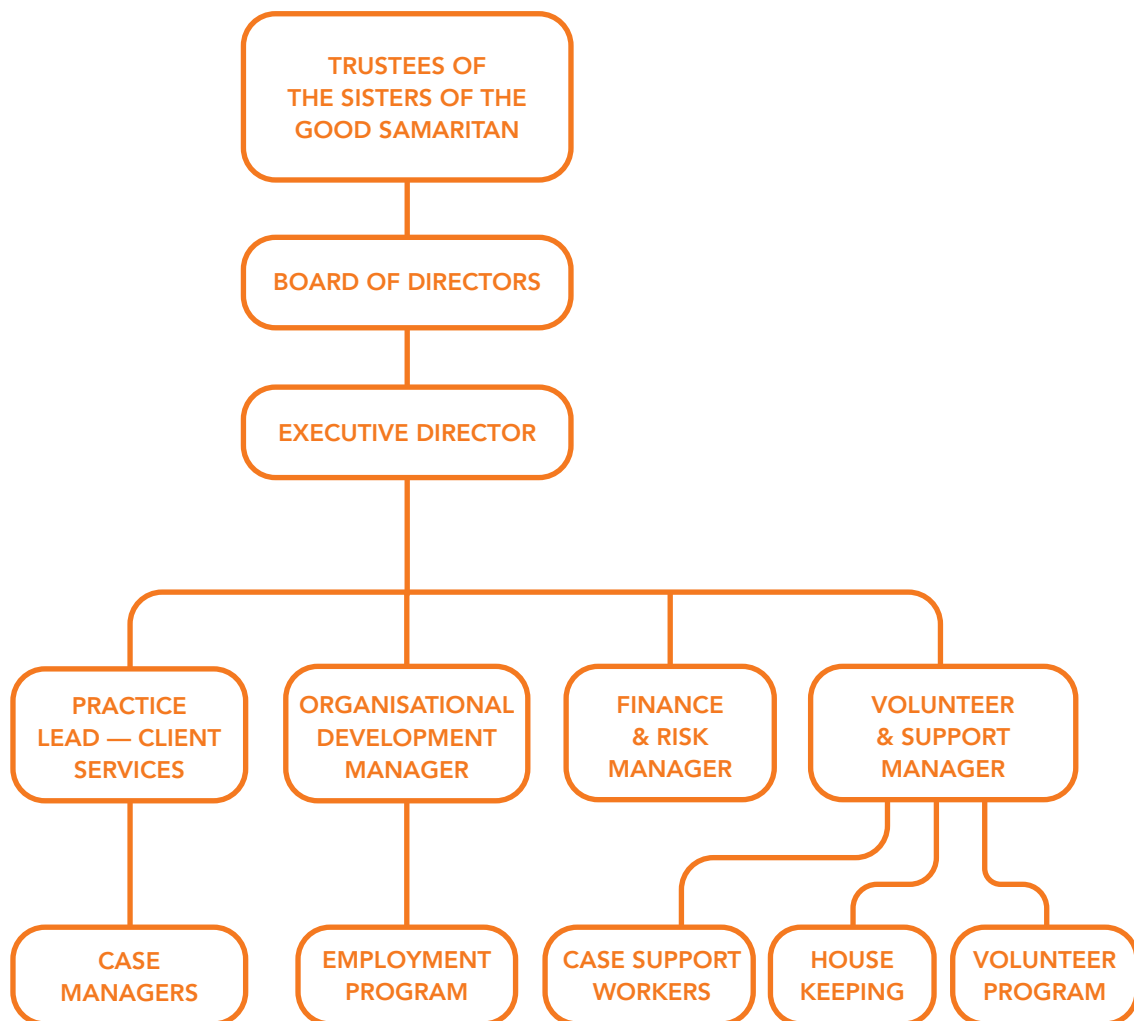
We look forward to a post COVID world although we realistically know that the implications of COVID-19 will be with us for some time to come. We have proven ourselves adaptable and responsive and we will continue in this manner as we move into 2021.

Thank you to all those who have supported GSI's journey throughout this past 12 months.

Felicity Rorke
Executive Director



Our People



Our People

Board

Patricia Bergin
Chair since Feb 2019

Mike Roberts
Deputy Chair since Feb 2019

Scott Hartley
Secretary

Sr Kerin Caldwell

Marie Mohr
Retired in 2019

Jane Seeber

Kate Jackson

Simone Tassone
Joined in 2020

Committees

Development Committee

Mike Roberts Chair
Felicity Rorke
Marie Mohr
Patricia Bergin
Ronnie Egan

Felicity Rorke
Jane Seeber
Laura Kubeil
Patricia Bergin

Governance and Standards Committee

Sr Kerin Caldwell Chair
Bronwyn Lane
Felicity Rorke
Kate Jackson
Patricia Bergin

Finance, Risk and Audit Committee

Scott Hartley Chair
Andrew Finn

Staffing

Executive Director Felicity Rorke

Practice Lead Cymantha Thompson

Finance and Risk Manager Laura Kubeil Webb

Organisational Development Manager
Valerie Richards

Volunteer and Support Manager
Kirsty Manning

Case Managers

Nardine
Nga
Hazel

Case Support Workers

Sally
Renata

Housekeeping

Annette
Milva

Crisis Accommodation

The direct service work at GSI has changed and evolved in many ways during the past 12-18 months.

We currently have capacity to support five families and two single women with the availability of an eighth room downstairs for any clients with mobility issues preventing them from accessing the upstairs bedrooms. We also have a new transitional property that can accommodate three single women or a single woman and a small family.

We continue to support guests for longer stays ensuring exit plans are comprehensive, well thought-through and that the appropriate immediate and ongoing support services are in place before the women and children leave our service.

Our work with clients during the day has expanded with a dedicated case manager on site from 9am to 5pm Monday to Fridays; accompanied by the guidance and backup of both the Practice Lead and Child and Family Practitioner. This has meant that our service is able to provide more support to women and children to accompanying guests to external appointments such as Centrelink, Child Protection and Immigration services. It also results in our staff being able to advocate more effectively for clients by connecting them with the right services at the right time. The outreach support has been particularly invaluable to our guests from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, especially if they are new to Australia and may have language barriers to add to their lack of knowledge of the service system here. To have a worker speak your language is a very powerful advocacy tool as well as being immensely reassuring to a woman. At GSI we have several staff who are bilingual, creating another layer of support and understanding that is critical for some women. The current languages our Case Managers speak include Arabic, Tagalog and Vietnamese and enable a deeper level of advocacy and the ability to translate relevant and critical information for women.

The renovations at the end of 2019 inspired new energy to our work at the Inn and there was a swift uptake for our vacant rooms immediately upon reopening. The new refurbished Inn is an extra special environment to work in and all the staff feel very proud showing guests to their new fresh and modern rooms.

The Good Samaritan Inn Transitional Housing Program welcomed its first tenants in 2020. The property allows GSI to continue working with clients post their stay at the Inn and is particularly focused on clients who have no Permanent Residency (PR) in Australia. This has been a very positive initiative and provides significant benefits and interesting challenges for us providing the outreach to the clients living there, particularly as we are providing support and tenancy management. We are all continuing to learn and grow with this program and its development.

COVID-19 saw GSI reduce capacity in March this year. Due to restrictions and to maintain physical distancing practices, GSI was only able to accommodate guests into four rooms. The staff rose to the challenge and ensured all strict DHHS guidelines were adhered to, to keep our guests and staff safe and healthy. The resulting restrictions meant exits to a refuge response and other housing options were reduced and GSI maintained support for clients for a much longer period than usual to ensure the safety and appropriate exit planning for our guests.

The work we do at GSI continues to involve walking alongside guests with varying complex needs. As a service we have expanded our partnerships to also include Flat Out (support service for women connected to the Justice system), Odyssey House, United Care ReGen (both alcohol and other drugs support services) and VincentCare Homelessness and Housing Service. We continue to work closely with our long-term partners safe steps Family Violence Response Centre, The Orange Door, Merri Outreach Support Service (MOSS), Berry Street Northern Family Violence Specialist Service, Haven Home Safe, Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Service, Georgine Martina Inc, WISHIN and Mary Anderson Salvation Army.

Children and Young People

The Children & Young Person's Program has also continued to develop and grow throughout the past year. We have spent time thinking about how we can best hear and listen to the voices of children and young people through feedback, experiences and through the development of their individual case plans. GSI staff have been able to support many children and young people and play a positive role in their journeys.

GSI staff strengthen their knowledge of working with children who have been impacted by family violence, through participating in training and capacity building, including the Children in Refuge training. GSI has also used peer supervision and individual supervision to discuss and reflect on the best ways to support and engage with children and young people. Being able to reflect on interactions, conversations and observations

about children and young people, helps us grow as practitioners and learn how to continue making a difference in their lives. There have been significant improvements in how GSI staff interact and communicate with children and young people creating more effective and child-friendly responses.

The program began including child specific case plans and risk assessments in line with the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM). This is an exciting addition to the program, as GSI and the rest of the Family Violence sector focus on the needs of the children and young people, and the risk that they face when exposed to family violence. Child-focused plans are something that GSI will need to continue to develop, expand on and change as staff improve how they ask and identify the risks and needs of children and young people.



GSI was able to support many children and young people and achieved many positive outcomes over the past year. GSI staff worked with mothers to inform them of the impact that family violence has on children and young people, reconnected mothers and their children, and spent time role modelling play activities. GSI staff were able to see many children and young people grow, learn, and establish important milestones in a safe and secure environment.

Spaces

During the year, the art room/children's space was turned into a staff sleep-over room as more additional rooms for guests were required. This meant that children's activities were held outside under the verandah and in communal areas such as the dining area.



Holding activities outside under the verandah has created a positive link to GSI's new Sensory Garden. Many children and young people have found joy and peace in the space outside and being able to use nature in art and craft activities has been beneficial. It has been wonderful to see children, young people, their mother's, and the other guests, connect with the garden and use the space for all sorts of activities.

GSI has been working towards getting a 'portable' which will be set up in the backyard. The portable will be used for the Children's Program, as well as future

Children and Young People

activities and groups for the women. The portable will hopefully continue to provide the connection between activities and the garden and offer space for children and young people to freely express themselves.

Pet Therapy

Continued GSI has been fortunate to have access to Pet Therapy through Lort Smith's Animal Hospital. Jinkee and his owner Sofia have been coming to GSI for a couple of years and Jinkee enjoys spending time outside running around with the children and having cuddles from the guests. The children, young people and women all enjoy the time spent with Jinkee. Many children who are nervous around dogs at first, tend to end the sessions wanting to cuddle or pat Jinkee and Banjo.

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, the Pet Therapy Program has been put on hold like most other activities undertaken by external partners.

Art Group

Berry Street Family Violence practitioners come to GSI weekly on a Wednesday afternoon for two hours to facilitate an Art Therapy Program for the children. The sessions in the past year have included, painting canvasses, sand play, nature walks, nature art, dancing, cultural painting, playdoh, and cooking. The children and young people who have participated in the sessions have all reported positive feedback and have been excited when they hear that the session is running. Berry Street is a very positive component to the GSI Children & Young Peoples' Program and has supported the reconnection between mothers and their children through art and play. During the pandemic this program has also had to be put on hold.

Farewell to Victoria

As my time as the Child and Family Practitioner ends, I hope that I have helped facilitate staff and volunteers listening more intently to the important voices of the children and young people who stay at GSI and who will stay here in the future. The program has been set up in a way that has educated the staff to work from a child-led perspective and to keep children and young people in their minds through everything they do.

GSI will continue to focus on children and young people and will need to continue to focus on training around working and engaging with children and young people.

We would like to express our deep gratitude for Victoria and confirm that she has had a huge impact on how all GSI staff interact with and 'hear' the voices of children and young people. She began as a student on placement and carved a very special role as an unwavering advocate for children and young people at the service. We will miss her enormously but know that she is on her pathway to become a counsellor and wish her every success in her future.



Volunteer Program



802 HOURS VOLUNTEERED



33 ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS



OVER 200 EVENING MEALS PREPARED



100% OF VOLUNTEERS SURVEYED FELT THAT THEIR EFFORTS WERE APPRECIATED AND RECOGNISED

100% OF VOLUNTEERS SURVEYED FELT THAT THEIR VIEWS AND FEEDBACK ON THE ORGANISATION WERE SOUGHT



GSI's rich history of volunteerism was complemented by unprecedented expressions of interest from new volunteers this year. With 95% of our volunteers saying they would recommend the program to others, our team of volunteers continues to grow in numbers, diversity and skill. Volunteers at GSI are committed to providing safe and respectful interactions with guests, while supporting the organisation to enhance and expand its programs and outcomes.

GSI volunteers prepared over 200 evening meals to women and children staying at GSI this year, provided emotional and practical support, facilitated and supported activities such as our sensory garden sessions, pet therapy sessions and children's art and play. They fixed things, made things, tidied and reset things, ensuring the house was safe, clean and welcoming for all who stayed. Every volunteer shift has an impact and we are truly grateful for the generosity, dedication and compassion our volunteers show.

"I feel I am valued and appreciated by clients and staff, and that what I do is worthwhile"

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have had to suspend the majority of our volunteer activity and are not currently inducting new volunteers. We look forward to welcoming our volunteers back once it is safe to do so and to creating new opportunities for volunteer involvement in the 'COVID normal' world. We encourage you to get

in touch with our Volunteer Manager in the meantime if you would like to learn more about the volunteer program or register your interest.

Award winning Volunteers

GSI's Tim Rankin (pictured) was one of 58 volunteers to receive a 'Victorian Premier's Volunteer Champions Award' at the end of 2019. The awards were created to recognise the incredible impact volunteers have in building our communities, services and connections. Winning a service award for making persistent and selfless contributions to the organisation, Tim has been volunteering his time and skills to the Inn for 23 years. You'll often find Tim walking through the back gate with timber in one hand and homemade biscuits in the other. A handy man with endless talents, and a positive male role model in a sensitive environment, Tim is truly a worthy recipient and a valued member of the volunteer team.



What our volunteers enjoy most about volunteering at GSI:

"I enjoy making a difference and that every shift is different..."

"I love working with the children and providing them with the opportunity to feel completely listened to, catered to and recognised..."

"I enjoy just being there. There is a great atmosphere of acceptance, respect and care..."

GSI Employment Program

In 2020 GSI's Employment Program connected with the broader sector, developed key business partners and has been piloting the most suitable and effective program structure and delivery method to meet critical outcomes for women who have experienced family violence.

Our key focus has been to leverage our expert knowledge as family violence specialists and develop strategic partnerships with trusted businesses that facilitate a pathway for women to gain access to employment, which would otherwise be a barrier for them. This led to the development of a six month, 1:1 mentorship program based on the EMPATH framework. An evidence-based US model that looks at poverty alleviation and trauma differently. The framework is based on a roadmap out of poverty; a bridge to self-sufficiency. This bridge is about a journey that we can take women on and support her across the five pillars of life (Family Stability, Physical and Mental Well-being, Financial Management, Education and Employment and Career). The purpose of this model is to motivate sustainable change in the life of victim survivors through walking alongside an employment coach who facilitates, motivates and supports this change. Whilst engaged in coaching and setting long-term goals, the aim is that women maintain paid work and start their journey to self-sufficiency.

We have achieved critical key partnerships with:

- inTouch (Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence)
- Danihers Facility Maintenance
- PRACE (Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education)
- EMPATH Mobility Mentoring training facilitated by WISHIN to all staff at GSI.

Due to COVID-19, like many services and programs, GSI's Employment Program was put on hold due to the safety of the participants and employees of the program. We are excited about the prospect of recommencing the program and finding much needed employment and support for women during this unprecedented time.



Student Update

In the second half of 2019, two RMIT students completed their Social Work placements at GSI. The students were able to develop GSI's Crisis Therapeutic Service Model – a critical piece of work that current staff continue to build on and integrate into practice. This involved interviewing current guests, staff, volunteers and external services. The students were able to synthesise a journey map of guests staying at the Inn and articulate our service model.

Alongside the development of the Crisis Model, our student Anne was able to develop a sensory garden from concept to reality. The sensory garden incorporates a water pump, sand play area and natural peaceful garden spaces. Anne was able to source funding and implement this sensory garden and begin a weekly therapeutic program for guests at the Inn.

The sensory garden and accompanying program gives women, children and young people the opportunity to connect to the natural world in a restorative and

therapeutic way. It offers opportunities for deep engagement, providing respite from fatigue and worry. Self-esteem and self-efficacy are enhanced through creating and sustaining gardens. The sensory garden offers the opportunity to experience being part of the rhythms and seasons of nature and to experience the interdependence between the plant and the gardener. Thank you, Anne, for all your work!

In the first half of 2020 we saw a further two Social Work students complete their placements. Our students showed great resilience in the midst of the changing COVID-19 environment. The students were able to take part in post-stay interviews, cultural safety planning, risk assessments, case noting and direct service work.

GSI will continue to commit to being a learning environment that aims to train the best practitioners to support the critical work of women, young people and children experiencing family violence and homelessness.

Acknowledgements

Trustees of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan

Sr Patty Fawkner sgs
Sr Marella Rebgetz sgs
Sr Catherine McCahill sgs
Sr Veronica McCluskie sgs
Sr Meg Kahler sgs

Schools

Mater Christi College, Belgrave
Nazareth College, Noble Park North
Parade College, Preston
Sacred Heart Primary School, Preston
Santa Maria College, Northcote
St Bernard's Primary School, Coburg East
St Columba's College, Essendon
St Joseph's College, Ferntree Gully

Parishes, Community Groups and Individuals

Ged Kearney MP
Airport West Rosary Group
Fr John McCarthy
Bridge Church
Blessed Sacrament Fathers Melbourne
Catholic Women's League –
Melbourne Archdiocesan Committee
Knights of the Southern Cross –
Doncaster/Templestowe
Northern Community Church of Christ
Rotary Club of Central Melbourne
Rotary Club of Preston
Sacred Heart Parish, Preston
The Tuesday Club of Sacred Heart Preston
St Bernard's Parish, Coburg East
St Leonard's Parish Glen Waverley
Within Reach Integrated Network
Andy Kuppe, Sally Ryan and John Nicholls,
Parade College
Sisters of the Good Samaritan, Melbourne
Fr Bill Edebohl
Chris & Di Dixon
St Bernadette's Parish, Ivanhoe

Businesses

Asher Greenwood, GKA Architects
Hayball Architects
Alphington Bowls Club
Brightlight
Chris Power, PowerProjects
GKA Architects
Good 360
The Nappy Collective
SNAP printing, Preston
LCI Consultants
Architects without Frontiers
Blake Bambridge

Grants and Foundations

Alannah & Madeline Foundation
Fr Kevin Broderick Memorial Trust
Good Samaritan Foundation
MF Foundation
Myer Community Fund
Preston Connected Community
Victorian Women's Benevolent Trust
Multicultural Community Infrastructure Fund

Partners

Berry Street Northern Family & Domestic Violence Specialist Service
Catholic Social Services Victoria (CSSV)
City of Darebin
Darebin Information Volunteer Resource Service (DIVRS)
Domestic Violence Victoria (DV Vic)
Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Services (EMH)
Flat Out
Georgina Martina Inc.
Haven; Home Safe
inTouch Multicultural Service Against Family Violence
Lort Smith
McAuley Community Services for Women
safe steps Family Violence Response Centre
The Bridge – Preston & Thornbury
The Orange Door – NEMA
Women's Health in the North (WHIN)
Women's Information, Support and Housing in the North (WISHIN)
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)

Adika's Story



Adika was born in Kenya. She arrived in Australia through a partner visa which was sponsored by her Australian immigrant husband, who was also from Kenya. They have an almost two-year-old son who was born in Australia.

During Adika's pregnancy, her husband, whose alcohol use had increased, became violent and abusive towards her. Adika believed that her husband's behaviour when drunk can lead to severe harm or even to her death. During her ordeal, Adika tried her best to protect her son and shield him from the traumatic environment, until she decided to reach out for help. Adika called Safe Steps and was provided support by the local family violence hub, The Orange Door, who helped Adika and her son escape the abusive home.

The Orange Door found emergency accommodation, for Adika and her son, and linked Adika with case management support with the Berry Street Crisis Response team. After a week in this motel room, Adika and her son were referred to the Good Samaritan Inn (GSI). Having no relatives, no income, limited friends, and only in possession of Bridging visas, they needed assistance. Thus, GSI provided Adika and her son with supported accommodation for three months.

Whilst staying at GSI, Adika applied for Protection visas because she feared that she and her son could suffer violence if they return to Kenya. GSI staff supported her to overcome the challenges of the visa application and assisted her to apply for funding available for families without permanent residency.

Aside from providing culturally appropriate food for Adika and her son, GSI provided daily transport passes so that she can regularly see her GP for the foot injury she sustained before she escaped from her husband. GSI made sure that she has funding to buy medicines for her foot injury and diagnosed depression. Toward the end of their stay, Adika had to have foot surgery, and whilst her son was beginning to open up to mum and GSI staff by being more verbal about his emotions, he was increasingly requiring more of her attention.

GSI supported Adika by making up a bedroom for them on the ground floor of the building, ensuring Adika felt comfortable once she returned from surgery. This also allowed GSI staff to better support Adika to respond and care for her son whilst she recovered. Regular counselling was also provided to her.

After three months at GSI, the family was referred to a long-term-stay refuge for survivors of family violence.

Amy's Story



Amy met her husband when she was 30 years old. She has been married for 8 years and they have 2 children, Lucas 4 years old and Noah a toddler at 16 months. Amy had a turbulent marriage. At first her husband was very protective of Amy, but later showed signs of possessiveness when he would become extremely short-tempered and aggressive. Amy tolerated it for years but his abusive behaviour escalated when he became addicted to drugs. Amy and the children were becoming more and more frightened of being at home, particularly when he had friends over at the house and they took drugs. Amy also feared the significant impact an abusive father would have on her two boys, particularly Lucas, who was showing signs of mimicked aggression and temperament. Amy has never worked since she got married. Her husband controlled the money and spent most of his pay on drugs.

Amy made the decision to leave with her children and took sanctuary with a friend who lived interstate. Her husband was very upset, he apologised profusely and begged her to return home. He made promises to her that he would change; that he will stop using drugs and be a better husband and father to the children. Amy agreed to give him another chance, and returned home with the children. After only a space of just two weeks, his behaviour regressed. One night her husband asked her for money to buy drugs. She didn't give him the money. He threatened to kill her. She was so intimidated by him and feared for her life and for the children. She took the children and hid in the closet. She messaged her friend and explained what had happened and her friend called the police.

The police referred Amy to Safe Steps (the 24/7 Family Violence crisis service) and was then referred to GSI for emergency accommodation. When Amy arrived

at GSI, she was mentally unstable. She was very reserved and had no self-confidence and seemed to be suffering from anxiety. Amy was reluctant to discuss her issues. Staff at GSI continued to show understanding and empathy towards Amy, and in time, established trust and respect. This allowed her to open up and share her feelings. Amy started to rebuild her sense of self and knew she did not want to continue being in a toxic relationship with her husband. It wasn't a safe environment for her to raise her children with confidence and safety. Amy reported that she had already seen signs of her oldest child, Lucas, displaying the same characteristics as his father. He witnessed his dad mistreating his mum and imitated his behaviour with no respect or feeling for his mum. Lucas wasn't able to express himself and believed that the only way to get his way was to kick and scream. This distressed Amy greatly and became very challenging for her.

GSI referred Amy to a counsellor for her mental health and parenting strategies; and to a Community Housing provider, who found Amy and her children a brand new 2 bedroom accommodation for long term housing. Initially, Amy was unwilling to accept this offer as she was scared to live on her own. Amy has now settled into a new life; safe in her home with her children. Amy was also referred to another Family Violence Specialist service for ongoing support located near to where she had moved to. She has reconnected with her mother after not seeing her for two years due to her husband discouraging her to see her family and now lives within a close distance to her mother who is able to offer support to Amy and her children. She appears to be more confident, says she feels empowered to make good decisions and can live independently. She has not been in contact with her husband since.



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