



Uniting together in kindness.

In the lead up to Christmas last year, we received four times more requests for support than the previous year. So, we reached out to ask our community to unite together in kindness to support children, adults, and families in the way they need it most at Christmas.

It was heartwarming and humbling to see the community come together to support each other. We can't thank the Uniting Church in the City enough for their generous donation, which provided Foodbank WA vouchers to help more than 944 individuals and families during a time when they faced considerable financial pressures.

We were also incredibly grateful for the monetary donations and contributions of food, toys, backpacks, water bottles, and other items. Many people who supported us also gave the gift of their precious time, picking up and delivering food, packing hampers, and preparing vouchers.

We're thankful to our community for uniting with us in kindness at Christmas, it simply wouldn't have been possible without you.

We share just a few of the comments we received from people supported:

"I would like to thank you very much for the Foodbank WA voucher. Not only did the voucher help with my December food budget, it also made me feel valued. Your gift will always be remembered."

"My little girl really thought it was Christmas with all the food she had to eat...she didn't know what to choose first!!!"

"You have no idea how much this means to me and my family. There would be no family Chrissy meal if it wasn't for your generosity. God bless u."

"Thank you very much from the bottom of my heart.....For many including my family this time of year is always very difficult financially."

Save paper and receive this newsletter by email.

Contact comms@unitingwa.org.au or sign up on our website.

Uniting WA kaadidj Noongar Moort Keyen Kaadak nidja boodja narnga ngaala yangka ngaalang noondakiny maar. Ngaala karnitj-djinang baalabiny kooranyi Midjiyoop boodja kepa. Ngaala maara-baron yira-ak kooralong kalyakool
Bardip Yira-Maaman boodjara karroyal ngaala karodjin
Koorakor birdiyar, koora, yeyi.

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Raine Square exhibition challenging the stigma of homelessness.

Raine Square partnered with UneARThed and Uniting WA recently to present the Gratitude Gallery, an exhibition of works by five local artists who have lived experiences of homelessness.

Uniting was delighted to be the project's beneficiary, receiving a \$1 donation for every QR code scanned at the exhibition.

The mission of the showcase was to create passion without prejudice by sharing the unique perspectives of those who have lived experience of homelessness.

The Gratitude Gallery ran from 13 January to 6 February 2022 at Raine Square in Perth City.

The money donated to Uniting WA will help fund homelessness support services, including the Tranby Engagement Hub, transitional accommodation programs and homeless outreach.

What's happening at Tranby?

There has been a buzz of activity at the Tranby Engagement Hub. We share a few highlights with you below.

Key Worker, Debbie, has been running weekly guided meditation sessions teaching simple breathing techniques. A regular attendee said: *"Meditation helps me get through the day. Just by taking a half-hour to relax, clear my mind and just turn off from all that is going on around makes a big difference to the way I approach the world and deal with what goes on."*

We're delighted that the team at *Short Back and Sidewalks* are now visiting Tranby on a fortnightly basis. Their team of volunteers are kind enough to provide haircuts, beard trims and blow dries free of charge. It is amazing to see how the simple act of a fresh haircut can boost a person's confidence and brighten their day.

Our Financial Wellbeing Services team is hosting regular pop-up information booth sessions where people can talk about their financial matters and concerns. Our Financial Counsellors have also been sharing tips on budgeting and money management.



Essential items to support the most vulnerable members of our community.

The Uniting Tranby Engagement Hub for people experiencing homelessness is running low on essential toiletries, including shampoo and conditioner, disposable shavers, body wash and new male (sizes medium to 2XXL) and female (sizes 8 to 16) underwear. Tranby is also running low on instant coffee, tea, sugar and cereal. If you're interested in donating any of these items to Tranby, we'd be very grateful for any support you can offer. For more information about how to donate, call (08) 9220 1288 or email tranby@unitingwa.org.au.

A brighter Christmas for a child in care.

A 9-year-old child who had been living in a Uniting family group home moved in with his new foster carer late last year, after he and the carer formed a special bond.

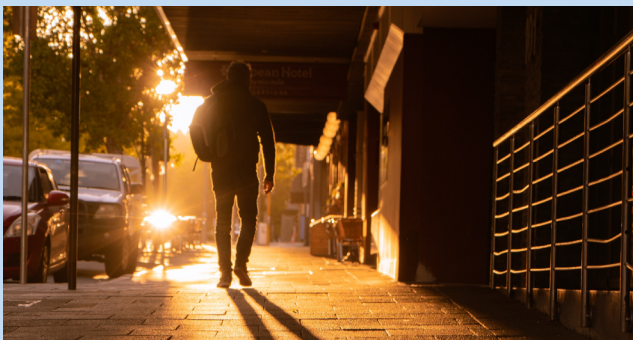
The carer came on board with Uniting following a foster care recruitment campaign which ran in late 2020. The carer completed the application and assessment process and was approved to become a foster carer a month or so before Christmas 2021.

At the same time as Uniting was undertaking the recruitment process with the carer, it was determined that a foster care placement would be more suitable for the child, who needed one-on-one support. The timing couldn't have been more perfect. The child and carer were introduced and spent time getting to know one another in preparation for the child to move into the carer's home.

Our Family Group Homes and Foster Care teams collaborated behind the scenes to ensure the placement became a success, working together to organise meetings and to ensure both parties felt supported through their journey.

Christmas was a special time for the child and carer, who enjoyed a family celebration together for the first time.

If you're interested in learning more about foster care with Uniting, visit unitingwa.org.au/fostercare. You can also call us on 1300 663 298 or email us at fostercare@unitingwa.org.au.



Lived experience: Josh's story of hope after homelessness.

The Beds for Change program offered Josh* the support he needed to get back on his feet, find employment and transition out of homelessness. We share a snapshot of Josh's inspiring story here.

"I was born in Ryde Hospital in Sydney and spent the first two years of my life there before my family moved to South Australia.

I was an only child; my mother was an alcoholic. I had to look after her a lot. A lot of the time I was on the street drinking at a very young age. I wasn't really socialising with good people and I was taken advantage of a lot.

There weren't many people who gave me the mindset that I was any good, my mother made me think that I was like her

and made me believe that I was worthless, that I couldn't do anything about it. But my grandparents taught me that I can really do anything, and I stopped taking drugs and drinking. They were hard on me, but I needed it. I saw the light at the end of the tunnel.

I was 27 years old when I came over to WA thinking that I had a legitimate job in the south west, turned out it wasn't. That's how I ended up homeless.

I spoke to the team at Tranby and they told me I could apply for Beds for Change and they helped me get through all that. I got a place at Beds for Change, re-did my CV and asked them if I could use that as my residential address. They agreed and two days later, I had a job.

Beds for Change was awesome, it's a program that should be done more often because it really helps people.

My advice to anyone in a similar situation is to think back to all the things you've done well in your life and remember that you can do it again."

To read Josh's story in full, visit the News & Resources page on the [Uniting WA website](https://unitingwa.org.au).

*Name has been changed to protect privacy.



Positive Behaviour Support helping people live their best life.

We're thrilled to announce the launch of our new Positive Behaviour Support service, supporting children and adults with behaviours of concern that limit their ability to live a full life.

The service recognises that behaviours of concern happen for a reason and are often used to communicate an unmet need.

Uniting team members Sandra Divanian and John Fulker lead the new service. Each brings a unique skill set that sees them combine clinical knowledge with on-the-ground skills and experience.

As a person-centred NDIS provider, Uniting uses evidence-based strategies that are responsive to a person's needs to reduce the occurrence and impact of behaviours of concern.

Sandra, who has a degree in Psychology, said: "Positive Behaviour Support is a meaningful service that recognises individuality and the importance of providing tailored services to meet a person's needs."

"When we focus on improving a person's quality of life, enhancing skills, and building capabilities, naturally, behaviours of concern subside," she said.

"I look forward to being a part of something that no longer takes a 'one-size-fits all' approach, rather embracing every person's story," added Sandra.

John, who has more than 20 years of experience supporting people with disability, said: "I have always found it amazing the impact the positive behaviour approach can have."

"The difference in a person's life and the lives of the people supporting them can be massively improved through the Positive Behaviour Support approach," he said.

Uniting NDIS Participants and external NDIS Participants, as well as those without an NDIS plan can access Uniting Positive Behaviour Support services.

If you'd like to learn more about Positive Behaviour Support, call John or Sandra on 1300 663 298 or email them at behavioursupport@unitingwa.org.au.

"If people we support are to achieve the lifestyle they desire; we need to understand them. Understanding requires insight, time and empathy."

- Michael Smull

Mr Smull has worked with people with disabilities since 1972. He is the Chair of The Learning Community for Person Centered Practices and is a senior partner at Support Development Associates.