



Diocesan e-News

AGE is NO BARRIER to MAKING a DIFFERENCE

Local Buninyong resident Ailish Ryan has proven that age is no barrier to making a difference. Ailish is a Year 4 student at Emmaus Catholic Primary School, Mt Clear. Recently Ailish witnessed homelessness in Melbourne while visiting with her parents, Alan and Narelle and brother Oliver. She saw people sleeping on the sides of the road and in the streets. When she saw these scenes Ailish shared that she felt so sad and that she wanted to be able to help in some way. This was not just a thought that Ailish had at the time and then forgot about soon after, she returned to Ballarat and immediately put her thinking cap on.

Ailish has since visited Fr Constantine at the Ballarat Shower Bus. She has also visited the Soup Bus too. She approached a member of the Emmaus staff team, Jo O'Kelly, who shares a strong passion for social justice action at Emmaus and requested her support to take action. Ailish made contact with the aforementioned with the intention of finding out what she could do to support those whose lives are filled with challenge as a result of homelessness. Whilst Ailish was visiting the team at The Shower Bus it was suggested to her by Fr Constantine that a letter, card or even a drawing would make so many homeless and less fortunate Ballarat locals feel that someone cared. So, Ailish now has a campaign. It is called the 'Sunshine Letters' campaign. Ailish decided on this name for her campaign as in her words, "I hope the letters will brighten up someone's day and also because the sun makes you feel warm and happy."

Ailish has a goal to deliver three hundred letters, cards and/or drawings in total to both the Shower Bus and the Soup Bus. She is requesting children and adults choose to participate. A letter/card/drawing can be titled... 'Dear friend...' and within it can include whatever it is that ones heart and mind desires. It has also been suggested that when signing your entry that you do so using your christian name only.

Ailish's dad, Alan built a gorgeous yellow letter box that sits proudly in the Emmaus Catholic Primary School, Social Justice Space. The space itself has a provocative question that reads in large font, 'How can we contribute to a most just future for all?' There are many opportunities to contribute in the space including the Sunshine Letters Campaign. Letters are being posted daily and Ailish is busy counting. Ailish plans to continue counting until she has collected three hundred entries before delivering them to the Shower Bus and the Soup Bus for those in our community who will benefit from Ailish's 'sunshine' and some of the Emmaus Catholic Primary School community 'sunshine' too.

Below is a letter formed by Emily who is a Year 5 student at Emmaus.

Dear friend,

I hope you are having a great day today. If you ever think that no one sees you, that's not true. I see you and I care about you. I have written this letter to put sunshine in your life so just remember that I care. As long as you have this letter then I hope you're not alone.

If you would like to participate and offer your own 'sunshine' to Ailish's Sunshine Letters campaign, you can post your letter to Emmaus Catholic Primary School, 1503 Geelong Road, Mt Clear, 3350 or alternatively email letters to admin@emtclear.catholic.edu.au. All are welcome.





"Recently we visited the shower bus and delivered some 'Sunshine Letters.' It was so lovely because the kids had the opportunity to see a client walk away squeaky clean with two 'Sunshine Letters' tucked under his arm with a spring in his step. He waved and thanked the kids for his letters." *Narelle Ryan*

Fr Constantine pictured with Ailish.

Joanne O'Kelly - Nyereeka Level Leader and Social Justice leader