



Making new beginnings possible.

In standing with people living life at the margins and **raising our collective voice for change**, together we create opportunities for people to thrive.

For over 20 years, people in the Ballarat community looking for a hot meal and a warm welcome, have found both at BreezeWay.

Now, the community meals service has outgrown its premises and plans are underway to move to a new space. Our generous partners like Jillian Oliver (above) from the Oliver Foundation, have made the relocation possible. **See full story on page 3.**

Learn more

1800 668 426
vt.uniting.org

Uniting



Spring into a season of new starts

At Uniting, we act to have impact – and we couldn't do any of it without your support. **Thanks to your generosity this winter, we can continue to bring care, compassion and positive change into our community this spring.**

Spring is in the air and, with it, longer days, warmer nights, and the distinct excitement that begins to build with Christmas not that far away. It's a time of possibility, opportunity and renewed hope.

Since the last newsletter, we've provided hundreds of meals to people in Melbourne through our winter breakfast program.

This program was launched at a breakfast event in May, where a panel of experts spoke on the connections between financial vulnerability, social isolation and poor mental health. The best support treats each person as an individual, taking time to understand their unique needs and making sure the services they need are joined up. Many of those who attend the winter breakfast program and other community meals tell us that they came for the company and warm welcome as much as the meal. It's this compassion and care that makes a real difference, and it isn't possible without your support.

There is always more to be done and we hope you will consider getting involved. Actions such as signing the Everybody's Home petition to call for a fairer housing system or sending a message to our leaders that it's time to raise the rate of Newstart and Youth Allowance all help to bring about change.

Encouraged by all that we've achieved together, I'm looking forward to the opportunities that spring will bring. Thanks to you, many people in our community can enjoy their own season of fresh starts.



If you'd like more information about what we are doing and how you can support us please visit our website **vt.uniting.org** or call **1800 668 426**.

Thank you for making each new beginning possible.

Paul Linossier
Chief Executive Officer





A new home for BreezeWay

Where people move from crisis to stability

For over 20 years, people in the Ballarat community looking for a hot meal and a warm welcome have found both at BreezeWay. People facing or experiencing homelessness find shelter, a safe place to be themselves and make the changes they want in their lives.

Each day, 75 people walk through the doors of BreezeWay seeking support for what are often complex needs, which can include housing, mental health issues and addiction. 365 days a year, we offer them the care they need to find strength to make positive changes in their lives.

Now, BreezeWay has outgrown its premises and plans are underway to move to a new space.

Our generous partners

In partnership with Alfredton Rotary Club, Uniting has received a \$180,000 Victorian Government 'Pick My Project' grant to move to larger premises. This was achieved through overwhelming community support, with people in Ballarat voting on which projects they wanted to receive the grants.

However, the scale of the dream meant that additional funding was required. Fortunately, The Oliver Foundation stepped in to bridge the gap.

Oliver Foundation and Alfredton Rotary Club member, Jillian Oliver, says BreezeWay was the perfect fit.

"Helping the region's growing homeless population is something we've been passionate about for a long time," says Jillian. "After meeting with the local Uniting team, we were given some practical ideas on how we could assist. BreezeWay topped the list."

A great new space

Our new space improves disability access and allows support for more people. A larger kitchen space means the program can offer training to people who access the service.

"By providing education and training opportunities, we hope people will gain the skills they need to work towards stability," says Jillian.

We'd like to send a huge thank you to the Oliver Foundation, the Alfredton Rotary Club and those individuals and businesses working behind the scenes to make the move a reality.



Alfredton Rotary Club members (left to right) Cheryl Noad, Leanne Sidebottom, Jillian Oliver and Deb Robertson.

Nobucks serves up hot meals in Hobart

BreezeWay is just one of our services that offers a hot meal and a friendly face.

Hobart residents who have difficulty preparing or accessing food can come along to Nobucks in the centre of town. Over 50 free lunch meals are served each weekday.

Nobucks not only provides great hospitality, but a chance for people to socialise with others and to stay connected to their community.

"Nobucks has been a fantastic service for vulnerable people in the region, run by a group of dedicated volunteers," Executive Officer of Uniting in Tasmania, Jeremy Pettet said.

"This service has been a mainstay in the Hobart landscape for over a decade."

People can access additional support through our emergency relief service, which is conveniently located on the same site as Nobucks.



“Food is a very practical way of showing care and concern.”

Our services provide more than just food

Maidie Graham manages the Uniting Crisis and Homelessness Services in Ringwood and Footscray. She says a parcel of food can go a long way in helping individuals and families in crisis.

“It’s a struggle to make ends meet on a low income,” Maidie said. “People have to be expert budgeters to survive and there is no room for error. Often there’s not enough money to cover the cost of living, let alone do something that brings you joy.”

Our emergency relief centres provide the basics for a home cooked meal. It’s often the first port of call for people in crisis - a chance to start building trust, establishing a connection they can count on.

“Food is a very practical way of showing care and concern,” said Maidie. “People are very grateful for what they receive.”

When people reach out to us for food, we’re able to talk to them about the issues that have led to the insecurity they’re experiencing. We can then link them into other services like financial counselling, housing support and family violence support.

Maidie says there are still a few items left from last year’s Food For Families donations, **but the cupboards are starting to look bare. So, we’re calling on you – our generous supporters – to get behind the cause once more.**

Your generosity brings Food For Families

Not so long ago, Sandra was struggling to get by. The 65-year-old has been the full-time carer for her two granddaughters for seven years, putting her under significant financial strain.

Sandra is one of the growing number of people who access our emergency relief services to feed her family. When times get tough, bills stack up and savings can quickly dwindle. In those circumstances, food is often an area where people cut back.

Your generosity brings transformative hope

Sandra shared her story as part of last year’s Food For Families appeal. In 2018, thanks to generous supporters like you, close to **50 tonnes of food and toiletries were distributed to individuals and families**



doing it tough across Victoria and Tasmania. Now, Sandra doesn’t have to choose between putting food on the table and the girls’ school expenses – and it means the world to her.

“If I’m running low on money, I know I can still provide the girls with food, which is a big relief,” Sandra said. “It means we don’t go hungry and – most importantly – the girls are happy and healthy.”

Are you able to collect, drop or donate for a great cause?

Our supporters come in all shapes and sizes – from individuals to big businesses – anyone and everyone can get involved. We want to help every single person that reaches out to us, but we can't do it alone.

How your generosity can make a difference

This year we're looking for groups and individuals who can:

- Donate non-perishable food and toiletry items
- Host a collection drive
- Become a drop-off point for donations.

Getting involved is easy

- 1** Register at **foodforfamilies.org.au** to collect food as a family, an individual, workplace, school, community group, congregation or sporting club.
- 2** When registering your business, school, church or community site you can select to be a **drop-off point** where others can donate their non-perishable food and toiletry items.

Once you've registered, we'll send you an email with next steps.

To find out more

Learn more about Food For Families at foodforfamilies.org.au or call our team on 1800 060 543.

Thank you to last year's supporters

Last year's top Food For Families collectors were a mix of congregations, organisations and schools:

- St Andrew's Uniting Church in Berwick
- Toorak Uniting Church
- Swinburne University of Technology
- Commonwealth Bank South East
- Epworth Healthcare
- Mount View Primary School

We are also grateful to the corporate volunteers who gave their time to sort donations:

- Accru Melbourne
- IOOF Foundation
- Ben and Jerry's – Hoyts Greensborough
- Red Energy
- ACME Group
- NAB Commercial Brokers
- SEMZ Property Advisory and Project Management
- Victorian Rover Council

Generous businesses also helped in practical ways



13CABS

13CABS have waived their taxi fares for the past six years for Food For Families, driving all over Melbourne to distribute and deliver boxes to our relief centres.



DMC Group

DMC Group helped develop and source our Food For Families donation boxes.




Golden Messenger

Golden Messenger delivered packing boxes to our supporters.



SecondBite

SecondBite stored donations during peak periods, keeping them secure so families can access food all year round.



“I have decided to leave a gift in my will to help ensure the future of these important services.”

Where there's a Will, there's a way

John is determined to leave a lasting legacy

Prahran resident, John Potter, has decided to leave a gift in his Will to Uniting after seeing the positive impact our work made in his friend Robert's life.

Robert was a regular at Hartley's Community Dining Room, where he enjoyed precious times socialising and sharing food.

By reaching out to Uniting, Robert also found support for his mental health and was able to secure permanent housing where he lived happily until he passed away.

“The continual assistance and regular meetings with his caseworker helped Robert live a fulfilled life,” John remembers.

“I've known about the work that Uniting does for 20-odd-years and I'm aware that ongoing support from the community is needed. I want to be a part of the services continuing for a long time to come.”

A lifetime of generosity

Over the years, John has found many ways to support Uniting, enabling more people like Robert to access the services they need to survive and thrive.

As a lifelong devotee of the arts, John has purchased several works from exhibitions held at Hartley's over the years. He enjoys keeping up to date with what's happening across Uniting, attends events and has also donated many items to the Prahran Goodwill Shop.

John has now given the gift of a lifetime, “I have chosen to leave a gift in my Will because I've seen first-hand the support Uniting gave to my dear friend, Robert.”



The legacy of a life well lived

Hazel's faith came with a strong sense of justice

Having moved from Scotland to Australia when she was 10, Margaret "Hazel" Bowie understood the sense of social isolation that comes with starting again in a new land.

How Hazel's life made a difference

As a loyal and active member of Blackburn North-Nunawading Uniting Church community, Hazel served on the Church Council and in multiple fellowship groups.

"Hazel really put her faith into practice," remembers long-time friend, Cherril Randles. "And it enriched her life."

Although she earned modestly throughout her life, Hazel donated what she could to the Outer Eastern Asylum Seeker Support Network for over 11 years.

When refugees from Myanmar formed a congregation at her church, Hazel volunteered her time, helping the minister to develop his English skills.

"She was very independent, private and lived frugally, but

she had a strong sense of social justice," says Cherril.

"Her only asset was her house, which she bought in the 1970s – a time of inequitable pay when it was difficult for a single woman to obtain a loan."

It was this desire to create a fairer world that led Hazel to leave a gift in her Will to the Outer Eastern Asylum Seeker Support Network, run by a local Uniting congregation.

Hazel passed away in 2017.

"She was not in a position to make a significant financial difference during her life... but, in death, she has," says Cherril.

How Hazel's gift has made a difference

Hazel's gift of nearly \$40,000 has helped to:

- extend the Asylum Seeker Centre's opening hours.
- provide Myki cards for newly arrived people to attend English classes.
- send socially isolated people on camps to create new connections.



Find out how you can leave a gift for the future

By leaving a gift in your will, you're ensuring a legacy that lives on – bringing hope to those who believe in a brighter future.

We understand that planning an estate is a personal process and, for many – a time to reflect on what matters most.

If you are considering including Uniting Vic.Tas in your Will, it would be a privilege to hear your story and learn about the intentions behind your gift and to thank you personally for your generosity.

Our Gift in Wills Co-ordinator, Amanda Kunjka is available for a confidential discussion.

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Get involved

Make a donation

Your generosity will help us continue to provide essential services that are not covered by government funding. A gift today or a bequest for the future will make a positive and lasting difference to individuals, families and communities.

1800 668 426
vt.uniting.org/donate

Fundraise for us

Host an event at your school, workplace or community group and get together to raise funds for vulnerable people in your community.

1800 060 543
fundraising@vt.uniting.org

Volunteer with us

Our 2400 volunteers are a vital and much loved part of our organisation. They give their precious time to help deliver our services. We rely on their support – and we're always on the lookout for more enthusiastic people.

vt.uniting.org/volunteer

A small act can sometimes be enough. A helping hand can halve a burden. One kind word can calm the nerves. Together we can do even more and there are many ways you can get involved.



Pancake Day

Flip for a cause

Each year, in the Shrove Tuesday tradition of cleaning out pantries before Lent, groups across Victoria and Tasmania have been getting together to flip pancakes to support people in need in their local community. Congregations, community groups, schools and workplaces have come together to enjoy a sweet treat and make a difference. We are now getting ready for Pancake Day in 2020.

If you have kindly supported Pancake Day in the past, we will be in touch shortly with details on how to register your event. If you haven't taken part before and would like to be involved, please contact our Pancake Day team on **1800 060 543** or **pancakeday.info@vt.uniting.org**

St Leonard's Uniting Church leads the way

St Leonard's Uniting Church in Brighton has been a long-time supporter of Pancake Day. Thanks to a dedicated group of congregation members, led by event organiser Barry Schofield, the church has recorded the highest fundraising tally for three consecutive years.

But this record wasn't achieved just by selling pancakes. In 2017 the congregation started its Coffee Cup Challenge. From International Coffee Day on 1 October until Shrove Tuesday, people are asked to put aside \$4 each week (roughly the cost of a takeaway coffee). By taking up the challenge almost \$11,500 was raised by the congregation this year.

"It was great to see so many people who generously donated," says Barry. People were invited to drop-off their donation and enjoy a free pancake on the Sunday before Shrove Tuesday. This challenge is now being taken up by other churches.

We would like to send a big thank you to everyone who supports Pancake Day each year.

Uniting

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

