

ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13



EVERYDAY

CareSouth

CARESOUTH ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

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EVER
DAY

“NOW ANOTHER
YEAR HAS STARTED.
OUR HORIZONS
KEEP EXPANDING AND
NEW CHALLENGES
PRESENT THEMSELVES
EVERY DAY.”

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN & FOUNDER

Another year has come and gone and once again I address you in our Annual Report. I feel very privileged to be the Chairman of such a wonderful organisation.

I am extremely proud of our organisation. What I like best is that from the top of the tree to its roots we have never lost sight of why we exist - to help young people and people living with a disability to have a better life. This is a theme that runs right through our organisation, not just for the professionals working directly with our clients, but for all the support staff as well. It is an honour to be part of that team. So thank you to everyone for another terrific year.

In many ways it has been a difficult year and we have our incredible CEO, Deb Tozer, to thank for steering us through the challenges. Deb's vision, enthusiasm, compassion and inspirational leadership have driven us forward.

The expansion of our services into Western NSW is testament to the high regard in which we are held. It is wonderful to see how CareSouth is welcomed by the community in these new areas.

I would like to thank my fellow Board members. This year we appointed two new Directors, Rebecca and James, and I feel we are very fortunate to have the addition of such great new talent to reinvigorate our Board. Being part of a Board is a huge responsibility, and understanding and supporting the distinction between management by staff and governance by the Board requires a very special group of people. Our Board is such a group.

Now another year has started. Our horizons keep expanding and new challenges present themselves every day. Fortunately, we have the team to take us to the next level. So keep enjoying what you do best and take great pride in your collective achievements.



Jim McEwan
Chairman, CareSouth

The Chairman asked our Board to tell us when and why they got involved with CareSouth; what their vision is for our future; and to share their favourite quote that captures their philosophy on life. For full biographies, please visit our website at www.everydaycaresouth.org.au



THEO BOYLE BOARD MEMBER

I have been a Board Member since 2004 after being invited to join by the Chairman, Jim McEwan. Having grown up in the child welfare system, I believed I could contribute a unique and beneficial perspective to the Board.

I have always liked dealing with everyday people from all walks of life and hearing their stories.

Considering our present rate of growth, I can see CareSouth 21 years from now as the number one provider of services throughout NSW and nationally.

My favourite quote would have to be:

“WE CAN’T HELP EVERYONE, BUT EVERYONE CAN HELP SOMEONE.”



PETER MURPHY BOARD MEMBER

I have been on the CareSouth Board for approximately 19 years. Having previously been a Scout Leader, I could see the benefits that Aunties & Uncles could provide as an early intervention program. I believe that early intervention is the key to reducing the need for rehabilitation type programs. I would like to see more early intervention programs introduced.

In the next 21 years I would like to see CareSouth established as the leader in quality care and training for its clients and staff. It is important that CareSouth contain its growth within its ability to provide optimum training and care to its staff.

My favourite motto is:

“ACCEPT THE THINGS YOU CANNOT CHANGE, PUT EVERY EFFORT INTO CHANGING THE THINGS YOU CAN, AND PRAY FOR GUIDANCE TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.”

JAMES PARRISH BOARD MEMBER



I joined the CareSouth Board at the start of 2013. So far I have found it to be a thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding experience.

I am motivated by a desire to contribute to an organisation that helps people in our society who are in need of assistance. In many cases these people are children, some are only a little bit younger than myself. CareSouth is a wonderful organisation that strives to meet the needs of these people, and endeavours to give them as close as possible the same start and support that many other people in our society take for granted.

The challenge we have is to continue to grow as an organisation whilst at the same time maintain the high standard of our services. We have to be motivated to keep the big picture dream alive whilst being disciplined to stay on top of the everyday details.

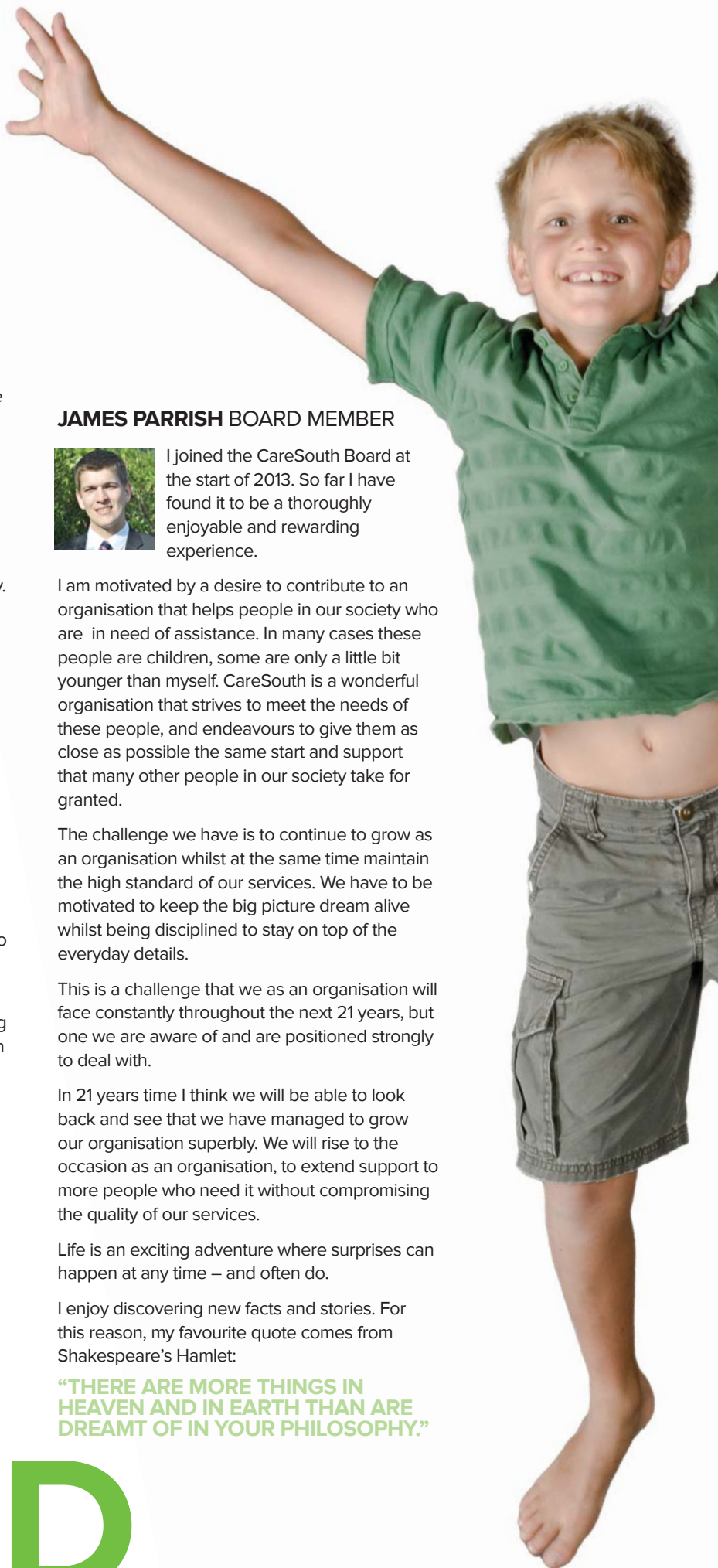
This is a challenge that we as an organisation will face constantly throughout the next 21 years, but one we are aware of and are positioned strongly to deal with.

In 21 years time I think we will be able to look back and see that we have managed to grow our organisation superbly. We will rise to the occasion as an organisation, to extend support to more people who need it without compromising the quality of our services.

Life is an exciting adventure where surprises can happen at any time – and often do.

I enjoy discovering new facts and stories. For this reason, my favourite quote comes from Shakespeare’s Hamlet:

“THERE ARE MORE THINGS IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH THAN ARE DREAMT OF IN YOUR PHILOSOPHY.”



OUR BOARD

CHRISTINE COOK BOARD MEMBER



At the time I joined the Board of CareSouth, in 2004, I had been teaching in high schools for nearly 30 years. Classroom teaching is both challenging and very rewarding. The most enjoyable times have been the years spent directing school productions. Most of this was in after-school hours, working closely with students and their parents to provide them with some unique experiences.

I was naturally very aware of the welfare needs of young people and the importance of receiving care and support in their formative years. Some families and young people require additional assistance and I was impressed with the work that CareSouth was doing to provide this support. I had been aware of the Aunties & Uncles program since it started and was honoured to be able to contribute to this organisation in some small way.

In 20 years time, it would be wonderful if the services of our organisation were no longer required. Sadly, this is unlikely. It will be imperative that CareSouth continues to listen to and embrace the needs of the community and keeps adapting to meet those needs.

I admire the efforts of the CareSouth staff who work in challenging environments to provide optimum care and support for our young people and their families.

My philosophy on life comes from my late father who instilled in our family that:

“EVERYONE SHOULD BE TREATED EQUAL REGARDLESS OF WHO THEY ARE OR WHERE THEY COME FROM.”

My father also told us “Don’t expect to be given anything - you have to work for what you want.” I have endeavoured to emulate his ideals and instil these values in my own children.

NICHOLAS SIMS BOARD MEMBER



I’ve been a Board Member since 2007. My role as a school counsellor makes me acutely aware of the benefits to children of living in a predictable and

loving environment. CareSouth provides quality interventions that strive to achieve this for children. I was honoured by Jim McEwan’s invitation to contribute my expertise to CareSouth.

I would like to see CareSouth continue to provide high quality services that improve the lives of the people we support, through a work environment where our employees are highly skilled, motivated and feel safe and happy in their jobs.

My philosophy on life is to live your own life well and try each day to improve the lives of others.

My favourite quote is from Mahatma Gandhi:

“YOU MUST BE THE CHANGE YOU WISH TO SEE IN THE WORLD.”

REBECCA KEEN BOARD MEMBER



I am a new addition to the CareSouth Board, having commenced in February 2013. I was honoured to be offered a position on the CareSouth Board and hope that I can make some

contribution to the organisation, as I cannot think of a better cause than that of child welfare.

CareSouth is a great organisation with strong community values and a clear vision for the future. I would like to see CareSouth continue to grow its services into other regions and continue to provide quality services to those in need. Like all organisations CareSouth will face challenges along the way, so it needs to continue to ensure it is a robust organisation with strong foundations for the future.

Nothing is as damaging to success as a negative attitude to anything that we set out to do. A positive attitude can make all the difference.

A quote that I really like is:

“BELIEVE YOU CAN AND YOU’RE HALFWAY THERE.”



CEO REPORT

“OUR CHILDREN
ARE OUR FUTURE
AND KEEPING
CHILDREN SAFE
IS EVERYONE’S
BUSINESS.”

This year we celebrate 21 years of caring. This is a remarkable achievement. I am very proud of the people who continue to make a difference in the lives of others. I extend my gratitude to the staff, carers, volunteers, specialists, donors and Board. Their everyday commitment to provide opportunities for those with whom we work to enhance their quality of life is extraordinary. Children, young people, individuals, families and communities remain at the centre of all that we do. Thank you to our government and non-government partners who continue to support us in the work we do every day.

It has been a year of notable change, internally and externally. We have experienced increased demand on services, major sector reform, structure and systems redesign, rebranding, revised and new policies and uncertainty within government. Amidst this incredible change the commitment to provide quality care remains resolute.

Our services and staff have grown during a time of financial pressure on community services. This is largely due to the outcomes driven by the Wood Inquiry with the transition of foster care from government to non-government community based services. In addition we experienced steady growth in our disability Leaving Care services.

Most exciting has been our establishment of services in the western region of NSW. In line with our strategic direction to provide quality services where identified need exists, we have taken up the challenge and expanded our services into Western NSW.

This growth reflects the strength of our expertise and our demonstrated commitment to being a leading service provider. This past year we commenced a range of initiatives that will pave the way for the coming year. To name a few, these include:

- A bold and determined approach to inform new and improved ways to deliver services. We are in the early stages of internal and key stakeholder consultation to develop a trauma informed clinical framework that will guide how we work with children, individuals, families and each other across the organisation
- Awards event for children in foster care
- Foster Care Week celebrations in Wollongong, Nowra and Mollymook to acknowledge the important contribution of our carers
- Exciting property development in Berkeley to accommodate our Illawarra staff
- Development of a new regional structure
- Launch of our new brand identity including new office signage, print marketing, TV advert, program DVDs and a dynamic new website
- Collaboration with local agencies on important sector initiatives including Child Protection Week, Foster Care Week and the 12 month Fostering NSW Campaign being run by ACWA

- Information Technology and Communication Strategy
- Streamlining Operations and Cost Effective Strategy
- Corporate Services plan for the changing landscape, in particular within disability services
- Plans commenced for our 21st Gala Fundraising Night on 15 November 2013

So many wonderful outcomes have been achieved for those with whom we work, including:

- Increased educational engagement and school attendance
- More young people completing Year 10
- Improved health and medical outcomes for children
- A rise in the number of children restored to their families
- Child adoptions increased this year
- An increase in young people entering higher education
- A greater number of young people secured employment and apprenticeships
- Increased number of children and young people participated in a variety of opportunities such as public speaking, art events, service development, events catering, staff recruitment and sporting events
- Improved living arrangements and outcomes for people living with special needs
- Intensive family work has seen positive improvements for children and family preservation
- Enhanced parenting skills for many families
- Increased diversity for counselling and clinical support

For the coming year we have set our sights on expanding the work we do with children, their families and communities to keep children safe every day.

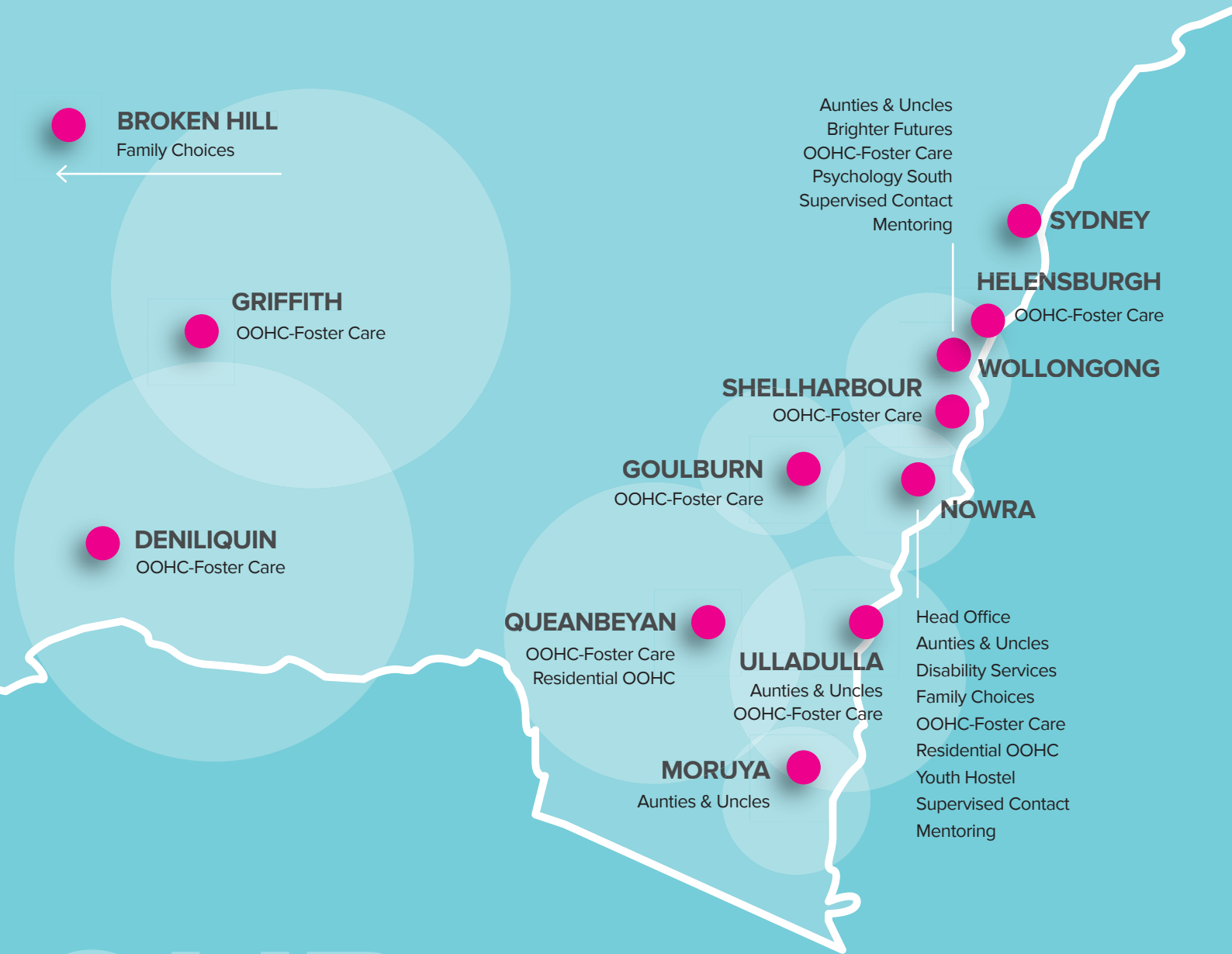
To achieve this we will work vigorously in pursuit of opportunities and partnerships that will financially assist us to progress this valuable work. Our children are our future and keeping children safe is everyone's business.

I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary work of all CareSouth staff and in particular the leadership team who support me in my role. Their commitment is second to none.



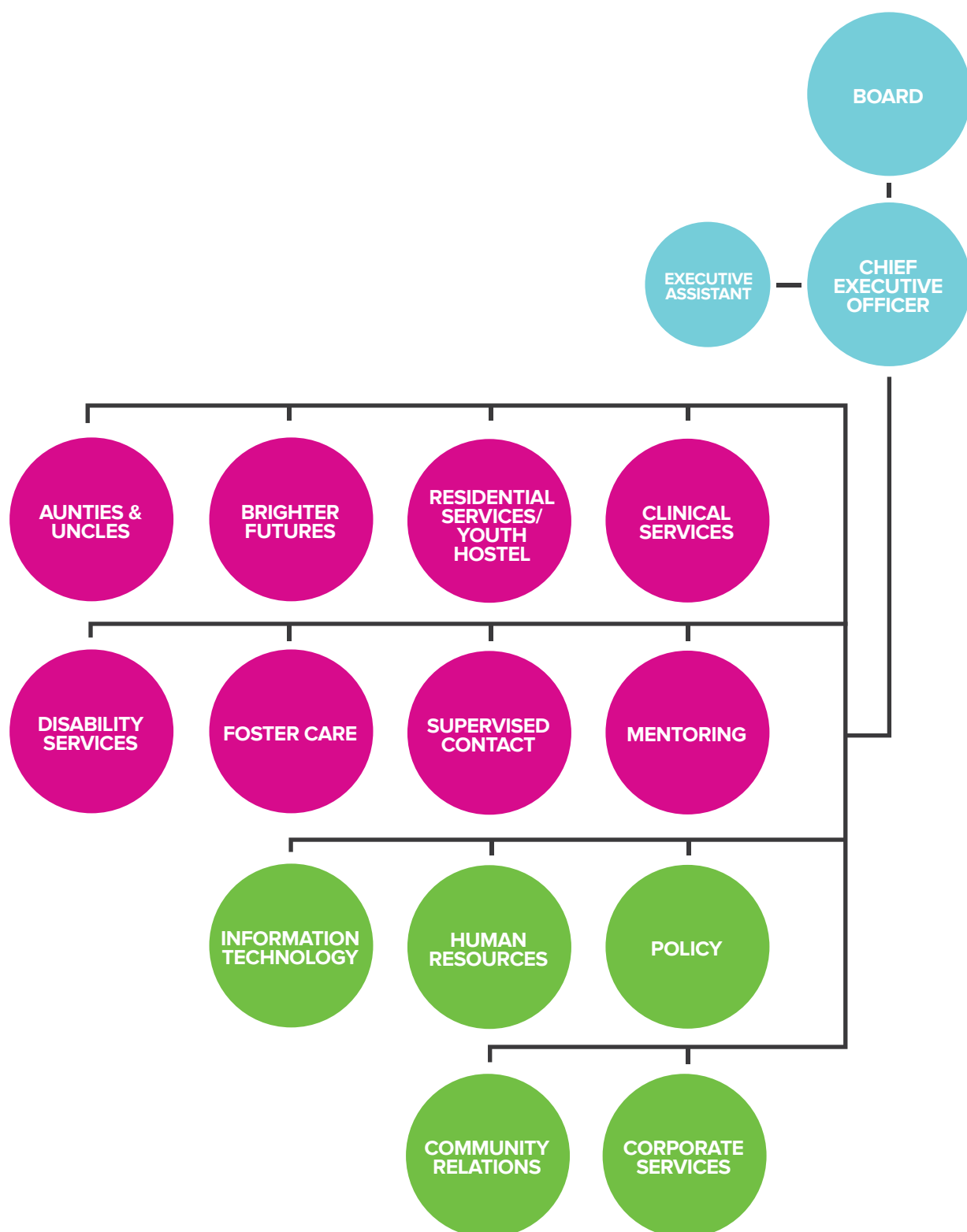
Debra Tozer
CEO

I look forward to another year of advancement in our continued work with our partners, government, non-government agencies and stakeholders to bring about change and further our work in creating a positive future.



OUR FOOTPRINT

OUR ORGANISATION





KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF A SKILLED WORKFORCE:

- Review and implement an integrated HR system
- Consistent implementation of the system
- Implementation of a consistent brand image across the whole organisation

FUNDING SECURITY:

- Existing contracts renewed
- Existing funding base diversified
- New contracts secured where identified need exists

BOLDNESS AND INNOVATION IN OUR SERVICE DESIGN:

- New opportunities identified
- New initiatives implemented
- Leader of innovation
- Community partnerships through innovation

COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS:

- All relevant standards identified and achieved

IMPLEMENT EVIDENCE- BASED BEST PRACTICE DESIGN:

- Evidence of research undertaken across the organisation
- Embedded practices informed by evidence-based research

EMBED ROBUST SUPPORT SYSTEMS:

- Review and development of integrated service support systems
- Staff trained
- Consistent implementation and maintenance of systems

ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT THE WORK WE DO WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES:

- Core community groups identified
- Key relationships established and maintained

PARTICIPATE WITH THE BROADER SECTOR AND PEAK BODIES TO SUPPORT THE WORK WE DO WITH CLIENTS AND FAMILIES:

- Influential peak bodies identified
- Relevant forums attended
- Relationships with members of the broader sector established and maintained



SEPTEMBER 2012

Participation in Child Protection Week activities, with CareSouth CEO providing the opening address at the Forum

Participation in Foster Care Week

Launch of new CareSouth Remuneration Framework

OCTOBER 2012

Office of Children's Guardian Out-of-Home Care Accreditation Certificate Presentation

Shoalhaven Business Awards 'Highly Commended for Excellence in the Community Sector'

CEO appointed to the Board of Association of Children's Welfare Agencies

First CareSouth All Staff Development Day

First Reconciliation Action Planning Group convened

Commencement and establishment of CareSouth services in Deniliquin and Griffith

NOVEMBER 2012

Organisation Induction Training

All staff end of year celebration

DECEMBER 2012

Participation in International Day of People with a Disability

First year of additional three days leave for staff between Christmas and New Year, provided as part of the new Reward and Remuneration Framework

Significant donations and Christmas gifts received, including Westpac, Sussex Inlet Primary School, Nowra Bowling Club

JANUARY 2013

CareSouth Out-of-Home Care services commence in Western NSW

FEBRUARY 2013

First CareSouth Community Photo Shoot

MARCH 2013

CareSouth Rebrand Launch including new website 'go live'

Reconciliation Action Plan launched to staff

Second CareSouth All Staff Development Day

APRIL 2013

Joined Illawarra Business Chamber

MAY 2013

Launch of Fostering NSW Campaign

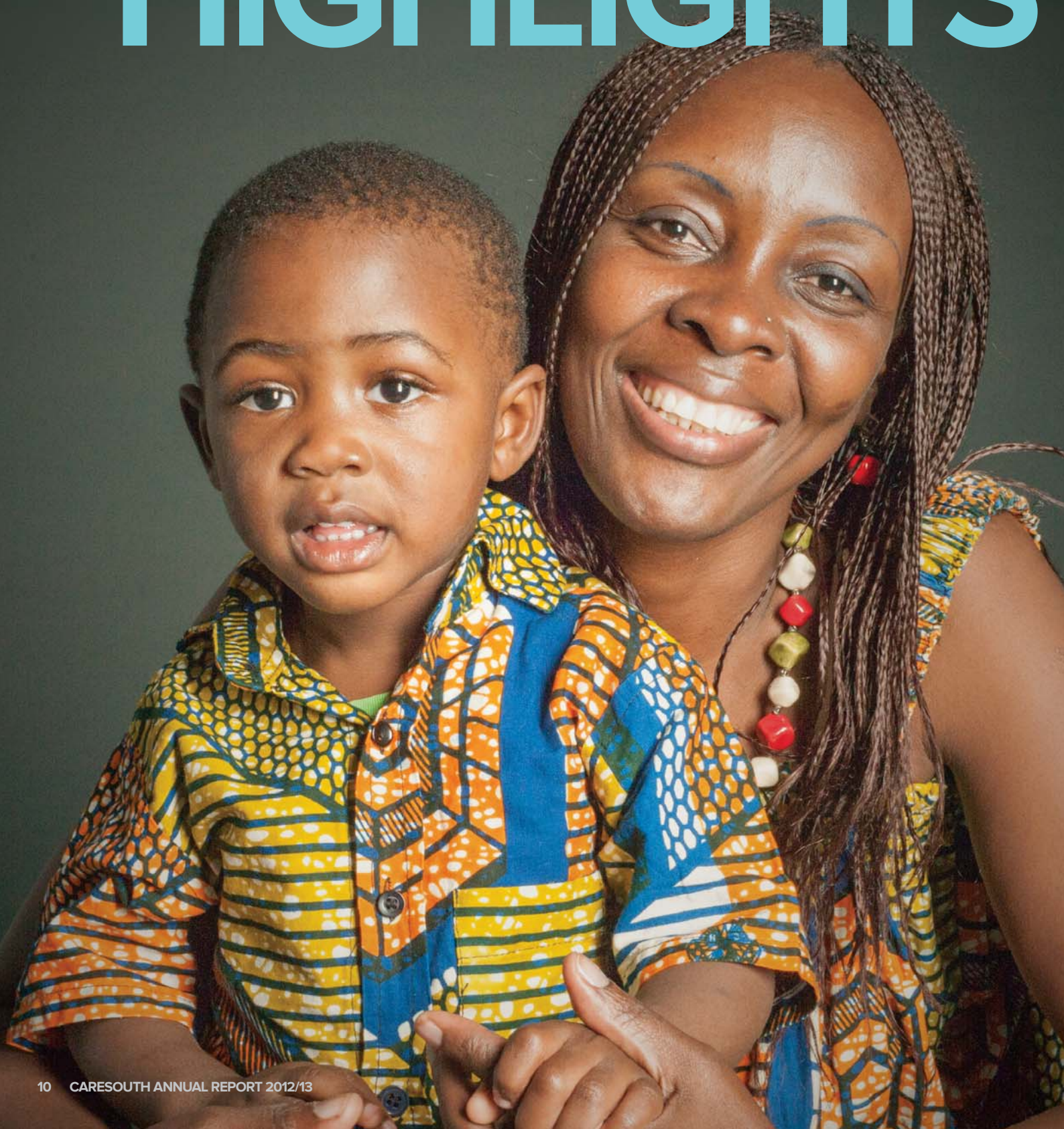
Foster Care Awards Night

Acknowledgement of Sorry Day

Participation in Reconciliation Week activities across our communities

OUR YEAR IN FOCUS

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS AUNTIES & UNCLES



Program Manager
Clare Wilson

IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS:

What have you achieved in meeting our Strategic Plan?

CareSouth's Aunties & Uncles team continues to improve our service design. A policy review was conducted in 2013 focusing on volunteer carer recruitment, assessment and training, to ensure we attract and retain the best volunteer carers.

Some highlights have included a review of the current training package for volunteers to update areas of knowledge and skill development in line with supporting children with specific needs.

A significant achievement of this year has been developing the first ever 'Fee For Service' schedule. This will enable CareSouth to seek funding opportunities for Aunties & Uncles supported placements and/or for referrals outside of current eligibility criteria and to secure the long-term sustainability outside of the existing limited funding arrangements.

“
IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH THE
BUNDANON
TRUST, WE WERE
ABLE TO OFFER
THE CHILDREN
ACROSS ALL
OUR REGIONS
A SPECIAL DAY
OF ART AND
EDUCATION.”

What is the achievement that your program/team is most proud of?

This year we increased the number of activities provided to carers by way of peer support and also to the children in our program. In partnership with the Bundanon Trust, we were able to offer the children across all our regions a special day of art and education. This event was a great success, providing opportunities to share time and a special, memorable experience with children in the program.

A very special DVD, soon to be released, captures the story of one of our young people supported by the same family for eight years. Jordan's journey with the CareSouth Aunties & Uncles program began when he was eight years old. It is a wonderful success story that highlights the power of the type of relationships that are formed in the program and how important these relationships are in giving vulnerable children a better chance in life. Our team is very proud of this DVD, which is symbolic of the work we do and how life changing it can be for all of us.

What challenges have you overcome?

The Aunties & Uncles program will always face the challenge of limited funding in this context. There is also competition among providers to attract sufficient numbers of volunteers in order to meet the often complex needs of ever increasing numbers of children referred to our service for support. Our efforts to develop the first ever 'Fee for Service' model and the review of our recruitment policies have been key to addressing these challenges.

CareSouth has been in operation for 21 years. In that time, what has been your program's most significant achievement?

Despite very limited funding, CareSouth's Aunties & Uncles program continues to grow and expand along the South Coast communities, delivering strong outcomes for children and their families and providing hope for their futures.

Over the past 21 years our program has provided long-term support to children through their enduring relationships with their carers. The very significant benefits to the children we support are due to the commitment of our volunteer carers to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable children and marginalised families.

Additionally, we have been able to advocate for children to receive support with literacy and numeracy, swimming and dancing lessons, other sport and recreational activities, increased confidence and self-esteem, improved nutrition, and health and wellbeing.

There are also many examples of mentoring and support provided to other members in the child's family; particularly in the area of mental health where our carers have been able to reach out and care for children for extended periods of time, when parents are impacted by health issues. The program is a good example of how communities can look after each other, making sure that we notice those among us who struggle with everyday life.

What are your hopes for the next 12 months?

Over the next 12 months, we will continue to assure the quality of the services we offer and broaden our geographical footprint into other regions where CareSouth is operating. We will continue our commitment to our carers and children with ongoing specialised training, opportunities for a diverse range of experiences and another graduation event for the second cohort of graduated links.

Working on our longer-term goals, we will begin developing an evidence-based model of support for our service, tracking the outcomes for children over the period of their involvement with our program, and we will seek to secure funding opportunities that ensure the program remains financially strong into the future.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS BRIGHTER FUTURES



Program Manager
Carol Newing

IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS:

What have you achieved in meeting our Strategic Plan?

In September 2013 the Brighter Futures team reviewed our program plan 2012 – 2014. Brighter Futures achievements over the past 12 months have been many.

We have consolidated our staffing numbers with little movement over the past twelve months, providing consistency and predictability within our work environment, for our team and our families.

We have worked together with clinical specialists in Child and Adolescent Mental Health, SAL Consulting and University of Wollongong to develop and implement evidence-based case practice, drawing on trauma-informed and relationship-based evidence.

We have undertaken a schedule of learning and development to strengthen our evidence-based practice models. All staff have participated in core training to ensure consistency of practice and a skilled workforce.

We have successfully implemented a range of evidence-based parenting programs that are delivering positive outcomes for parents and their children, including: i) Confident Carers Cooperative Kids; ii) Circle of Security; iii) Music and Movement Group; and iv) Sing and Grow.

What is the achievement that your program/team is most proud of?

We are most proud of our evidence-based case management model, our therapeutic understanding of the issues parents and young children are experiencing and ways to work with parents and their children.

Our intake, triage and assessment process ensures the most vulnerable families enter our program. Our case management model and structured assessment process ensures that we are working with the family to understand how best we can support them to parent their children. Our specialist consultation both with our internal specialists and clinical consultants ensures that all aspects are considered when planning with the family and we are responsive to their changing needs as issues arise.

What challenges have you overcome?

Our major challenges over the past year have stemmed from changes to the Brighter Futures Service Provision Guidelines. As a result of these changes there has been an increase in the complexities of the families we are working with. We have overcome these challenges by developing and learning new processes, revising and changing while continuing to do our work with families.

We have also overcome internal challenges by building a team, staff retention, learning and development. Throughout this process we have remained resilient and committed to our families and to CareSouth's vision.

CareSouth has been in operation for 21 years. In that time, what has been your program's most significant achievement?

We are proud of the recognition of the value of Brighter Futures as a program run by CareSouth.

What are your hopes for the next 12 months?

Over the next 12 months we would like to achieve wider recognition from other services of the importance of the Brighter Futures program to families and to be recognised throughout the Illawarra as a service of excellence. At the same time, we will maintain a focus on self-care for our staff who deal with the everyday challenges of working with vulnerable families.

“
**THROUGHOUT
THIS PROCESS
WE HAVE
REMAINED
RESILIENT AND
COMMITTED TO
OUR FAMILIES
AND TO
CARESOUTH.**”

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

DISABILITY SERVICES



Program Manager
Glenn Connor-Brown

IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS:

What have you achieved in meeting our Strategic Plan?

CareSouth Disability Services has successfully campaigned over the past 12 months to obtain recurrent funding for high support individuals transitioning from Out-of-Home Care (OOHC). In addition to this, promotion of our success in Leaving Care Independence Training has resulted in six new funded places, ensuring an offset for those exiting the program over the coming year. This has ensured funding security for our service over the next three years as we establish a broader care arrangement moving forward.

What is the achievement that your program/team is most proud of?

In the 12 months, 2012-2013, our accommodation services saw some significant changes, as two of our residents moved into the community and one exited the program after moving out of the region. Additionally, two group home residents made the transition to independent living support, with one moving into their own home in the community and another transitioning into a CareSouth residence. These developments demonstrate the commitment and skills of CareSouth support staff in empowering our young people to achieve their life goals.

Also in the past year six new leaving care participants have joined the program, doubling the size of the service. This is indicative of the growth in independent living as a preferred future model and our team has successfully met the challenges this growth brings.

What challenges have you overcome?

CareSouth's Disability Services is a large and diverse program, providing Family Choices, Extended Family Support, Leaving Care Alternative Family Placement, Leaving Care Drop in Support, Leaving Care Accommodation Support, Accommodation Services (Group homes), Independent Supported Living, Flexible Respite, Brokered Services, OOHC Disability Support. There are inevitably challenges in running a program of this size with a consistent vision.

The Family Choices and Alternative Family Placement program was unfortunate to lose three key staff over the past year and they will be missed. Despite these changes our team have managed to maintain the continuity of service across our programs, resulting in the Family Choices program reaching capacity at the end of the financial year.

The year has also seen significant changes in general staffing with 12 new people being added to the current roster of staff. This task has been made easier through the implementation of a new induction program across CareSouth, supported by the Human Resources Team. Projects of this nature help to maintain CareSouth's reputation as a quality employer within the disability support sector.

CareSouth has been in operation for 21 years. In that time, what has been your program's most significant achievement?

The success of the independence programs such as Leaving Care Drop in Support and the new Independent Supported Living Fund programs demonstrates CareSouth's commitment to supporting individuals in achieving their goals. This program represents the future of disability support services nationally and is reflective of CareSouth's commitment to delivering innovative and evidence-based services.

What are your hopes for the next 12 months?

CareSouth Disability Services support programs are an integral component to CareSouth achieving its vision of strengthening individuals and communities to achieve their goals. With a highly dedicated, committed and trained team of staff, we are mindful of the challenges faced by our service users as they engage in their local communities.

Over the coming year we will continue to strive for creating responsive and less intrusive service models to meet the new direction in the delivery of disability services and the diverse individual needs of those community members accessing services. Funded by the Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care (ADHC), we provide everyday services to families, inspiring individuals across the southern and western regions of NSW.

“
**PROJECTS OF
THIS NATURE
HELP TO
MAINTAIN
CARESOUTH'S
REPUTATION
AS A QUALITY
EMPLOYER
WITHIN THE
DISABILITY
SUPPORT
SECTOR.**
”

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

FOSTER CARE



Program Manager
Chris Stubbs

IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS:

What have you achieved in meeting our Strategic Plan?

The most significant change, for CareSouth and the entire Foster Care sector over the last 12 months, has been the transition of Foster Care from the government to the non-government sector. This has been the most significant change to ever occur within the NSW Out-of-Home Care sector and CareSouth has played a major role in this process.

This transition has required a high level of support and collaboration with both NSW Department of Family and Community Services and non-government organisations (NGO's). CareSouth has played a significant role in being represented on the Regional Implementation Group (RIG) and has representatives on the various RIG Sub Committees involving the Recruitment and Retention of Foster Carers. The collaboration of NGOs has been highly successful and the southern region has been regarded as one of the leaders in this area, which CareSouth can take some credit for alongside many of the other agencies.

CareSouth's Foster Care program has continued to expand in both contracted numbers and geography. The main expansion has been to open up offices in both Deniliquin and Griffith. It has always been important to keep moving forward while continuing to ensure that each placement is provided with the most appropriate level of support.

CareSouth now has 158 Foster Care placements across all regions and this has placed CareSouth in a solid position to provide ongoing supportive placements for many years to come.

What is the achievement that your program/team is most proud of?

We have increased our overall placement numbers but have remained committed to maintaining an appropriate support system to all children, young people and carers, as well as receiving continued positive feedback regarding the quality of service we provide. We are very proud of the continued high standard of professionalism shown by all staff across all regions.

What challenges have you overcome?

Whilst the transition of foster care to non-government organisations is an exciting development, there have been a large number of challenges involved in this process. There have been many key systems and processes that have either taken some time to finalise or had a variety of changes along the way.

Our expansion into the Western Region of NSW has also provided a range of challenges, not withstanding the obvious issue of having such a large geographical spread across our program. There are plans to overcome this being implemented for the year ahead.

“**WE ARE VERY PROUD OF THE CONTINUED HIGH STANDARD OF PROFESSIONALISM SHOWN BY ALL STAFF ACROSS ALL REGIONS.**”

CareSouth has been in operation for 21 years. In that time, what has been your program's most significant achievement?

CareSouth's Foster Care program has run for approximately 14 years and the most significant achievement has been the positive outcomes for the children and young people in our care. Additionally, there are a number of staff who have been with CareSouth's Foster Care program for over 10 years and their passion and drive has remained throughout their time with the organisation.

What are your hopes for the next 12 months?

In the next 12 months it will be important to consolidate both the increased contracted numbers as well as embedding the new structure to support the program across all regions.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS RESIDENTIAL OUT-OF-HOME CARE



Program Manager
Tracy Mayo

IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS:

What have you achieved in meeting our Strategic Plan?

There have been significant achievements in many aspects of CareSouth's Residential Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) programs this year. This includes young people, teams and leaders. As a leadership team we have met regularly and developed a shared knowledge of clients, practices and systems. This has promoted a broader support for team leaders amongst peers and also the implementation of shared systems and practices that have had positive outcomes. This achievement has created the opportunity for some staff to work across programs, creating greater flexibility and support for our young people.

Our teams have continued to meet frequently with the support of clinical psychologists to continually review, improve and monitor the support needs for young people. All our young people are supported by individual behavioural support plans and risk management plans. This practice assists us to deliver a consistent, predictable environment of support for them.

At a client level we see significant achievements every day. This can be facing the challenges of attending mainstream education, open employment, learning to drive and preparing for leaving care. These seem like 'normal' achievements for 12-18 year olds but with the impact of trauma and abuse, developmental delays or poor impulse control, this may be compared to 'walking up a hill versus climbing Mount Everest'. We are proud, supportive and celebrate these everyday achievements with our young people.

What is the achievement your program/team is most proud of?

Our most significant achievement this year as a service has been the development and implementation of induction and training for residential OOHC frontline staff. All current staff have attended and participated in our Residential Induction. All new staff are attending as part of a five day orientation and induction. We provide practical information including self-care, documentation and record keeping, introduction to attachment theory, and the impacts of trauma and abuse. We also implement the Office of the Children's OOHC standards into practice, child protection and legislation.

What challenges have you overcome?

There have been challenges to overcome across all our service areas with the need for continued community education and advocacy for our young people. Often a young person's psychological damage cannot be visually seen. Many people including other health professionals, police, those working in the criminal justice system and education providers, may lack the experience or expertise to have a depth of understanding of the behaviour of our young people. We have implemented regular meetings with Juvenile Justice and local Police Youth Liaison Officers in the Shoalhaven. We continue to take every opportunity to educate individuals and stakeholders that work with our young people in the community.

CareSouth has been in operation for 21 years. In that time, what has been your program's most significant achievement?

As CareSouth approaches 21 years of community service delivery, the organisation continues to learn from the past whilst having a shared vision for the future. Our development and implementation of CareSouth's Reconciliation Action Plan is an achievement of which we are all very proud. With approximately 25% of young people in Residential OOHC identifying as Aboriginal, this is a statement of our commitment and hope for the future.

What are your hopes for the next 12 months?

Over the next 12 months we will transition into a regional model of leadership support for OOHC across the organisation. We hope to continue to grow, learn and develop whilst staying focused on individual young people, families and communities.

“
**AT A CLIENT LEVEL
WE SEE SIGNIFICANT
ACHIEVEMENTS
EVERY DAY. THIS
CAN BE FACING
THE CHALLENGES
OF ATTENDING
MAINSTREAM
EDUCATION, OPEN
EMPLOYMENT,
LEARNING TO DRIVE
AND PREPARING
FOR LEAVING CARE.**
”

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS SUPERVISED CONTACT & TRANSPORT



Program Manager
Paulette Sewell

IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS:

What have you achieved in meeting our Strategic Plan?

CareSouth's Supervised Contact and Transport program is committed to recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce. We employ qualified staff who have a broad range of skills and areas of expertise. Our pool of casual workers includes psychology graduates, family support workers, social workers, counselors, disability workers, teachers, parents and multi-lingual workers. We ensure we match the right worker to the right contact.

We have recruited 18 new contact workers since our last annual report. We have also updated our induction training material. All staff entering our program are provided with the same training to ensure consistency in work practices and with CareSouth's Values.

“
OUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT IS THAT OUR PROGRAM HAS ALWAYS REMAINED CONSISTENTLY CHILD FOCUSED, DESPITE HUGE CHANGES IN THE SECTOR AND THE CHALLENGES THESE BRING.”

What is the achievement that your program/team is most proud of?

Our team is very proud of the high level of service we provide to our clients, and we believe that this sets us apart from the rest. We have maintained quality relationships with our major clients and also built relationships with new clients. We continuously receive positive feedback regarding the reliable and professional service offered by our program. We have consistently maintained the standard of our contact reports and streamlined our training to ensure we provide objective, descriptive and court-ready contact reports to submit to Family and Community Services (FaCS), our primary client. We recognise this is vital as FaCS focus more heavily on child protection and Out-of-Home Care transitions to non-government organisations.

What challenges have you overcome?

We have worked cohesively in adapting to the change in costing for services we provide, as per the Non Placement Support Service Agreement by which we are bound. This change required the renewal of all financial contracts for our current families and we successfully did so within a short time frame.

Our program has been impacted by the current changes within the Department of Family and Community Services, in particular the transfer of Out-of-Home Care clients to non-government agencies. We continue to work closely with our clients to provide contact services as they accept new families and embrace new opportunities as a result of these changes in the sector.

CareSouth has been in operation for 21 years. In that time, what has been your program's most significant achievement?

Our greatest achievement is that our program has always remained consistently child-focused, despite huge changes in the sector and the challenges these bring. We continue to provide a high standard for safe and secure environments in which children living in Out-of-Home Care can successfully maintain relationships with their families.

What are your hopes for the next 12 months?

We are excited to announce the new name of our program in the coming months and to expand the number of services we hope to provide our community in the future. We will continue to identify the needs of the children, young people, individuals and families we work with and grow as a program to meet those needs.

We will explore funding opportunities to reduce costs of existing services and introduce new ones.

We are very much looking forward to moving to the new CareSouth Berkeley office with its outstanding contact rooms and bold new facilities. We are positive that our new facilities will further contribute to our service being a stand out from the rest!

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

HUMAN RESOURCES



Human Resources Manager
Jacqueline Forst

IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS:

What have you achieved in meeting our Strategic Plan?

In very recent years, Human Resources (HR) at CareSouth has transformed from being transactional and reactionary to being a business-centred, proactive partner to the services. We have embarked on some innovative programs aimed at becoming an Employer of Choice in the Community Services Sector.

Our biggest achievement has been laying the foundations of our Total Reward Framework. We have seen immediate results in improved benefits for our staff (both financial and non-financial benefits) and more transparent reward offerings. Further significant outcomes will be achieved as we develop our competency framework (core and functional competencies) and build career paths and job families.

A short time ago it would have been unheard of to allow our staff to work across areas and programs; now it is possible as we develop and build a workforce strategy that will provide and support the skilled staff necessary to maintain and expand our services.

This year we have:

- Commenced phase one and two of the rewards framework
- Designed and implemented a new induction and on-boarding program, which will empower our new employees with the best knowledge to start their careers with CareSouth
- Commenced the process of updating all of the Human Resources (HR) policies and procedures
- Commenced a restructure for workers compensation purposes
- Expanded recruitment into the western NSW
- Finalised the recruitment of a stable and skilled HR Team
- Commenced building a relationship with the University of Wollongong – Community Services Research Consortium

- Commenced building links with local TAFE campuses to help train the local community by offering work placement for students in Disability Services, Case Management and Youth Work
- Enhanced salary packaging options and increasing the take home pay for all permanent staff, most importantly those staff on the lowest incomes

What is the achievement that your program/team is most proud of?

We are most proud of improvements in staff recruitment, retention and laying the foundations of developing a true and strategic training and development program for all CareSouth staff. This has taken place through the development of competency frameworks and the CareSouth salary architecture that serves to increase transparency, equity and improve the capabilities of our staff, thereby promoting performance.

What challenges have you overcome?

The most significant challenges we have overcome have been from implementing change as we promote more transparency, more support for staff and fairer reward for all staff. We have achieved successful recruitment in the midst of a period of growth across a geographically dispersed area.

CareSouth has been in operation for 21 years. In that time, what has been your program's most significant achievement?

Both CareSouth and the Human Resources field have come a long way in 21 years. There have been many developments as CareSouth has grown from a small agency to a large organisation. Our staff work 24/7 across many locations and often in difficult environments. Our challenge is to ensure in this environment that we focus on clarifying expectations, roles, responsibilities and resources required to achieve goals as well as ensuring compliance with ever-changing employment legislation.

We focus on:

- Improving communication and understanding between managers and employees in terms of work requirements, expectations, performance criteria and achievements
- Linking individual, team or unit performance with quality assurance, continuous improvement and evaluation processes
- Encouraging structured feedback from employees and supervisors on individual performance and career planning
- Introducing an achievement focused culture and increasing motivation
- Increasing CareSouth's capability to meet future requirements

What are your hopes for the next 12 months?

We have big plans for the next 12 months:

- Rewards Framework Phase 2
- Training analysis and skills audits based on agreed and defined competencies
- Finalisation and implementation of all Human Resources (HR) policies and procedures
- Provisional psychologist program
- HR database and reporting system
- Continuing to improve our Work Health & Safety culture and laying the foundations of a positive duty of care for all staff
- Training our managers and supervisors in performance based pay and effective performance management for the benefit of our clients.

“
**BOTH CARESOUTH
AND THE HUMAN
RESOURCES FIELD
HAVE COME A LONG
WAY IN 21 YEARS.**”

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

CORPORATE SERVICES



Chief Financial Officer
Renee Schott

IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS:

What have you achieved in meeting our Strategic Plan?

CareSouth's Corporate Services team has been involved in the creation of the CareSouth Induction Process and Manual. This has been a massive undertaking to provide tools and education to new staff; to ensure they are entering the organisation with all the information they need to fulfil the duties of their role.

There has been a substantial amount of effort and focus on also finding solutions for our Information Technology infrastructure and ongoing support needs for the organisation. We recruited a full-time Manager of Information and Communication Technology to help guide and support the work of the organisation.

This new Manager is currently working on improving the reliability and performance of existing systems whilst also investigating and implementing more robust systems that will assist us in achieving our strategic goals. We aim to implement new systems in the next 12 months as well as an improved, organisation-wide client management system. By improving our systems we hope to give our staff more time to spend with their clients and less time in front of the computer.

What is the achievement that your program/team is most proud of?

Being able to assist staff and clients on an everyday basis by providing them with the appropriate tools and supports in a timely fashion.

What challenges have you overcome?

The environment that we work within is ever-changing. It has been simultaneously challenging and rewarding to ensure we provide the level of service required whilst remaining accountable and compliant.

CareSouth has been in operation for 21 years. In that time, what has been your program's most significant achievement?

The most significant achievement for us is that we have always been able to support the organisation throughout its existence within appropriate timeframes, on budget and with a high level of accountability and compliance. We have been able to adapt to the changes that have occurred throughout the organisation's lifecycle with a collaborative, cooperative team.

What are your hopes in the next 12 months?

We will continue to improve our systems, processes and procedures to ensure that we are robust and compliant for the organisation's continued growth.

“THE ENVIRONMENT THAT WE WORK WITHIN IS EVER-CHANGING. IT HAS BEEN SIMULTANEOUSLY CHALLENGING AND REWARDING TO ENSURE WE PROVIDE THE LEVEL OF SERVICE REQUIRED WHILST REMAINING ACCOUNTABLE AND COMPLIANT.”

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS COMMUNITY RELATIONS



Manager
Jennifer Nelson

IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS:

What have you achieved in meeting our Strategic Plan?

CareSouth is committed to community engagement and the Community Relations team has worked tirelessly over the past year to implement our brand new look to an exceptionally high standard.

Having evolved beyond recognition as an organisation, it was time to show how we have come of age. We were aware that we needed to communicate our uniqueness amongst other organisations in our sector. We recognised the importance of developing and communicating our brand identity to more effectively engage with our communities.

The **EVERYDAY CareSouth** brand came to life with images of families from our communities when our dynamic new website went live in March 2013.

The EVERYDAY concept reflects the work we do, supporting everyday breakthroughs for children, young people, individuals, families and communities. The smallest breakthroughs can have a major and life changing impact in peoples' lives.

What is the achievement that your program/team is most proud of?

CareSouth has taken the brave step of undergoing the introspective process of creating and implementing an entirely new brand identity. We did a lot of work internally over the past year to come up with a fresh new look that identified our personality as BOLD, BIG-HEARTED and DETERMINED.

The rebrand process has been a very rewarding experience and has given us the voice we needed to tell our stories in a way that we believe inspires others to help us build capacity in children, young people, families and communities.

Our new website showcases what we have achieved for CareSouth through this process. We managed to get this very contemporary, high-end website completed in record time and with a very small budget. We are so proud of this achievement, especially as we continue to get highly positive feedback on our website every day!

What challenges have you overcome?

We have had a huge year driving a rebrand and then implementing the changes that process naturally produces. As a new team of two, consisting of myself and Public Relations Coordinator Caroline Jones, we have been extremely proactive in getting the work completed. It continues to be a learning experience.

We have delivered the CareSouth rebrand successfully across seven offices and five programs with highly positive feedback from our communities. All this whilst actively increasing our profile through strategic and planned media campaigns and activities, including but not limited to Child Protection Week, Foster Care Week and the Fostering NSW Campaign.

We have also gained the respect of other local organisations in our sector, including the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies and the NSW Department of Family and Community Services, through the collaborative support we have provided to local community initiatives.

CareSouth has been in operation for 21 years. In that time, what has been your program's most significant achievement?

The updating of our website has been a massive achievement. An organisation's website is its portal to the world. Our new website was developed as a dynamic and user-friendly resource. We wanted to ensure that anyone visiting us online would leave with an understanding of what we do and who we help.

We believe we have achieved this and the feedback we have received continues to be very positive and encouraging.

What are your hopes for the next 12 months?

Over the next 12 months we will continue to embed and evolve our brand messaging. As we move through this process, our communities and stakeholders will gain better insights and understanding into what we do – creating a positive future for children, young people, individuals, families and communities, providing opportunities to enhance their quality of life.

Our sincere appreciation and thanks are extended to all those who support CareSouth.

“HAVING CHANGED AND GROWN BEYOND RECOGNITION AS AN ORGANISATION, IT WAS TIME TO SHOW HOW WE HAVE COME OF AGE.”

CARESOUTH CELEBRATES 21 YEARS WITH A BRAND NEW LOOK

In March 2013, as we commenced our 21st year, CareSouth launched our brand new identity with a dynamic, interactive new website at www.everydaycaresouth.org.au.

CareSouth is a not-for-profit organisation that supports and cares for people who are doing it tough. Whether it's children having a hard time at home, people living with a disability, or families struggling to get by – we're here to help, every day.

Our vision is to create a positive future for people in our community, providing opportunities to enhance their quality of life. We've grown a lot since we started in 1992 and we're able to help people across the Illawarra, South Coast, Southern Tablelands and Western NSW.



Our new look and tone of voice better captures CareSouth's personality and motivation, as an organisation that inspires EVERYDAY people in our communities and staff to do extraordinary things. We celebrate EVERYDAY achievements and seek to bring hope to the lives of the children, young people, individuals, families, and communities we help EVERYDAY.

"We seek to inspire each other and the communities in which we operate – through excellence in service delivery and always doing what we say we will, in a professional and compassionate way," said CareSouth CEO Debra Tozer, "We are leaders in our field and aim to be the agency of choice for our families and volunteers."



BRAND NEW LOOK

OUR NEW LOOK AND TONE OF VOICE
BETTER CAPTURE CARESOUTH'S
PERSONALITY AND MOTIVATION

“In non-government organisations it’s more about building relationships”

CareSouth CEO,
in ‘Foster shortage looming’
Illawarra Mercury 3 September 2012

“PEOPLE DON’T SEE THE CHILDREN, THEY JUST SEE THEM SITTING IN THE WHEELCHAIR. THEY DON’T REALISE THEY HAVE A LOT OF NEEDS AND HEADACHES BUT ALSO A LOT OF LOVE TO GIVE.”

Karon Foster, CareSouth Family Choices carer in ‘Volunteer finds unexpected joy in role’ Lake Times 28 November 2012

“I KEEP DOING IT BECAUSE I HAVE SEEN THE DIFFERENCE IT MAKES.”

Nanny Nette, CareSouth Foster Carer, in ‘Beautiful memories line the wall of love’ Illawarra Mercury 9 March 2013

“The connection doesn’t end when they leave. There have been hard times, but it’s the greatest thing we’ve ever done.”

Von and Sacha, CareSouth Foster Carers, in ‘Family ties’ South Coast Register 13 February 2013

“Some of these kids have never smiled, they don’t know how to. So seeing them break into a grin, or laugh for the first time, that’s the best feeling.”

Michelle, CareSouth Foster Carer, in ‘Foster Parents rapt with the newest family member’ Illawarra Mercury 3 September 2012

“We’re trying to recruit carers for the 10-14 age group. While there are challenges associated, the positives you can gain by helping them move into young adulthood outweigh them.”

Chris Stubbs, CareSouth Foster Care Program Manager, in ‘Foster carers needed’ Lake Times 24 October 2012

“In some ways it’s more challenging than we thought it would be, in others it’s more rewarding.”

Terry and Diane, Aunties & Uncles carers, in ‘A lasting resolution’ South Coast Register 23 January 2013

“I couldn’t think of anything better than coming to work and getting to spend time with Steve. I came from being an apprentice butcher. I did not like that and I didn’t really know where my life was going, but I thought I would give this a shot and I have never looked back.”

Daniel Gannon in ‘Caregiver rates his mate’ Illawarra Mercury 30 November 2012

A SELECTION OF OUR GOOD NEWS STORIES FROM AROUND OUR REGION, 2012-2013. FOR FULL MEDIA INTERVIEWS, INCLUDING NEWSPAPER AND TELEVISION, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT

WWW.EVERYDAYCARESOUTH.ORG.AU

IN THE NEWS

ANNETTE'S STORY

FOSTERING A LIFE OF LOVE ...

Knowing from an early age that I would be unable to have children, I had always planned to adopt two children and to be a foster 'Mum' to many others. Like many other people I have since spoken to, other things got in the way of carrying through my plans.

When I married, we were told that my husband was too old to be considered as an adoptive parent – so we started talking about fostering young children. We both wanted to foster young children on a crisis/short term capacity as this was where there was the greatest need.

Other things continued to delay us investigating becoming foster carers, such as travelling or completing our home. Unfortunately my husband died before we started the process of becoming carers and I guessed (incorrectly as it turned out) that I would no longer be eligible to be considered to become a foster carer. I was devastated because my entire life had involved working with children (teaching swimming, Sunday School, being a Cub Leader, on the Board at the school of my niece and nephew whom I had raised as my own).

It was in my capacity as a Board member at Illawarra Christian School that my passion to become a foster carer became a reality. A caseworker for a foster care agency called me to organise an enrolment for a child. I casually said to her "I don't suppose that a single parent can become a foster carer?" and her answer was "Why not?" I received an information pack the very next day, read it thoroughly and they had my application that day. I was stoked!

The process was thorough and exciting. My first placement was a three month old little girl who was soon joined by her twin eighteen month old sisters. What a learning curve! While the night feeds were a change to my normal late-to-bed, late-to-rise routine, I was in heaven. The hardest part was saying goodbye when it was time for them to return

to their family, but we continued doing respite for them for some time and it was great to see their family situation improving and the difference it made to the girls.

I have actually had seven sets of twins amongst the 67 children I have cared for so far. I have been a carer for 16 years with a break of three years. I have been blessed to be able to mentor new carers, be involved in a Foster Carer Advisory Group with Community Services, been part of training teams and spoken to many potential foster carers about what is involved in being a foster carer – but the most incredible aspect continues to be the children. While it has never become any easier to say goodbye, the way the children blossom and learn to trust, receive and return love more than outweighs the sadness of goodbyes. I feel I am "Nanny Nette" to 67 children!

The children I have cared for are loved and treated as if they were my own for the time they are with me and are never forgotten. They have included children from families with substance abuse issues, children who have been neglected and/or abused, a little person whose Mum was afraid she might hurt him, children of other carers who have been ill or going on vacation, children of parents who have never known themselves what it is to be parented and children whose parents have mental health or other issues.

I feel that I am part of a very important team – a team comprising of our caseworkers at CareSouth, workers from Family and Community Services, the families of our very important little guests, even more importantly the children themselves and finally myself. I also know that I can and do make a difference in the lives of all the children I care for and that is such a privilege.

I hope to be a CareSouth foster carer for many more years to come.

“

I ALSO KNOW THAT I CAN AND DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF ALL THE CHILDREN I CARE FOR ...”



Q&A

WITH A CARESOUTH AUNTY AND UNCLE

When and why did you decide to join CareSouth's Aunties & Uncles program as volunteer carers?

Rachel: "For years I've been going past the CareSouth Aunties & Uncles sign at South Nowra. I was interested in the program as I haven't had kids myself and I wanted to give back to the community. The idea was idling around in my head for a long, long time, say 4-5 years, because I had to make sure the timing was right for me."

One of the things that made it happen was finishing my second university degree. This signalled the end of a chapter in my life and it was time to start some new adventures. Also recognising that Ken and I had a rock solid relationship and I wasn't going to leave the area was important to me as I didn't want to start something that I didn't know I could finish. I felt the children on the program have probably been let down too many times in their lives and I didn't want to be another person to do that to them".

Ken: "I have raised my own children and have grandchildren, but Rachel hasn't had her own children so initially she was interested in fostering. Aunties & Uncles was a better choice for us."

Rachel: "Yes, Aunties & Uncles was a better choice and fit for our busy lifestyles and where we are at in our lives."

Tell us what a typical day as an Aunty and Uncle is like for you.

Ken: "It's a lot more settled now than when we first started. At first the day started and ended at a million miles per hour! My granddaughter Sienna spends regular time with us too and they have become friends. They've had a few little tiffs but they're mates and it's great to see them enjoying spending time together."

Rachel: "I pick our "nephew" Dylan* up from soccer on Saturday mornings as Ken works at his sawmill and farm business on Saturdays. He seems happy to know I'm there and watching him play his game. We then come home and he and I are happy to potter around doing things together like Lego or playing with our dog Sasha. When Ken comes home it's Ken time as it's all about Ken – Dylan loves Ken!"

Ken: "We might have a couple of ideas about activities we might do but we don't plan too much in advance other than planning when we will have Dylan stay over. Dylan loves going out to the sawmill and farm where we have goats and he has recently experienced seeing a baby goat being born. He has also learnt from the farm that eggs come from a chook's bottom and not a factory. He is still grossed out by it though and thinks the eggs need to be taken to the factory to be cleaned".

Rachel: "I take Dylan out on the bike when I am doing running training as I compete in triathlons. He really enjoys this and I plan to take him to see me compete in a triathlon soon so he can also experience that."

Ken and Dylan have started making homemade pizzas together. If Dylan is involved in cooking dinner he is more likely to eat it and try new things. He doesn't like trying anything new and we have made it a house rule that in this house we all have a go at trying new things before deciding we don't like them".

How do your expectations of the program compare with the realities of the program?

Ken: "Our Aunties & Uncles Regional Coordinator was really clear and realistic in explaining what was going to happen once we got involved in the program. I didn't really have any expectations I just thought if it works it works but if it doesn't it doesn't."

Q&A

Rachel: “I was worried about discipline and maintaining boundaries in the beginning but I haven’t found it hard at all. During the training we talked about the importance of maintaining healthy boundaries and consistency for the children in the program and I was really concentrating on this topic. Once I got started I realised – oh, this boundaries stuff is just my normal way! It’s not as hard as it all seemed and it just came naturally for me.”

How has being involved in the program changed your life? What have you learnt as a couple or family?

Rachel: “We talk a lot and I’ve really admired how much Ken has stepped up to the role. Ken always refers to himself as just tagging along but he’s doing much more than that.

Dylan refers to Ken’s granddaughter Sienna as his step-sister. He said fairly early on in our relationship that Ken and Rachel are my Uncle and Aunt and I’m not having any other Uncles and Aunties. I sat there and thought this is clearly a long-term thing and we have really signed up now!

I think we are better, Ken and I together. I reckon we’ve grown closer since becoming an Aunty and Uncle. We’ve always been a really good team.

Ken: “We’re communicating a lot more now. We find that the next morning after we’ve had Dylan, we are having a cuppa together and talking about the actual visit - where we went wrong or right and what we could do differently next time. We tend to be talking more and planning for the next visit better and things seem to be achieved.

Rachel: “Sienna is benefiting from more rules and boundaries that have been put in place since Dylan has come along. She’s also learning about respect for other people and learning about people from different walks of life”.

What support have you found most useful from CareSouth staff?

Rachel: “Trust the process. CareSouth has the process really down well and I trusted the process right from the beginning. The CareSouth Aunties & Uncles team have been a really big influence on us continuing in the program. Bear with the harder times and communicate with your Regional Coordinator as they are there to support you.”

Ken: “The support of our Aunties & Uncles Regional Coordinator got us off to a really good start. It helped us to really confirm why we were doing this rather than it being just because we can. When you hear about what these kids go through you realise you’re not doing it for your own gratification, you’re doing it for the child.”

CareSouth’s Aunties & Uncles program did a really good job of matching us with Dylan and because of this a child is happy. Our Regional Coordinator told us when she first met Dylan he was dangling from a tree in his front yard trying to saw the tree with a hand saw wearing man-sized boots. She said she knew the type of carers that would work for Dylan and knew she had found the right match for him when we applied.”

What are the most noticeable changes you have seen in your niece or nephew over the time she or he has been involved with your family? How has the relationship developed/changed?

Ken: “Dylan was so wound up in the beginning but he’s settled right down now. He seems to have grown up a bit since he first started and he’s not anywhere near as hyperactive as he used to be.

We went fishing together recently and Dylan is normally quite shy with a stranger. I was talking to another man who was fishing near us and Dylan really opened up and had a good chat, which was a real surprise. Dylan seems more confident now.”

Rachel: “Dylan has started talking about going to work at the mill with Ken when he grows up or perhaps driving a crane. Ken is a big influence on him.”

What would you say to people who are considering the program but feel they “don’t have the time”?

Rachel: “It does take up time and you do need to make the commitment but I think you can relax and not put too much pressure on yourself. We fit it in and I also have two time-consuming hobbies.

I found I was making it more complex than what it really is in the beginning and doubting myself but it all just happened naturally. I feel like Ken and I are still really at the beginning stages six months into being linked with Dylan. We can really see the benefit of him sleeping over now and he’s much more settled.”

Ken: “Certainly sit down and talk about how you’re going to manage a child. I think it takes at least two to three visits to really start to get to know a child and to start forming a relationship.”

Rachel: “Dogs are great and our dog Sasha has been a great icebreaker - Dylan loves her. Dylan feels part of what’s going on by us including him in things like feeding the dog or cleaning up after her. I feel there are ways we can influence Dylan but it’s not about the big stuff all the time. Just make sure there’s always some really nice stuff going on - like Ken’s pizza, fishing and swimming – that’s easy!”

**Child’s name changed for privacy reasons.*

“

I THINK WE ARE BETTER, KEN AND I TOGETHER. I RECKON WE’VE GROWN CLOSER SINCE BECOMING AN AUNTY AND UNCLE.

”

CARESOUTH YOUTH ACCOMODATION

Mel moved into CareSouth's Youth Hostel whilst completing her Year 12 Higher School Certificate at a local high school. This is Mel's story.

"When I became homeless I felt like my world around me was falling apart. I was suffering from anxiety and panic attacks. I didn't know what the future held for me, where and what to do.

When I first moved into the CareSouth Youth Hostel, I was very nervous and found it daunting. After meeting the kind and friendly staff and making new relationships with my housemates, I realised I could be independent but still have support and advice around me when I needed it."

Despite not being able to live at home at the time, Mel showed continued motivation and commitment towards her education. CareSouth Youth Hostel staff assisted and supported Mel in various ways, from preparing for University to helping with her dress for her Year 12 Formal. A local community member, Lynda, kindly donated her time and skills to alter Mel's Formal dress.

"The best thing about the CareSouth Youth Hostel is that without my troubles being a burden any more, I could study for school and focus on completing Year 12.

Without the support of my older brother and the Youth Hostel staff, I don't think I would be where I am today. The CareSouth Youth Hostel is like a big family."

In the face of her challenges of homelessness, Mel has risen above her situation. She plans to attend University of Wollongong – Shoalhaven Campus in 2014 to achieve the necessary qualifications for a career in Nursing. Mel's story of resilience and courage is a true inspiration for other young people in a similar situation.

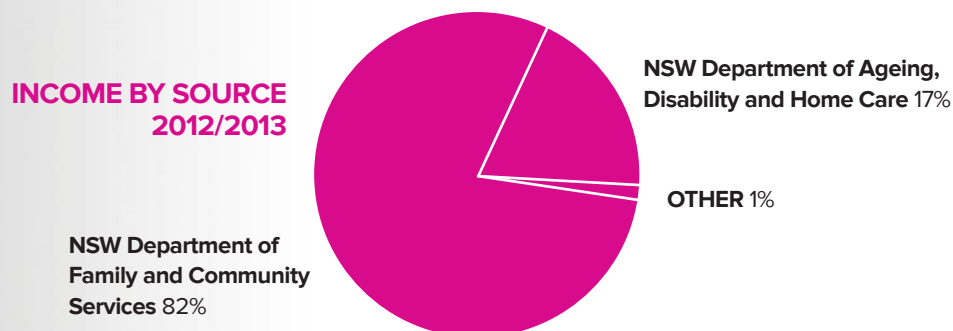
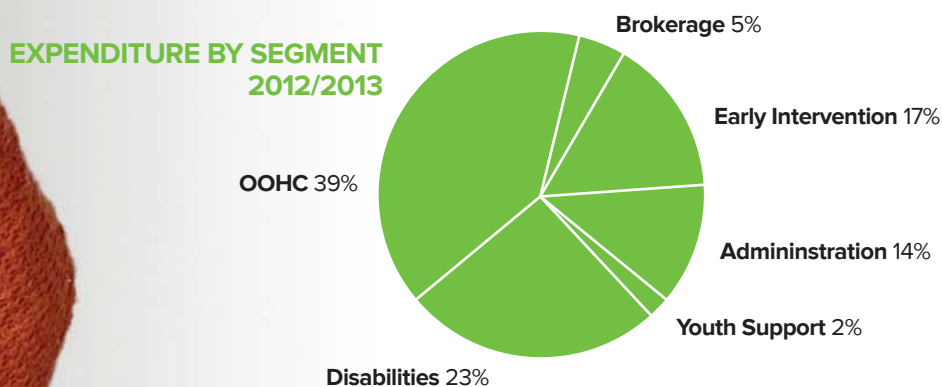
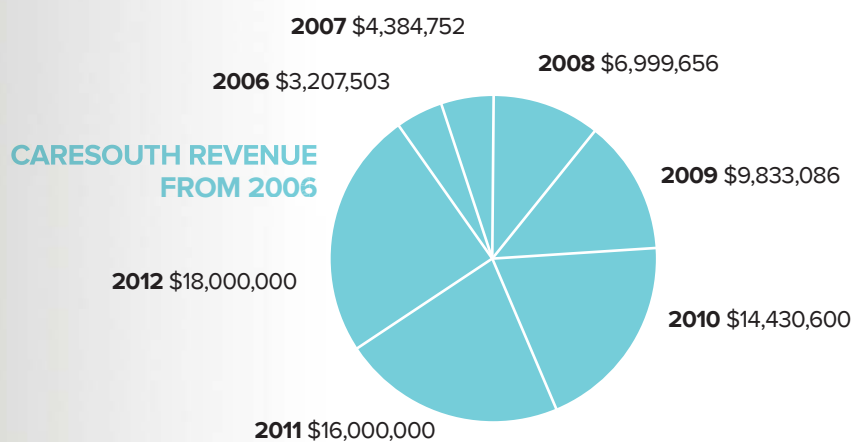
MEL'S STORY

MEL'S STORY OF RESILIENCE AND COURAGE IS A TRUE INSPIRATION FOR OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE IN A SIMILAR SITUATION.



FINANCIAL REPORT

CareSouth continued its expansion during the 2012-2013 financial year. Our infrastructure and support services have been significantly developed to ensure that we continue to provide a high level of service delivery to our clients and service providers. The NGO sector continues to grow and the long-term projection for CareSouth is growth across all our service areas.



HUGE THANKS

TO OUR 2012-2013 PARTNERS, SUPPORTERS AND DONORS

An enormous **THANK YOU** to all the individuals, families, businesses, clubs and organisations who have supported us over the last year. Please know that you have made a very real difference in someone's life. Every donation and in-kind gift truly does matter.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our special thanks to:



Family &
Community Services



KINGHORN MOTOR GROUP



OUR HUGE THANKS ALSO...

to all others who donated to us during the 2012/2013 Financial Year, either in cash or in kind, including:

Australian Museum, Sydney

Canberra Raiders

Cold Rock Ice Cream, Wollongong

Craig Green Photography

Empire Cinema, Bowral

Escape Travel, Shellharbour

Explore ANZ Stadium, Sydney

Fujifilm, Australia

Hangdog Climbing Gym

Illawarra Fly Treetop Walk,

Southern Highlands

Illawarra Golf Complex

Illawarra Titans

IMAX Theatre, Sydney

Kiama Laser Skirmish

Kids at the Reins

Land's Edge Surf School,
Seven Mile Beach

Lightsounds, Wollongong

Lions Club of Minnamurra

Marty Haynes

Master Builders Club

Mike Weyman

Mogo Zoo, Mogo

Nextra

Questacon, Canberra

Rural Bitumen Supplies

Shoalhaven Illawarra Performing
Arts Centre

Shoalhaven City Council

Shoalhaven Zoo

Southern Style Events

Sussex Inlet Public School


Taronga Zoo, Sydney

The Links, Shell Cove

Tractor Design School Pty Ltd

Wendell Sailor

Zoo & Adventure World



**WE WOULD LIKE TO
THANK EACH AND
EVERY ONE OF THE
MANY INDIVIDUALS,
BUSINESSES AND
ORGANISATIONS WHO
DONATED TO US IN-KIND
OR IN CASH IN THE 2012-
2013 FINANCIAL YEAR.**

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ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

EVERYDAY

CareSouth

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