



MERCYCARE
FOUNDATION

Bringing compassion to life



SHARE THE CARE

A project to properly resource foster care families and meet the health, development and extracurricular needs of children in foster care.



MercyCare invites you to make a difference and to sponsor children in our foster-care programme.

We have places for 58 children in foster care family settings who need your help.

CHILDREN AT RISK – A growing concern

For the vast majority of children, Western Australia is a great place to live and grow. But there are some sad exceptions. The tragic reality is that this year alone, more than 5,000 children in the State will be reported as being at risk in their family environment. Of the children at risk, the painful truth is that more than 2,000 will be abused or neglected in the next 12 months.

FOSTER CARE – Part of the solution

Home-based foster care is one of several community responses being provided for children and young people where abuse and neglect is an issue. It offers a safe and supportive alternative home environment for children and young people unable to live with their parents. Usually contact is maintained with families of origin, and wherever possible, efforts are made to reunite children with their families. The number of children and young people in out-of-home care in Australia has risen steadily from 14,078 in 1997 to nearly 28,441 at 30 June, 2007. In Western Australia there are approximately 2,500 children in out-of-home care.

FOSTER CARERS – Caring that matters

Foster carers make an invaluable contribution to caring for children and young people, helping them to develop capable and independent young adults. This is really an essential service in our community and foster carers should be more highly recognised. They provide day-to-day care for some of the most vulnerable, neglected, and abused children and young people. Many of these children and young people have complex needs and the task of caring for them can be both challenging and rewarding.

This is one step in a long process of improving our community's response to the needs of children most at risk. We have identified the first step as working with children who are already in foster care. Concurrent with this, we will be working on improvements on the whole system of child protection and support in the State.



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SHARE THE CARE

MercyCare and the Sisters of Mercy have been involved in working with children at risk in Western Australia for over 160 years. We specialise in long-term placement of siblings.

‘Share the Care’ is concerned with improving the health and development needs of children in care and providing more support for foster caring families.

Our aim is to provide each child in our foster care programme with the health care they need and the extra-curricular activities that will give them joy and extension. We want these children to have access to some of the experiences that you see enriching the lives of your own children and grandchildren every day.

We also want to enhance the care and support provided to foster caring families. Our vision is to significantly improve foster caring options so that we can dramatically increase the number of families who take on the trials and tribulations of being a foster caring family.

HOW YOUR FUNDING WILL HELP

Your funding will provide:

- Private essentials health insurance for the whole foster care family
- A full-paediatric and development assessment for each child
- Necessary care interventions (speech therapy, psychology, physiotherapy)
- Remedial tutoring where required
- At least two of the following activities: music lessons, participation in a team sport, solo sport, art, theatre or dance lessons for each child and their foster care siblings
- The provision of an adult “older sister” “older brother” to each child

RESEARCH & EVALUATION

The research is clear, early intervention can make all the difference to the lives of children (*What Works – A literature review of the evidence for the effectiveness of parenting strategies*).

MercyCare will be conducting detailed monitoring of the effect of the improved diagnosis and care intervention on the development of children in care and measure the impact of the additional support on the foster caring family.

THE LONG TERM

By having access to immediate funding for services required to heal and respond to need, we believe that this initiative will lead to better outcomes for foster care children. In addition, providing this level of support to foster families will go some way toward improving the attractiveness to families of bringing foster children into their lives. We hope that word-of-mouth of this support in the community will aid us in recruiting more wonderful foster families.

We will also be encouraging other foster care providers in the State to start similar programmes. In addition we will be lobbying the State and Federal Governments to include this type of support in their foster care funding.



INVESTMENT LEVELS

We are looking for **anchor investors** who make a **major contribution** of **\$15,000 or more**.

For others, the contribution will be on a per child basis. Providing this support for a 12 month period is **\$3,500** per child.

All donations to the MercyCare Foundation are fully tax deductible.

WE REALLY NEED YOU

Let's make no mistake; this intervention in the lives of these precious children will not happen without you.

If we want to develop this better resourced model of foster caring, we will need you in order to do it.

You have MercyCare's solid commitment to undertaking this work with the utmost care.

We wait for you to join us and open up a new chapter for foster caring in Western Australia.



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