

Diversity & Inclusion

ART COLLECTION 2019

 MercyCare



Diversity & Inclusion

ART COLLECTION 2019





Every
person
matters

We believe. We listen. We care.

During 1846 a group of young Irish Mercy Sisters landed on the banks of the Swan River to help disadvantaged and vulnerable women and children. Today, we continue in the same spirit.

MercyCare has grown to become a leading provider of aged care, family, community, health and disability services. With more than 1200 employees and 164 volunteers, we operate from 40 locations across Western Australia.

We're a not-for-profit organisation with a clear vision: to enable individuals and communities to thrive, not just survive.

We believe that human needs come before service needs. We listen to what people have to say about what matters to them. We care about and respect people for who they are. We do this because every single person in our community matters.

Foreword

At MercyCare, stories are important. They are the human face, voice and life behind diversity and inclusion. These stories are why diversity and inclusion in the workplace and community is imperative.

From our employees to our service users, these stories show what diversity and inclusion looks like to us. This is how the richness of other people's experiences enrich us.

These ordinary, yet extraordinary, people's stories show how they are individually effecting change for themselves and the people around them.

Take the time to read their remarkable stories. Take that knowledge and continue an authentic, unrestrained conversation on diversity and inclusion. I challenge you to then effect change in your part of the world.

Anthony Smith
MercyCare CEO



Nikki Peapell

MercyCare Youth & Homelessness Services Manager



Having staff that come from different backgrounds, who have different lived experiences, is so valuable because they can have a deeper understanding of not only what the issues are, but what the solutions are to break those cycles.

A portrait of Maori chief Heta Te Haara hangs in Nikki Peapell's home. Born in the 1800's, Heta united tribes to negotiate with the Crown. Nikki is a direct descendant.

"We believe our ancestors protect and guide us, so my aunties gave me a portrait of him and said, 'you have to put Heta up because he looks after our family'," Nikki said.

"I truly believe those attributes transfer down to our family. He was a humble leader, and like my grandfather, his father and so on, they are known for having a wicked sense of humour but being able to talk their way out of any situation. True negotiators."

Nikki's more recent forebearers are just as impressive. Known to her simply as 'Nan', Nikki's great Aunt is Merimeri Penfold. Born in the 1920s, Merimeri was the first woman to teach Maori language at University and served as Human Rights Commissioner from 2002 to 2007.

"My pride of our culture is definitely there, but I know a lot of Maori people that don't have that sense of pride, they are disconnected from their tribe, or they have had a negative experience of being Maori. This can really get in the way and impact your mental health and [life] trajectory."

Nikki's own life trajectory could have been very different.

Growing up on New Zealand's Hibiscus Coast, Nikki's family life was turbulent. While her mother's side had a heritage of strong leadership, her father's side had intergenerational difficulties with drugs, alcohol, mental health struggles and violence.

"I guess as a result as a kid I was always curious about human behaviour. I had a strong sense of justice, community and fairness."

At 17, Nikki fell pregnant.

"A comment that stuck with me was 'you are just going to be another Maori statistic - a young teenage Mum'. I was quite stubborn and determined to show everyone otherwise - no that wasn't going to change the trajectory of my life."

Nikki completed a psychology unit at university whilst pregnant, setting her on the path to studying psychology.

Working in mental health, first in New Zealand then in Australia, Nikki could see the difference a psychologist made for families but was frustrated by traditional models.

"The outcomes were poor because there wasn't enough cultural awareness and understanding."

Nikki has been a champion of bicultural practices.

"In previous work, we had a low number of Aboriginal clients accessing our mental health services because of stigma, mistrust, impact of colonisation - factors I could relate to because our people had been through a similar journey."

Bicultural pathways were developed in partnership with Aboriginal leaders and Elders and the number of Aboriginal youth accessing the centre and the service's impact increased.

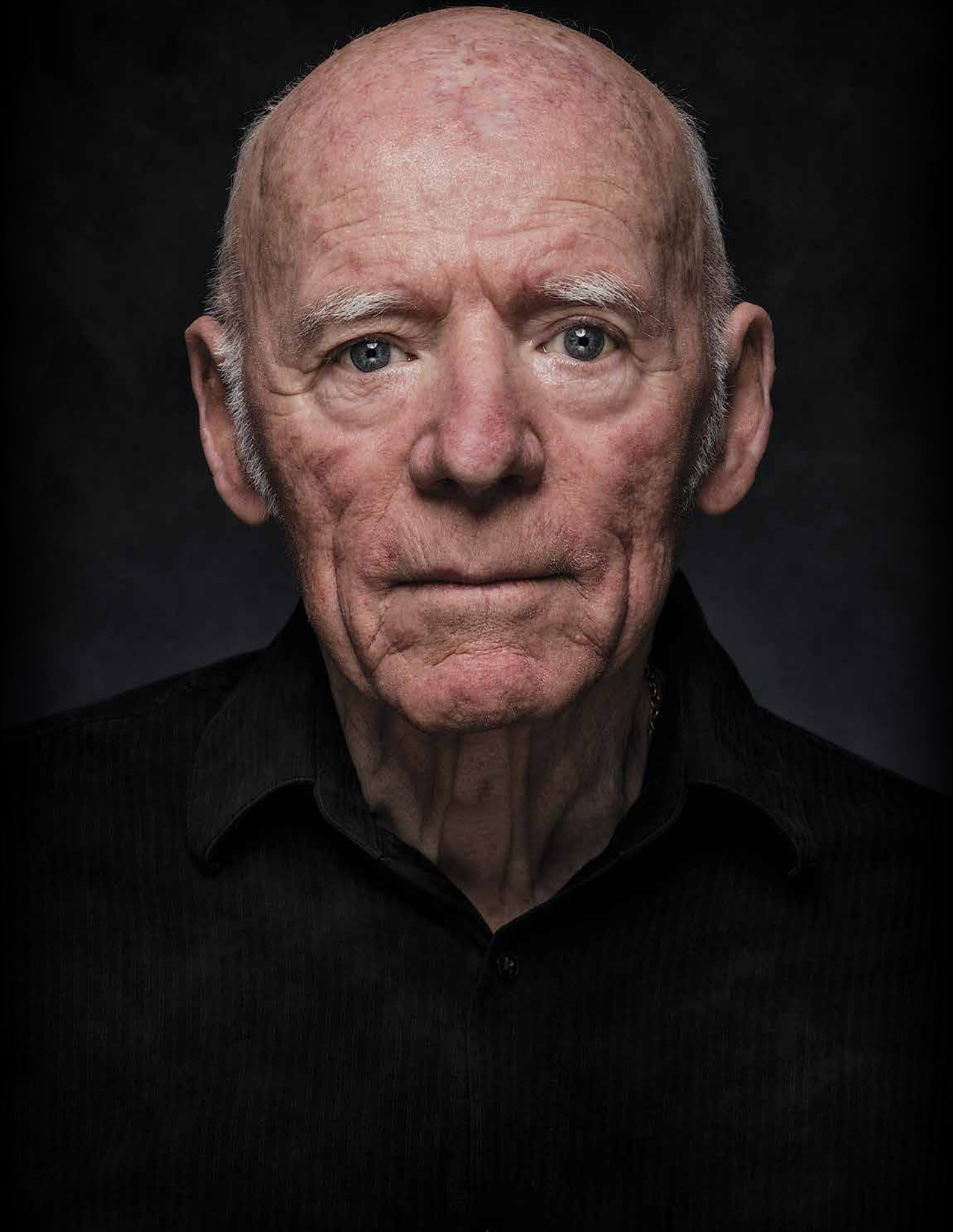
"With youth, you need to be holistic. We may not understand their presentation or behaviours or why they are disengaged from their family if we don't use a cultural lens."

"We need to be culturally responsive, engage with diverse cultural groups to better understand what works for their people, and embrace that diversity to integrate it into our service delivery."

"I truly believe part of the solution is working collaboratively with community, whether that be the Aboriginal community, different ethnic groups, or LGBTQI. By really having that genuine, meaningful relationship and being flexible in our delivery of services we achieve better outcomes."

Nikki said staff diversity was crucial. "In the field we work in you need to understand the people you are working with. You need to be well connected and represent the diversity in the community."

"Having staff that come from different backgrounds, who have different lived experiences, is so valuable because they can have a deeper understanding of not only what the issues are, but what the solutions are to break those cycles."



Pat Jordan

MercyCare Residential Aged Care Joondalup Volunteer



Volunteering makes me feel included in the community. When you first start you feel a bit strange but after a while, you're thankful for it really. And you enjoy doing it.

Every Wednesday for two years, eighty-five-year-old Pat Jordan has caught the bus to volunteer at MercyCare Residential Aged Care Joondalup.

He has provided an ear for aged care residents and shown off his fancy footwork at exercise class.

Pat started visiting the Centre when his wife Patricia was admitted. His call-ins over the next two years provided not only company for Patricia, but the other residents too.

“When I’d come in, sometimes my wife used to be asleep all day and I just got talking to some of the people,” Pat said.

“People love talking and sometimes they just need someone to listen. I imagine some don’t have relatives come to visit.”

Patricia sadly passed away, but Pat made the decision to continue visiting, this time under the guise of volunteer.

Pat has provided an invaluable service, allowing many residents to join activities.

His morning starts early with strong cups of tea and chats with residents before bringing the jokes and fast footwork to the exercise group run by therapy assistant Nigil Fairman.

Pat is not only a star pupil, but the class leader.

“When we do exercise with Nigil we have a laugh with them. We don’t just make it exercise which is boring to some people. And plenty of them show they have cheek and still got a bit of spirit in them.”

He has also been instrumental with tasks during hand therapy and helped push residents in chairs to the park for cake and tea.

Pat too has gained his own sense of inclusion and satisfaction.

“Volunteering makes me feel included in the community. When you first start you feel a bit strange but after a while, you’re thankful for it really. And you enjoy doing it.

“Some of the people here are real characters as well, you know?”

Pat recalled one resident Mary who was a plotter during World War II, her role vital in monitoring and mapping the air force during battles.

“Some of them have had top jobs in their life. I treat everyone the same, equally.”

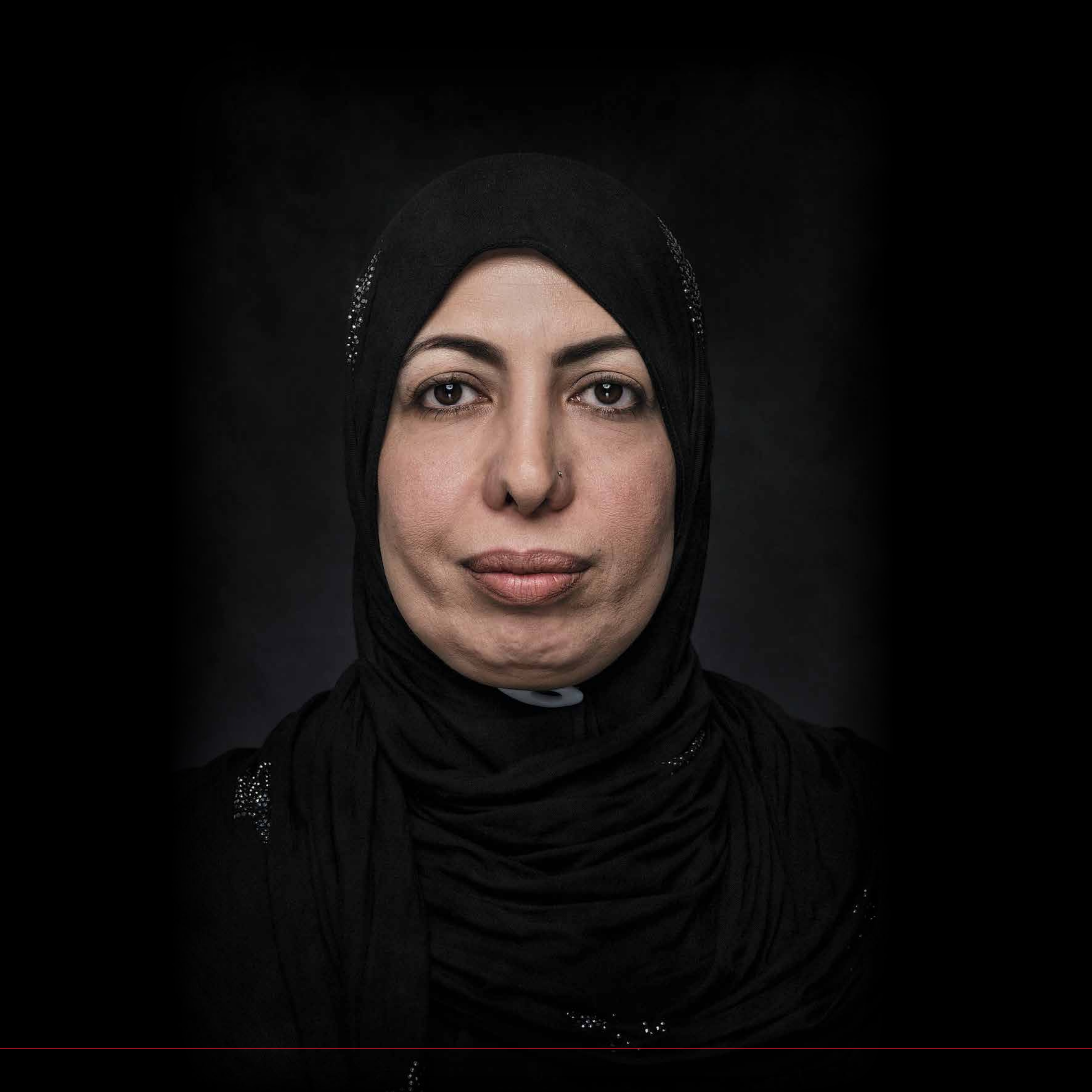
While he has loved hearing the stories of residents, his own globe-trotting history is no less interesting.

He grew up in Liverpool in a rough neighbourhood, the eldest of five brothers. He worked as a 33,000 volt cable jointer (“none of those Micky Mouse cables thanks you very much”) and spent five years in the British Army.

During the 1950’s he was posted to Egypt alongside the Suez Canal where he lived on “biscuits that could break stone”.

After semi-retiring to Portugal for 20 years, he moved to Perth at 64 years old to join his daughter, two grandchildren and now one great grandchild.

“I’d like to be at my great grand daughter’s wedding.”



Hadeel Al Taey

MercyCare Early Learning Centre Educator and Room Leader



It doesn't matter what clothes I am wearing, what make up I put on, if I am wearing a scarf – it doesn't matter because I am still human. As I respect you, you should respect me.

Hadeel Al Taey has drawn great strength from her father's respect for his six girls in Iraq, and her own love for her five children in Australia.

“My Dad was a high school teacher in Iraq and father to six girls. In our community they would say, ‘Oh that poor guy, he has six girls,’ but every time my Dad opened the door, he looked at us and he said, ‘Oh thank God, I have six girls’.

“He supported us and stayed next to us step-by-step until we finished our study.”

As a Shiite family in Saddam Hussein's Sunni-dominated and war-torn Iraq, Hadeel's father succeeded in getting Hadeel's older sister out of the country. Authorities detained him for a month in punishment, his family unaware of his fate. Undeterred, he returned home and continued his quest to find safety for his children.

Before coming to Australia, Hadeel met her now-husband who had fled Iraq eight years before as a persecuted Shiite, first living as a refugee in Saudi Arabia before being accepted into Australia.

Building her life up from nothing in Australia, she spent the next 14 years raising her five children before deciding she needed to become a role model and financially contribute to their future.

“They need a strong Mum. Someone to look after them and to build their future. I need to support them through university.

“I thought ‘I have love, kindness and care for my children, so I should give that to all the children here’.”

Hadeel embarked on her early childhood education diploma but was initially met with discrimination for her Muslim faith.

“It doesn't matter what clothes I am wearing, what make up I put on, if I am wearing a scarf – it doesn't matter, because I am still human. As I respect you, you should respect me.”

When she joined MercyCare three years ago, she found herself in an inclusive and supportive environment.

“Every day I am teaching all the children about MercyCare values, in particular respect. Respect people and understand them.”

Hadeel and her fellow educators celebrate diversity each day through simple activities, from reading books by authors from around the world, to listening to music from other countries that develop their sense of belonging.

“Another educator from India talks about her traditions, the clothes they wear in India. One of the stories I tell them is about my Dad and how he was proud of his six girls, about importance of family and looking after each other.”

With her income Hadeel can now contribute towards her children's education. Her eldest child has just started a law degree at the University of Western Australia with a desire to support women. Hadeel could not be prouder.

“I try to teach my children to respect other people, support them, give them a hand if they need it. Communicate all the time if they need your help and be the first one who is going to say ‘yes, I am here’.”

After many years away, Hadeel was able to return to Iraq and visit her sick father.

“When I went back, I felt so heart-broken. Here was this guy who used to support us and now he is in bed and can't move on. It was a shock.

“I miss my family. I love my country but where I can find the peace and safety? I can find it here in Australia. I love Australia too and I can feel myself here.”



Phil Bartlett

MercyCare Aboriginal Consultant



Each day is different – the next day might be that you get the same sunshine but not as much wind – and that is the good thing about people, we are all different and that is what makes life interesting.

Standing in front of class as the new kid was old news for Phil Bartlett. He attended 13 different schools growing up, from Perth out to Kalgoorlie and up to Derby.

“I had to learn to communicate with new people and while that has been a big learning curve for me, it taught me to be a good communicator with people of all kinds of different backgrounds,” Phil said.

Born on Whadjuk land as Noongar, Phil’s early years weren’t clouded by racism.

“I didn’t see a friend who was non-Aboriginal – I didn’t see him as ‘he is white, I am black’ – I didn’t see that. It was just my mate, my brother, then later when you learn things, you learn things that you shouldn’t have to as a human being.”

While Phil was mastering communication, his education suffered as move-after-move set him back. After fathering his first son at 15, followed quickly by another, he had to grow-up, and fast.

“I had to make better decisions, play the game of life chess, so I learnt to be smart. I had a late start but from there my education just went bang and I got diplomas in counselling and music.”

Music runs through Phil’s veins.

“As a young fella I was like music this, music that, and then before I knew it I was burning myself out trying to become this famous musician and I wasn’t enjoying it anymore.

“Over the past three or four years, and with my brother passing in 2017, I realised I was doing it all wrong. Now I play, I write, I don’t do pub gigs, I do it because I enjoy doing it.

“Music gives me peace and a sense of building and crossing a bridge to another person.”

Professionally, Phil has harnessed his music and communication skills, building bridges for MercyCare as its Aboriginal Consultant.

Power is in Phil’s music, from his voice that cuts to the soul at MercyCare events, to playing didgeridoo at Early Learning Centres, imparting those first positive memories for the next generation.

“When I walk around and talk to people, that is my way of showing people that there are a lot of good Aboriginal people who are intelligent, who are talented, and great to talk to.

“There’s an attitude out there, perpetuated by the media, that all Aboriginal people are the same. Aboriginal people are as diverse as any other group and I try to demonstrate through my actions and the example I set when I walk around talking to people is that there plenty of us out there who are intelligent, talented and up for a great yarn. We have to understand each other’s stories to move forward.

“I can change somebody’s whole point of view. They may have grown up seeing racism and it might just be normal to them to put certain people down but then they see after a while ‘oh, Phil’s a good person, he’s this and he’s that. I did one of his cultural lessons, maybe I’ve been wrong’.

“This gives me a reason to wake up every morning, to try and change people’s perspective and to bring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people together.

“Did I experience racism growing up? Yep, plenty, and still do. Usually every day.”

But it’s not the overt racism that can get to Phil. It’s the casual, the underhand, the unconscious bias.

“That’s the worst kind of racism and that happens all the time.”

Phil sees beauty in difference.

“I believe God created all the animals differently, different trees, different days – each day is different – the next day might be that you get the same sunshine but not as much wind – and the good thing about people is that we are all different and that is what makes life interesting.

“Who would want to grow-up and just be around the same thing every day?”



Sina Abbasi

MercyCare It Takes A Village Playgroup Member



If I compare my childhood to the younger generation it has been so different. When I was young, I was in a place of war and everything was messed up. Now my kids have everything here.

Her own younger years torn apart by war, Shokofa Abbasi has envisaged a very different future for her son Sina in Australia.

Shokofa arrived in Australia with her two children to join her husband in 2015. She gave birth to son Sina, now three, a year later.

“When I first came to Australia, I got pregnant, had a baby, then had depression so I wasn’t really able to go to any English classes. Over the past four years I haven’t been able to learn a lot, but now I am very keen to learn,” Shokofa said through a translator.

The setback in Shokofa’s education was sadly nothing new to her.

“When I was six years old, the war in Afghanistan was really bad. I remember the war was going on in Kabul and we used to hide and try and stay safe.

“Some areas were worse than others, so we used to climb the mountains to get to a safer area.”

Six-year-old Shokofa and her family fled Kabul to Iran via Pakistan. She spent the next 20 years in Iran as a refugee.

“As a refugee in Iran I didn’t have the same rights as a citizen and wasn’t allowed to go to school. When the other kids used to leave to go to school, I used to just watch them.”

After having her first daughter, the UN Refugee Agency was able to give all refugees access to education. Shokofa jumped at the chance and steadily completed classes so she was able to read and write.

Her husband made the move to Indonesia, leaving Shokofa and their two children in Iran, and was eventually able to secure a visa to Australia. Two years later he was able to sponsor to bring his family over.

“It was really hard being apart for those five years.”

While she struggled with having a newborn in a new country, Shokofa could see the potential Australia held for her children.

“While I missed my old life in Iran terribly, when I came to Australia I felt included because I had the same rights.

“If I compare my childhood to the younger generation it has been so different. When I was young, I was in a place of war and everything was messed up. Now my kids have everything here.”

Shokofa’s optimism has been reflected in her joining MercyCare partnership, the Step by Step Settlement program.

Shokofa and Sina attend the It Takes a Village Playgroup where Sina has thrived and Shokofa has met many women from Afghanistan.

It has also enabled Shokofa to access English classes and case workers to provide her with hope for a better future in Australia.

“I really love to communicate with other people and make friends from other communities. Right now, I can’t, but when I finish my English classes I am looking forward to that.”

As Sina makes new playgroup friends, and is able to communicate in two languages, his future as he heads towards school in Australia looks bright.



Katalina Lavaka

MercyCare Migrant Community Support Services Administration Officer



The people I know with a disability are some of the most intelligent people I know. We are eager to be heard, to be recognised and enabled contributors and earners in the workforce.

Young, vibrant, articulate and a gun on an Excel spreadsheet, Katalina Lavaka struggled to find employment when she began to lose her vision.

“I lost a job when I was going through the deterioration of my eyesight,” Katalina said.

“Honestly, I was so desperate for a new job and I had the determination, but I was just adapting to living without my sight.

“I realised, how am I going to land a job when I’m not confident working with a new disability?”

“I would write cover letters online and forward my resume which gained interest from employers, but when I would arrive to the interview, I knew when I couldn’t find the door or find my seat that I was not going to get the job. Out of courtesy, they would interview me anyway, but I knew I didn’t have the job.”

Katalina began to lose her vision at 18 years old due to Retinitis pigmentosa, a rare genetic disorder causing the cells in the retina to breakdown. Now 27 years old, Katalina has low vision, which has allowed her to see silhouettes and to read text in certain colours on certain backgrounds.

“I still struggle mentally with losing my vision, and it is still deteriorating. I am still struggling to find acceptance and closure within myself. It’s hard because I know what I had before and now I’ve had to relearn everything anew.”

That process covered almost every aspect of her life – from walking with a stick to using gadgets that would enable her to continue working.

She also had to overcome the daily fear and grief losing her vision presented.

“Before my eyesight started deteriorating, I was already an anxious person. When I lost my sight that anxiety was three-fold.

“When I couldn’t find employment, I had to live at home with my parents. It was like being a 16-year-old for three years. Though I appreciate my parents support in my most vulnerable and desperate time, now I live independently and can support myself.

“When I sit in my parents’ lounge facing the front yard, sometimes I daydream and I can remember as a kid looking at snails, snail trails, the tiny details of flowers.”

Katalina was connected to MercyCare through a traineeship. Her competency was quickly rewarded with a permanent position at the Mirrabooka office.

She has used gadgets to aid her at work, including specialised software and a device that allows her to zoom in and out and change colours on screen.

“Getting a job meant everything to me. It gave me a purpose in life, to be able to support myself and feel included with my peers.

“The people I know with a disability are some of the most intelligent people I know. We are eager to be heard, to be recognised and enabled contributors and earners in the workforce.

“I encourage all managers of employers to give people with a disability the opportunity to show what they are capable of. We are capable of the same things as anyone else, we just have to do it a little differently.”

Katalina’s next big goal is to use her writing talent to craft a non-fiction, inspirational novel based on the fascinating and diverse lives of herself and her fiancée.



Emmanuel Mathias

MercyCare Disability Services User



I ran from them, they were looking for me – the soldiers back in Sudan – so I ran to Egypt. After that I ran here to Australia.

There were the nay-sayers, the doubters, those that said Emmanuel Mathias would never live independently.

He proved them wrong.

“MercyCare helped me get my own place. Now I have my own place, my own space,” Emmanuel said.

Having his own place, somewhere to call home for the past two years has been a monumental step in creating a better life.

Emmanuel grew up in Sudan, his life and family ripped apart by the civil war causing one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. Emmanuel was forced to become a child soldier, finally escaping at 15 years old to Egypt.

“I ran from them, they were looking for me – the soldiers back in Sudan – so I ran to Egypt. After that I ran here to Australia.”

His Aunt, a pastor in Mirrabooka, brought him to Perth in 2002. With a childhood tainted with significant trauma and unimaginable challenges, Emmanuel struggled to piece his life together.

To cope with the trauma and tenuous mental health he would turn to drugs and alcohol. His support network was almost non-existent, dysfunctional and so-called friends were a bad influence.

After escaping the atrocities of his childhood, bad luck came to Emmanuel again. He was hit by a car and acquired a brain injury. Moved from service to service, Emmanuel was referred to MercyCare in 2017 after living in a group home with around-the-clock support.

Despite his trauma and coping with the day-to-day challenges of an acquired brain injury, Emmanuel came to MercyCare as a young man with a big smile, someone that still had hopes and dreams of a better life despite what had been thrown at him.

The MercyCare team took a different approach to providing services to Emmanuel. They took the time to find out what mattered to him, what was important, what he wanted for his future, where his passions were.

Emmanuel now is a passionate cook, woodworker, painter, and singer.

“I like cooking. I like to cook African food and lamb chops. I like making things with my hands, I’m doing music, doing woodwork. I can make anything,” Emmanuel said.

With his support worker he has volunteered for his local community, learnt important life skills, how to live independently, and attends a Creative and Therapy Arts program.

“I know all the other people in the art group. I get along with them all and they love me too.”

With hope now in his life, Emmanuel will continue to strive for a better future.



Cherie Wells

MercyCare Residential Aged Care Joondalup Resident



Having Parkinson's has made me a nicer person.

“Having Parkinson's has made me a nicer person,” Cherie said.

“Anywhere you go there is always people that want to help you. In the supermarket, people have even driven me home from the shopping centre.

“It makes you feel good. It makes me feel included. They do see a disability but their kindness, sometimes it is just overwhelming.

“The kindness comes from all people – young and old, all different nationalities.”

At just 39 years old, Cherie was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. She has lived with it for 30 years.

Prior to diagnosis, Cherie's life was limited in its exposure to other cultures beyond her West Perth upbringing and devoid of dependence on the kindness of others.

“I was married and didn't really need anybody's help because I had a husband, but when my husband left I learnt quickly that there is a lot of nice people out there who are willing to help you.”

Cherie has been empowered over the past 30 years to find her inner-confidence.

“I'm now a more confident person. I used to be really shy but now I'm able to express myself. I'm more outward.

“Parkinson's has also taught me more patience because everything is slower and you have to have patience.”

Cherie recently moved from her own home to MercyCare's Residential Aged Care Centre in Joondalup. While happy with the move, she was devastated to leave her beloved Maltese Shitzu.

“I miss my little dog every day. They brought her in once but it was too hard on her, she was confused, didn't know where she was. She deserves better than that. She has gone to a new home with friends of the Chaplain here, so she is being well looked after.”

Cherie can take some comfort in Residence dog Jock, a 14.5-year-old West Highland Terrier. Owner and Service Manager Ronalda Cowcher started bringing Jock to work after he was left pining when his dog companion passed away. Now Jock finds comfort in the companionship of residents like Cherie.

The switch to residential aged care has allowed Cherie to travel the world from within the Centre's walls.

“I feel included here. The staff, who are so nice and lovely, are from so many different nationalities. It's good because you get to know people from different countries.

“I was having dinner the other day and looking at all the different nationalities of the people serving and I was thinking, ‘I love being in this place’.

“I get to talk to people, I find out a bit about their country, what life was like for them before they came here.

“In a way it allows you to travel.”

In just six months, Cherie has become a beloved and active member of the MercyCare community.

“I'll have a go at anything. I volunteer to do Bingo calling on the weekend. I guess in a way I am doing what other people have done for me – through volunteering I'm offering kindness.

“I also do the gardening – I just love it.”



Ada Kanu

MercyCare Service User and Residential Aged Care Worker



Everything is not perfect but when I look back where I was last year and where I am now, it is a huge, huge difference. I want to help people like me.

Ada Kanu is a fighter.

Through countries, across continents and between families, she has shown strength despite circumstances, now positioning herself and her young son for a future where she can give back to others.

She does this not only with style and certainly a bit of sass, but with the respect and morality instilled in her, first in Sierra Leone and then Guinea.

“In my culture you can’t talk back to an adult. You have to respect someone that is older than you,” Ada said.

“Morality is like: you are the woman, have dignity and respect for yourself.

“You don’t just go drinking and smoking – that is not what is right. In Australia you have to do a little bit different, but at the end of the day I am still who I am.”

She is determined to pass those cultural values onto her five-year-old son.

“My son, he has to have respect. I always tell my son even if you see your friend screaming at the teacher you don’t have to follow them. You have to respect. As young as he is, he is doing that.”

Ada spent the first six years of her life in Sierra Leone. During the civil war she was separated from her parents and each presumed the other dead.

Ada ended up in neighbouring Guinea for the next seven years. Despite her tumultuous early childhood she found happiness with her adopted French family whom she adored. But that serenity didn’t last.

She was recognised and her father, who had survived the civil war and made his way to Australia, voided the adoption and brought her to Australia as a humanitarian refugee.

At just 13, Ada had to draw on her strength as she was taken from the home and family she had made in Guinea to live with her biological father and step mother in Wagga Wagga.

“Me and my parents, there was no understanding because we were separated for so long.”

Ada’s new home life was riddled with issues, and she sought refuge and strength at school.

“I loved school. That was my escape, my friends, my way of getting away from home.”

Home life escalated and she was taken by child services and put into care at 15 years old.

From Wagga Wagga, Ada spent time in Melbourne then Canberra before coming to Perth with her son. It was in Perth she would have to draw on her own deep reservoir of dignity and respect.

“In Perth I was in a domestic violence relationship. I got out, I went to a refuge and that’s how I got linked up to MercyCare.”

With all her belongings destroyed, including her identification, Ada was trapped.

“It was so stressful because I really wanted to work, I really wanted to study but you can’t do any of this because you need ID.”

After hitting one brick wall after another, MercyCare outreach worker Tania Hennah successfully reached out to secure identification.

Employing her fortitude and supported by MercyCare accommodation and employment at a MercyCare Residential Aged Care centre, she is now in the midst of securing her own private rental.

She’s also taking inspiration from those that gave her the leg up that enabled her to draw on her own strength.

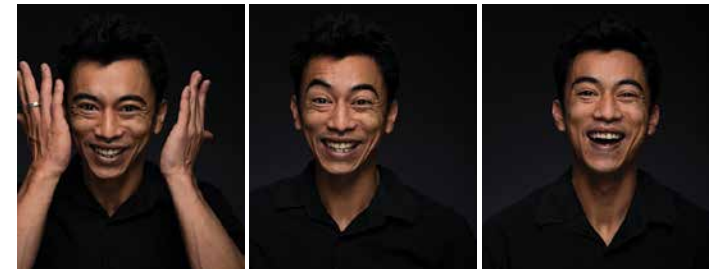
“Next year I am planning to study mental health, social work because people have helped me to get where I am, like Tania.

“Everything is not perfect but when I look back where I was last year and where I am now, it is a huge, huge difference. I want to help people like me.”



Zac Abdullah

MercyCare Residential Aged Care Therapy Assistant



I enjoy the happiness that comes from the residents. They are happy to see you, they are thankful for what you do for them. It is just like having 105 extra grandmothers and grandfathers.

Zac Abdullah has 105 extra grandmothers and grandfathers, and he wouldn't have it any other way.

It's not every teenager that chooses to work in aged care. But then, Zac Abdullah wasn't your typical 16-year-old.

"At 16, it was pretty normal for me starting as a therapy assistant in a place like Joondalup Residential Aged Care," Zac said.

"My mother is a nurse. During the school holidays I went to the nursing home with my Mum and she dropped me off at the therapy department and said 'have a fun day, do some exercises'. Pretty much ever since then I've done therapy."

Career and cultural influences nudged Zac towards aged care.

Born in Perth, Zac's heritage lies in Malaysia and Vietnam where often the onus for aged care is with family.

Growing up, Zac had a special relationship with his grandfather, who he thinks of as a father figure.

Together this has built in Zac a respect for the elder members of our society, a lesson he is passing onto his own young son.

"I enjoy the happiness that comes from the residents. They are happy to see you, they are thankful for what you do for them. It is just like having 105 extra grandmothers and grandfathers.

"My son comes in on a regular basis and runs around and has chats with the residents. He doesn't say much obviously, but it is good for them. Sometimes they don't get to see any of their grandkids.

"When kids come in and you see a heartfelt emotion, the smile comes from their eyes."

Zac's passion for intergenerational care was also fuelled by seeing the success of MercyCare's intergenerational program, with visits from students at Belridge Secondary Education Support Centre.

"Both parties get equal benefit. For the kids it gives them that confidence to approach someone and have a chat. For the residents it is letting that person into their world."

Zac just celebrated 10 years at Residential Aged Care Joondalup, which he combined with a few stints elsewhere.

As a therapy assistant, Zac said he takes care of the fun outings, exercise and social activities to give residents a sense of home and community.

"When you are in an acute aged care setting, there's not a lot familiar from when you were at home. We try to make the place seem as familiar as possible for them.

"Just having someone to talk to allows them to keep their identity for a lot longer."



Tania Hennah

MercyCare Housing Support and Youth Outreach Worker



I think all of us are individuals, all of us are different, all of us have different strengths that sometimes we don't even know that we have. Sometimes it helps for someone to help bring those strengths out in you.

Sometimes you just know. At 14, Tania Hennah knew exactly what she wanted to do with the rest of her life.

“I started volunteering with a youth group and it's then I knew: I wanted to do youth work. I'm 54 now and I'm still doing it. You get a calling, I guess,” Tania said.

For a quarter of a century, Tania has been a MercyCare Youth Outreach Worker, zig zagging her way across Perth supporting young families to break the cycle of homelessness.

“It's an opportunity to make a positive difference to marginalised people's lives.

“Everyone needs a break, some people need a second, third chance. Life deals you the card you are dealt and sometimes you need that support to be able to work your way through that to get the best out of life.

“When you see people get positive change and you are part of that, it's a great job.”

It's why Tania has never pursued management roles. She wants to be on the ground.

“I have a knack for the face-to-face stuff and I love to do it. No one day is ever the same.

“To be able to come to young families and support them to find and maintain stable accommodation so they can rebuild and parent effectively, this can set a new course in life for their children and break the cycle. This is what I love about this job.”

Tania grew up within the idyllic surrounds of Guernsey in the Channel Islands. Her childhood was one of summers spent on the beach, school and paper rounds. It's a world away from the families she helps.

“I think all of us are individuals, all of us are different, all of us have different strengths that sometimes we don't even know that we have. Sometimes it helps for someone to help bring those strengths out in you.

“I think sometimes when you have been dealt a card that makes you feel that you are not worthwhile or you can't do this, you can't do that, you fail to see the things that you can do.

“Some of the things that have beaten us down can be the things that make us stronger and help other people.”

Tania learns life lessons from her clients too.

“I've learnt heaps from my clients. I don't sweat the small stuff because there are other people that have been through way worse situations that I couldn't even imagine. It has made me more balanced.

“Some of the young people I work with are 15, 16 going into rentals and they've got children. They think their life is not going anywhere or they can't cope. I say 'goodness me, you are keeping two tiny human beings alive every day. You're doing that. Other kids your age, their biggest stress is what colour nail polish to wear to school that day'.

“It puts things into perspective.”



Luca Mizen

MercyCare Early Learning Centre Student



I want children's differences, and everyone's differences celebrated, for nobody to think twice about a family with two mums or families from other countries. It just is what it is.

For three-year-old Luca, having two Mums is normal. It doesn't worry her that the child who sits next to her at early learning eats only halal, or that her friend gets picked up by her grandparent.

For many children today, differences are barely noticed. It's simply accepted as the way things are.

"For the most part, children don't even register differences, they don't bat an eyelid. Whether it is a child with two Mums, or a child that doesn't eat meat or only halal. Because we have so many differences it is just so normal for them. Maybe it's because they're quite young, or maybe it's because the world is changing," Luca's Mum, and Thornlie Early Learning Centre Manager, Leah Mizen said.

It's a welcome change, and one that Leah has seen develop from when she was young and came out 14 years ago at the age of 20 with her now wife, Amber.

"Even from when I was a teenager, acceptance has changed. I see my nieces and my own family growing up and it is just so normal for them to have a friend that is gay or whatever it might be. It's just not a big deal for children these days. Of course, that doesn't mean they don't have lots of different issues, but I think there has definitely been a big change."

At the Early Learning Centre, there are a host of different family set-ups, from same-sex parents to single parents, extended families living together to blended families. All, Leah said, are treated equally.

"We have some really good resources now to teach the children things like, for example, different abilities, different family dynamics; plus, because we are in a very multicultural area, we learn from each other by celebrating our differences.

"Teaching diversity and inclusion in a early learning setting means everyone feels supported and welcome. Just that sense of belonging and feeling accepted. That's really important for little children because that's their foundations."

Leah is against the simplistic view that while we may look different, we're all the same on the inside.

"We all have different beliefs and values, so we're not actually all the same inside. I think it should be that people know it's okay to be different on the outside and the inside."



Ravikumar Rajadaurai

MercyCare Status Resolution Support Services Case Worker



I met my wife in the train station and I left her with a heavy heart. She was weeping and said to me that she never thought this beautiful life would end so shortly and that my life was so important to her. I left with tears and continued my journey to Colombo and onto Australia.

“While I was away from my home country I always felt homesick and loneliness. I would travel home to Sri Lanka with a thousand dreams and everything would shatter in a couple of days,” Ravikumar said of the journey that would eventually bring him to Perth.

“Shootings, killings, kidnappings would make my Mum panic and she would force me to leave the country. I had to leave the country time after time to save my life.

“The last time I left Sri Lanka I met my wife in the train station and I left her with a heavy heart. She was weeping and said to me that she never thought this beautiful life would end so shortly and that my life was so important to her. I left with tears and continued my journey to Colombo and onto Australia.”

Ravikumar has built a life in Perth drawing on his own heartbreaking experiences to help others.

In a life that has spanned countries and religions, from a Prince’s Palace in the Middle East to his church in Gosnells, Ravikumar has always found himself surrounded by diversity.

As a case worker he has assisted asylum seekers from diverse backgrounds access support and services and integrate into the community while they await their bid for asylum.

“I like my job very much because I meet different people. They often have the same background as me in that they have been through a similar situation – whether they are from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, or Sri Lanka.”

While Ravikumar was born in a “beautiful” Sri Lankan village, his childhood was marred by the civil war between the Tamil Tigers and Sri Lankan Government.

As the vicious civil war dragged on for three decades, Ravikumar left his home country first for Malaysia for five years, then for Doha, Qatar for nine years where he supervised activities at the Palace of the Prince.

Between countries he endeavoured to return home, but the fighting made it impossible.

“In 2009, when I finished my work and was heading home on my motorbike, a white van with an armed group followed me. Wherever I went, they followed me with extreme speed and I was sure that my life was in danger. I narrowly escaped and did not go home as I felt my family would be in danger.

“That day I stayed in my Aunty’s house and tried to escape from my country. Several kidnappings and murders in my home town followed after this incident and I always thank God for protecting me from danger.”

He was finally able to come to Australia as a refugee nine years ago, but for the first painful year he had to leave his wife behind in Sri Lanka. It was another year to add to the eleven he had already waited when he was forced to continually flee.

“The first year in Australia was a very painful year of my life without my wife. But it has allowed me to understand many of the people I work with and their family background.”

Raised Hindu, Ravikumar followed his mother’s lead in his 20’s and became a Christian, studying to become a pastor.

He brought that faith and belief in the power of inclusiveness with him to Australia and established a church for the Tamil-speaking community just one year after arriving.

“We have so many people here from different backgrounds... many have lost their peaceful life, they have lost everything, feeling hopeless. We get the people together and we build our own family.

“They have lost many things at home, but they get it here.

“In coming to Australia I have learned and experienced the meaning of inclusion and diversity.”



Godelive Lukunga

MercyCare Status Resolution Support Services Business Support Officer



I always believe language helps you build a bond with the people of that place. You can have a different appearance physically, but if you speak the language automatically they consider you one of theirs.

Godelive Lukunga's gift with languages has allowed her to feel included in a diverse set of communities spanning Africa to Australia.

"I learn languages easily. I speak French, Portuguese, English, Spanish, Lingala and Chichewa," Godelive said.

"I always believe language helps you build a bond with the people of that place. You can have a different appearance physically, but if you speak the language automatically they consider you one of theirs."

Despite her impressive credentials, Godelive has had an internal battle to recognise her own talents.

"Since I started working with MercyCare they have given me so many opportunities, even ones I didn't think I was going to get as I already had a barrier in mind.

"I would think 'I won't be given this work opportunity because of my culture or where I come from', but on several occasions, I have been proven wrong.

"MercyCare has that culture of looking beyond your colour, looking to you just as a person, just as Godelive."

Godelive has applied her talents as a Business Support Officer for MercyCare's Status Resolution Support Services, stepping up as an acting coordinator. The opportunities, and surrounding herself with those that lift her, has allowed her to feel included and valued.

"You need people that can lift your morale. First it was my Australian case worker when I came here telling me how capable I was, even though I couldn't see it in myself.

"Now it is my supervisors and managers. They remind me I am special and make me feel like I am worth it. I believe that is especially important coming from a background like mine where a woman is not believed to be good enough."

Born in Congo, Godelive completed much of her education, including a Bachelor in Social Science, before fleeing to Malawi with her husband for political reasons.

They spent the next 11 years in Malawi. While her husband's life was painfully on hold, unable to use his law degree to work or resettle due to his refugee status, Godelive was able to use her talent with languages to find a semblance of normality.

"I had spent a lot of time outside the country but because I could speak the local language they considered me one of them."

In 2010, Godelive and her young family were granted a humanitarian visa to come to Australia.

"For my husband it was the start of a new life, because he had everything on hold for eleven years. While for me I had built relationships and I am a bit reserved, so I really suffered cultural shock."

Once Godelive found the right support worker she went into a volunteer role, secured a paid role and jumped at an opportunity to join MercyCare six years ago.

While her job covers finance administration and quality assurance, she has been quick to volunteer to translate for asylum seekers from her community when required.

"I had that advantage, knowing the English language, it helped me settle in Australia. Whereas for many of the people from my community where French is their first language, they are still finding it hard to settle into the Australian community.

"Now I feel part of the community. I can even argue. I know my rights, I know I'm Australian."



Cody Rout

MercyCare Disability Services User



For other young people that are homeless or (gender) transitioning, I want to say, don't lose hope. And don't give up.

Cody Rout loves to rap.

“Sometimes I can't tell people stuff so I rap it out and get all my anger and frustration out,” Cody said.

“I rap my life story, what's going on with me, how much I love my girlfriend, about when my Dad had leukemia, about living on the streets.

“I have been on and off the streets since the age of 17 because I had troubles at home. After my Dad died it got a bit too hard for my Mum.”

Cody was homeless for nine months before connecting with MercyCare.

“I always thought to myself that I wasn't perfect. I used to look at myself in the mirror and think, I'm just going to be Cody the low life. But then I got help.

“MercyCare helped me to look forward and see what is out there. I never thought I was going to find somewhere to live, but there's housing out there.”

Cody now has his own unit and regularly accesses counselling and doctors, in part to help in his gender transition from female to male.

“I've always known I was male. From the age of two I started dressing up in my brother's clothes, then I didn't have a boyfriend. That's when my Mum said to my Dad, I think Cody's a boy.

“It was really hard for my Dad. He just kept saying I was confused. I came out after my Dad died because he wasn't really accepting of it.

“When I came out it made me feel really good.

“For other young people that are homeless or (gender) transitioning, I want to say, don't lose hope. And don't give up.”

At times Cody was tempted to give-up as he was in-and-out of adolescent psychiatric wards due to his mental health, but he always knew life would improve at some point.

“There's a lot of trans people out there who can't find anyone to help them, but don't think you won't find someone to help you. You will get there at the end of the day.”

Now with his own home, Cody has taken steps towards becoming more independent, not just looking after himself but his cats, guinea pig, bird and fish.

“I've always loved animals actually, but I had never owned a cat. It was always dogs. And then you know, I got my first cat Socks and yes, she's my everything.”

Cody's mission now is to turn that love for animals into a volunteering role before seeking paid employment.

“In my family, if you got a job, you stick to it. For money I've got to think about the cats and then think about me and bills. I also want to be supportive of my girlfriend like she has been of me.”



Courtney Geidans

MercyCare Volunteer



Working in the office here make me feel a part of things. It feels quite nice. I'm not in that type of environment every day, people come and talk to me when they feel like it or they have free time. It's nice to be included.

Twice a week, Courtney has made the short commute to her volunteer role at MercyCare's West Perth head office where she has put her supreme organisational skills to use, making friends along the way.

"Working in the office here make me feel a part of things. It feels quite nice. I'm not in that type of environment every day, people come and talk to me when they feel like it or they have free time. It's nice to be included," Courtney said.

Courtney was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder at six years of age. Now 31, she lives with her parents but ultimately would like to be independent.

"I live at home for now but maybe down the track I may live alone. That is the goal I have set myself.

"To do this, I think I'll need to save up a lot of money. Sometimes I feel like I'm a spender not a saver. Mum says, 'where does all your money go? You spend too much'. I'm on a very low income being on a pension."

Courtney said she has learnt plenty of tricks to cope with her Autism.

"I don't feel like I have a disability, I feel I can control the Autism. When I get upset, I just go and have some quiet time alone and say don't talk to me. I can calm myself down this way."

Over the past year-and-a-half, Courtney has become an integral part of the MercyCare family, spending two mornings a week volunteering with the Community and Home Support and Learning and Development teams.

Without knowing it, all new employees and volunteers are recipients of Courtney's hard work in the orientation bags she assembles.

Her role has encompassed putting together training folders and Community and Home Services files, and she is known for her meticulous work, efficiency and willingness to pitch in and help where she can.

Her achievements at work have injected Courtney with confidence that she can assist in a busy office. In fact, her dream job is very similar to her role now.

"My dream job would be an admin assistant who is doing a bit of data entry, the filing and mailouts, writing notes but not answering the phone. It would be great to be in a big office environment somewhere close to the city, so it is easy for me to get there and home in the commute.

"I like it here because the people are nice, and I like knowing that when I come in there is some work for me to do.

"If I'm upset or something people will come over and say, 'Are you OK?'. It all starts with a conversation – when, what, why, how and who. Being able to talk to people is quite nice."

Away from work, Courtney spends time playing her Nintendo Switch and connecting with Facebook.

"Facebook is my number one platform. I like the way you can add friends, delete them or block them."

She has been a keen traveller too, spending time in England, North America and Europe.

"I like the flights and seeing my family on the other side of the world. I would like to do this each year, but I can't always have it that way."



Sanjay Muniandy

MercyCare Support Worker



While I earn some money to work for these people it's not really about that. The passion comes straight from my heart.

A severe accident as a young man led Sanjay Muniandy to Australia where he went from settlement client to employed support worker; and it was in Australia he discovered his natural talent for working with people with disabilities.

At 22 years-old Sanjay was involved in a car accident in Malaysia where he sustained facial, knee, spinal and brain injuries. His arduous recovery took two-and-a-half years.

“My family members looked at me like I had a disability,” Sanjay said. “I’d tell my Dad, ‘Don’t look at me like that. I’m just a normal person and I’m able to work’. My Dad would reply, ‘You can’t do that, you can’t work’.”

Sanjay left Malaysia for Australia in 2013. Despite numerous promises of sponsorship when working, none came to fruition.

Sanjay made it his mission to become fluent in English alongside his native Tamil, in addition to his competency in Malay, Chinese and Hindi.

His English teacher suggested a new career path. “He said: ‘Sanjay, you’re a different kind of character, why not try to working with people with disabilities?’”

Eventually Sanjay was put in touch with MercyCare’s Complementary Services Program where he expanded his English and looked for employment opportunities.

He was offered a position as a Support Worker with MercyCare’s Disability Services in 2018. From there, both Sanjay and his clients have flourished.

“I’m happy I can teach my clients different things and encourage them. While their life isn’t perfect, I love that I can help them in some way.”

“Sometimes when I first meet a client they don’t want to listen and open up to other people. I just go nice with them, slowly we can change.

“For example, I had this one client who never went outside. While not everyone wants to go outside, some are like birds put inside a cage – they feel like they want to fly, and they have got the wings to use.

“Now my client goes walking with me, we go for a coffee, some breakfast, the park. He starts to listen to me.

“Before he didn’t want to clean his house, so I say, ‘If you want to go out tomorrow, we have to do the house cleaning’. Next time I visit, he has cleaned the whole house before I even got there at nine o’clock and he’s waiting for me and says, ‘What’s the plan to go out today?’”

Engaging with people from all walks of life comes naturally to Sanjay. “I’m just normal with everyone.”

When his family visited him, they were shocked Sanjay had chosen support work over his trade as a mechanic.

“I tell them support work is a new world for me. I love when I see my clients, they feel happy they have someone to spend time with and share their life. They feel trust.

“While I earn some money to work for these people it’s not really about that. The passion comes straight from my heart.”

In his time away from work, Sanjay loves to travel to Albany and Margaret River to fish and cook for big groups of friends.

“My friends are from all different countries. I just learn from everyone. Human is human.”



Ronalda Cowcher

MercyCare Residential Aged Care Joondalup Service Manager



***My childhood was so good
I thought we were rich.
When I grew up I realised
we weren't, we were just
normal, but I felt rich.***

With her Scottish brogue and cheeky one-liners, Ronalda Cowcher has brought beautiful warmth to MercyCare's Residential Aged Care Joondalup.

Much of that affability stems from a “normal” and inclusive childhood in Glasgow.

“My childhood was so good I thought we were rich. When I grew up I realised we weren't, we were just normal, but I felt rich,” Ronalda said.

“I was brought up Protestant, but all my best friends were Catholic and when you come from Glasgow there's a big divide between the green and the blue. I never, ever had issues.”

Ronalda can trace her heritage back to Margaret Crawford, mother of famous Scottish patriot William Wallace.

“My claim to fame is in my maiden name Crawford, a great Scottish name. When we trace my family history back we trace right back to Margaret Crawford. The Crawford's were the smart part of the family. It was all downhill from there,” she joked.

Even as a small child, Ronalda knew she wanted to be a nurse.

“I'd draw cuts on all my dolls and put on band aids and I'd use lollypop sticks as thermometers. Now I've been nursing since 1973.”

She started in mental health before working at Inverness Hospital emergency department as a surgical nurse.

“Inverness Hospital is close to the ski fields at Aviemore which was full of Australians and New Zealanders breaking their limbs and arriving in emergency.

“They said you should come to Australia – you'll love it. I thought – ‘well what an idea, why don't I just do that’ – so I did.”

Ronalda loves her adopted country for its clean water, blue skies and diverse people.

“This facility here, MercyCare Joondalup, only 11 percent of the staff were born in Australia, which I think is fantastic.

“They all get on really well and work beautifully together. Plus, we've got the best residents.”

Ronalda loves aged care for the time it has allowed her to build relationships with residents.

“When you are in mainstream care, there is no time for relationships. It's about getting you well and getting you out. Here in aged care you have time to build relationships.

“Older people have so much to give. Whatever is going on for them you have to get to their reality and try and make each day better for them.

“We need to give the residents what they individually want, not what we think they want, and I think that is where aged care is at.”

Ronalda would welcome with open arms further diversity in the residents at Joondalup.

“We are more than ready to take people from different cultures. Certainly, we have the staff from so many different cultural backgrounds to do it.”

Ronalda has worked hard for residents to be included in the fabric of community, whether it be through the intergenerational program with Belridge Secondary College, a local furnishing the Centre with weekly copies of British Magazine *The People's Friend*, or taking residents to the local coffee shop.

“We want to see them become more a part of the community, and in return, for the community to embrace them.”

From her days sticking bandaids on her dolls, Ronalda has retained her passion for care.

“I'm happy. The day I come to work and I'm unhappy or don't want to go in, is the day I walk away. Every day I am happy to come in here.”



Alex Kurz

MercyCare Early Childhood Educator



I actually wrote a letter as a teenager to the Australian Embassy in Germany asking how it works and how I could go to Australia. They actually answered me. It's been a dream since back then.

Faced with a choice between a compulsory year in the German military or in a social service, Alex Kurz opted for the social stream, choosing to work in an early learning centre. The decision changed the direction of his working life.

“I always liked kids and playing and mucking around, just bringing the best out of them. It's just great when they smile and you can teach them something, give them something for their life.

“Working in the childcare centre in Stuttgart, that was the first time I come into contact working with children and I really liked it. I went back after the year to work in an office again and spent seven years behind a desk, but I knew it wasn't for me,” Alex said.

In 2003, he came to Australia for a holiday and fell in love with the country he had dreamt about visiting since he was a teenager.

“At school we had a geography teacher who talked a lot about America and Australia, and since then Australia was always, for me, a dream.

“I actually wrote a letter as a teenager to the Australian Embassy in Germany asking how it works and how I could go to Australia. They actually answered me. It's been a dream since back then.”

In 2007 Alex and his partner made the move to Australia, and with a change in continents he decided on a change in career too.

“I always wanted to do something with children back home and then we came here, and the opportunity was there, and I took it.”

He started working at MercyCare's Wembley Early Learning Centre in 2007 with a diverse group of educators.

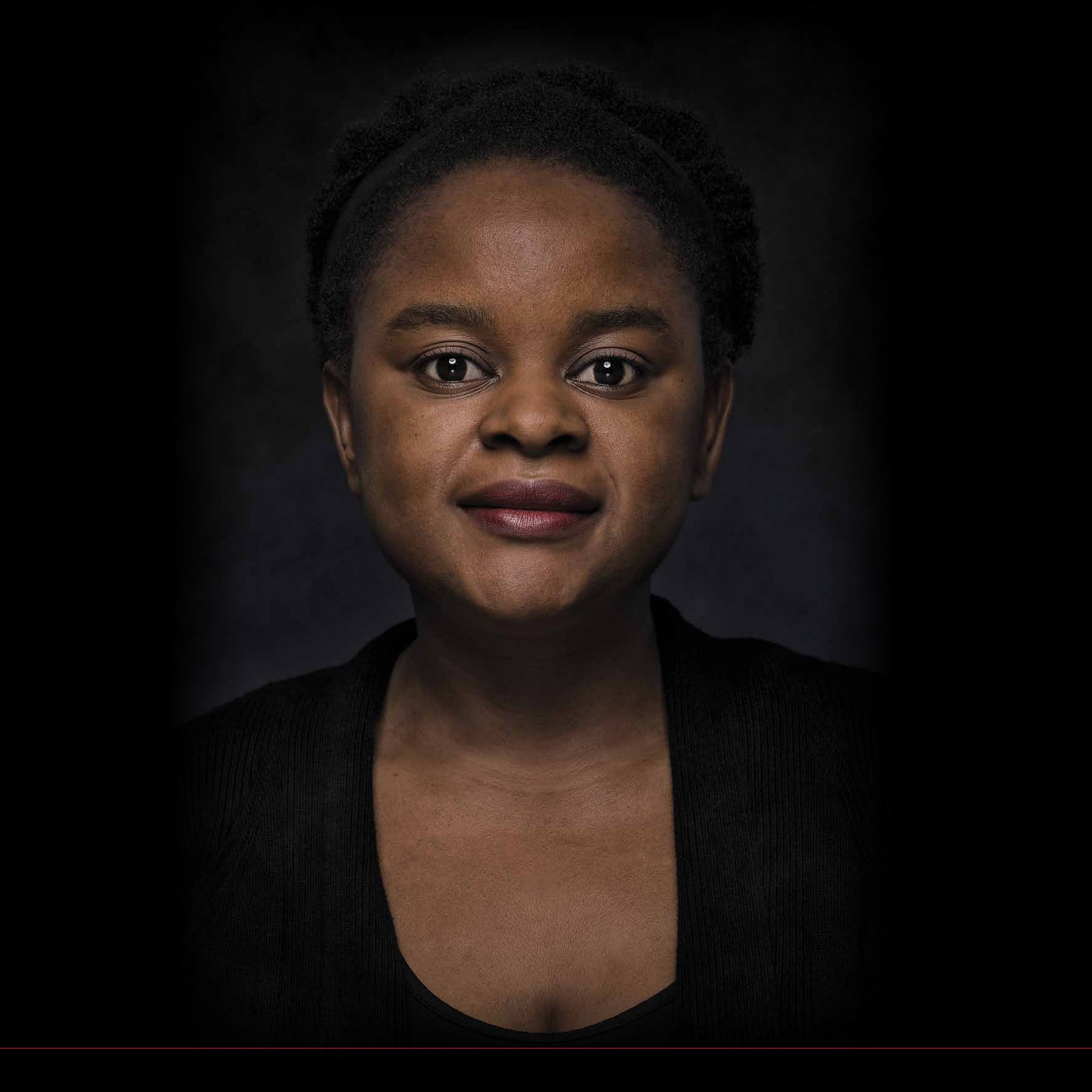
“We've got people born in India, Poland, Croatia, Bosnia, England, Serbia, South Africa, Mauritius, Romania and obviously a few Aussies as well. The children are from all different backgrounds too.

“It works well because it's good that you learn from other cultures as well, not just from your own.

“There's different cultures, foods, languages and different behaviours in the way people handle different scenarios.”

Alex is indifferent to any adverse opinions about him working in what has been a traditionally female-dominated role.

“It really makes no difference to me. Sometimes I get a funny reaction from people outside work, but for people at work or the children, they just see me as Alex.”



Florence Tressler

MercyCare Step by Step Settlement Services Alliance Coordinator



At such a young age to survive in a country where you don't know anyone, you don't have any family, you have to really dig in deep within yourself.

“My Dad had a non-negotiable rule in the house. At 16 you move out of home to a new continent,” Florence said.

“It was to encourage us to have an open mind. He said: ‘Whenever you’re the majority, sometimes you don’t question how things happen, or why things are the way they are, but when you’re in another country and you’re a minority, you really learn to get out of your comfort zone, you learn to socialise with people from different backgrounds’.”

Florence’s father had left Zimbabwe in his 20’s to study at Cornell University in New York and her older brother had headed to England at 16 years old. Florence decided both were too cold for her; she would leave Zimbabwe for Perth to further her studies.

“I don’t regret it because it’s given me really thick skin. It takes a lot to push me down. At such a young age to survive in a country where you don’t know anyone, you don’t have any family, you have to really dig in deep within yourself.”

While a huge step for a 16-year-old, Florence had already been exposed to different cultures as her family moved from Zimbabwe to Kenya and back.

“In Kenya, I went to an international school. Everybody in my classroom was from a different background and that really helped to open-up my mind about different people, cultures, religions and beliefs, and I really enjoyed that.

“It made me realise the way I think is not always the way everyone else thinks, and it is not necessarily the right way. It made me appreciate how different people see different things.”

Florence’s first six months in Australia were rocky with a negative homestay experience, but a new family brought better times.

“They took me to the footy, different restaurants, the beach, and that’s when I started really enjoying being in Australia and appreciating the laidback culture and lifestyle.”

After completing a double degree in Behavioural Science and Human Resources, Florence worked with migrants and instilling leadership in young girls before joining MercyCare this year.

“I’ve always been really passionate about helping people from refugee backgrounds. When I came to Australia, I was fortunate that I could speak English and had financial backing and, even then, I struggled. Imagine coming and having neither of those things.

“I can’t say I understand because I haven’t walked in their shoes, but I can relate.

“Employment is crucial in the settlement process for building self-confidence, finance and to learn about Australian culture. But the learning works both ways.

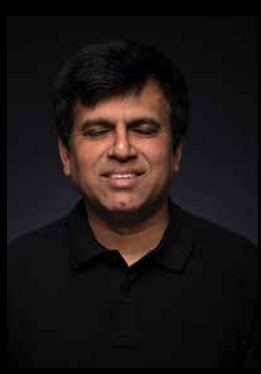
“It also teaches mainstream Australia how different cultures do things.

“Employment opportunities for migrants are few and far between, so when they come, they grab it and they work extremely hard.”

Will Florence be enforcing her family’s rule for her own two-year-old daughter?

“I don’t think I could put my own daughter through that at that age, even though even now I can see how strong she is. And anyway, her Dad would never allow it, she has him wrapped around her little finger.”







Thank you

to our photography subjects for volunteering their time and sharing their stories.

Adu Kanu

Godelive Lukunga

Ravikumar Rajadurai

Alex Kurz

Hadeel Al Taey

Ronalda Cowcher

Cherie Wells

Katalina Lavaka

Sanjay Muniandy

Cody Rout

Luca and Leah Mizen

Sina and Shokofa Abbasi

Courtney Geidans

Nikki Peapell

Tania Hennah

Emmanuel Mathias

Pat Jordan

Zac Abdullah

Florence Tressler

Phil Bartlett

Photography: Steve Wise | Words: Angie Tomlinson | Design: Bec Hammond

Every
person
matters



T: +61 8 9442 3444

E: corporate@mercyCare.com.au

A: 38 Ord Street, West Perth WA 6005

mercyCare.com.au

 [MercyCareWA](#)

 [@MercyCareWA](#)

 [MercyCare](#)

