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Dear NCCG Friend,

Welcome to the latest edition of the NCCG's community newsletter - 'catch up'.

The last few months have been very busy at the centre with record numbers of families receiving care and new program activities launched.

This Summer newsletter highlights the care we provide to our youngest clients aged 3-6 years, a new music program enhancing our group counselling service Kids Group and the wonderful donations provided by local community groups.

All the very best for the new year,
Chris

Bereaved children aged 3-17 years cared for by the NCCG, July 2022 – June 2023. The largest number of children supported by the NCCG in a year.



A Young Client's Story – Chloe

Chloe left her first session at the centre, smiling and skipping, 'like a weight had been lifted.'

Five-year-old Chloe is an active young girl who is full of life and full of joy. Chloe started coming to the NCCG three months after her dad Rocco died of suicide. She attended individual sessions with specialist NCCG Children's Counsellor Carolyn.

When Rocco died, Chloe's mum Jenna knew she needed help and advice to give Chloe the best care and support. Chloe often spoke about Rocco and did not appear to be crying very much, but Jenna could sense there were things Chloe was not sharing. Jenna also wanted to be honest with Chloe about how her dad died, but naturally struggled with how to talk about suicide.

Jenna has shared a beautiful story of how coming to the NCCG has allowed Chloe to stay connected with her dad, express her grief and learn how to build her life around it.

The NCCG is a very rare service in Australia that cares for bereaved children as young as three years old. In counselling sessions for younger children aged 3-6 years, NCCG counsellors often use more play and craft-based strategies. Engaging in tailored activities rather than direct conversations allows children to express what they are feeling inside when there is an absence of the language to describe it.

Helping children to develop their understanding, coping skills and ability to 'dip in and out of grief' at a young age can prepare them for navigating a lifetime of change.

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



The Power of Music – A Kids Group Story

During Kids Group counselling last year, children worked together with their NCCG counsellors to create their own song about grief.

The NCCG was supported in this project by music therapy experts Iani and Grace from local care organisation *Sound Expression*, who kindly volunteered their time to train our team and produce the final musical work.

The children and counsellors worked together to find words about their feelings of grief, questions they wish they could ask their parent, things that help them live with grief and how they feel about group counselling. These ideas were given back to Iani and Grace who created the lyrics and made a beautiful recording, named 'A Friend's Place'.

Family and friends of Kids Group members were invited to a special event at the NCCG's care centre, where the new song was performed. The entire room was filled with smiles, love and glassy eyes.

Excerpt from 'A Friend's Place':

*Our time together was far too brief.
Now learning how to live with the grief.
My friends and family help me cope.
Knowing love lasts forever gives me hope.*

*Talking in a safe space, Comfort in A Friend's Place
Makes me feel strong, And that's where I belong*

The NCCG's counsellors use a broad range of arts and creative activities to help bereaved children explore and articulate their grief - guided by the passions and interests of the children themselves. We would like to thank Iani and Grace who volunteered their skills and time with Kids Group and shared the power of music.

[READ FULL LYRICS OF 'A FRIEND'S PLACE'](#)

DONATE NOW

The creative resources used at the NCCG, for groups and individual sessions, are 100% funded by community donations.

Please **donate today** to help us buy more great resources and fund programs for bereaved children at the NCCG.

The NCCG Blog Living with Grief

In her recent blog post, NCCG co-founder Dianne McKissock OAM, discusses what it really means to live with grief.

Few people really understand grief, let alone what living with it successfully means.

The process is never a straight line and coming to terms with what is unchangeable is rarely a constant state. Life keeps happening...

[READ DIANNE'S FULL BLOG POST LIVING WITH GRIEF](#)



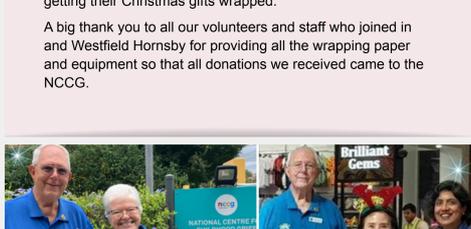
NCCG Christmas Volunteering

In the lead up to last Christmas, NCCG volunteers and staff spent four days at Westfield Shopping Centre in Hornsby, wrapping Christmas gifts.

After NCCG Counsellor Scott Andrews was awarded as the Hornsby region's Westfield Local Hero in 2023, Westfield generously offered this opportunity to raise funds for the NCCG at their Christmas Gift Wrapping Stall.

Spending the day amongst Christmas shoppers made for some great conversations with customers, inventive wrapping techniques for strangely shaped gifts and some touching interactions with customers who shared their personal stories of bereavement. It was very special to receive such generous donations from strangers who listened to our story whilst getting their Christmas gifts wrapped.

A big thank you to all our volunteers and staff who joined in and Westfield Hornsby for providing all the wrapping paper and equipment so that all donations we received came to the NCCG.



Thank you Lions Club of Hornsby

We would like to thank our dedicated supporters – The Lions Club of Hornsby. Over the Christmas period, The Lions Club ran a Christmas market stall every weekend throughout December to raise funds for the NCCG.

A huge thank you to the devoted Ted and Pauline Henebery for all of their efforts, along with their Lions Club members and the NCCG volunteers who helped at the stall. Over \$8000 was raised for the NCCG from selling festive gifts and Lions Christmas Cakes. An amazing effort!

The NCCG is primarily funded by community donations like these, which make possible our free and unlimited care for bereaved children and their families.

If you are interested in supporting the NCCG by volunteering or fundraising, check out the [Get Involved](#) page on the NCCG website or reach out to our fundraising team - fundraising@childhoodgrief.org.au.