

Friday 20 April 2018

MEDIA RELEASE

Life Without Barriers calling for more foster carers

Queensland Foster and Kinship Carer Week 22-29 April

As Queensland celebrates 2018 Foster and Kinship Carer Week, social purpose organisation Life Without Barriers (LWB) is recognising their 780 Queensland foster carers, while continuing to call for more couples, individuals and families to provide short term, long term or respite care to children who are unable to live with their families.

“Our carers are special people and this week is about thanking them for their love, understanding, patience and the huge difference they are making in the lives of the children in their care,” LWB Queensland State Director Helena Holdaway said.

“However, we always need more carers. We are looking for people who can provide a secure and nurturing environment for children of all ages – from babies, primary school age, teenagers and young people.”

Ms Holdaway said children in care have often been through difficult circumstances and experienced trauma, so we need carers who can partner with the child’s care team to ensure the best possible outcomes for the child.

Children in care come from a diversity of backgrounds, and carers are needed who reflect that diversity. This is especially important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, who may need support to return home or be cared for by members of their own community.

“Some children will go home and we need supportive restoration carers to help make this happen. Other children will need carers, guardians or adoptive parents for life. Whether you provide short term care or commit for the long term, all carers make a significant difference in the lives of children,” Ms Holdaway said.

“We welcome carers from all cultural and linguistic backgrounds and all types of families – individuals, single parents, same sex couples, married or de facto couples, with or without children. Foster care doesn’t have to be a full time commitment – if you can spare one weekend a month or more, we would love to hear from you.”

Carer profile – Trevor & Sandra Mobbs

Until a few years ago, Trevor and Sandra from Brisbane’s eastern suburbs had little interest in having children in their lives. They had never had children of their own and were approaching retirement and generally living the good life. Something in them changed however when they

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began to help out with the care of their newborn nephew and they thought that caring could be the next chapter for them.

Trevor and Sandra signed up to becoming foster carers with Life Without Barriers and not long after completing their training, they took an 11 year old girl into their care. They immediately knew it was the right decision and their time was soon filled with school, homework, after-school sports, family visits, play dates, cooking meals together, playing Minecraft, bike riding, as well as training and meetings with their foster daughter's care team.

Mr Mobbs said, "The best gifts we can give our foster daughter are our love, time and attention so we've been pouring those upon her and she is thriving! Of course, there are some challenging days for all of us and there is still a long road ahead. But with our help, she is starting to see that there can be a bright future ahead for her".

Mr Mobbs said that Life Without Barriers provided comprehensive training and support to foster carers. "These kids have complicated feelings and behaviours, and the training will really help you know how to respond to that."

Since they signed up 12 months ago, Trevor and Sandra haven't looked back. "We still think it was the right decision not to have any biological children of our own, but we are definitely enjoying the opportunity to express the nurturing, parenting sides of ourselves that we didn't even know we had," Mr Mobbs said.

"If a person has capacity in their lives to give one of these children a better situation, they should go for it. It will help the child, it will help the carer to be more empathetic to others and it will help society as a whole," he said.

Queensland Law requires you to gain the permission of the Queensland Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women to publish details of foster carers like Trevor & Sandra. Permission can be attained quickly by contacting media@communities.qld.gov.au or 07 3828 2611

[Download photo of Trevor & Sandra](#)

If you would like to become a foster carer, here are some considerations:

- You will need to be over 18, with relevant life experience. Upper age limits may apply for some types of care such as long term care or adoption
- You can be from any cultural or linguistic background; we welcome diversity
- You can be single; defacto, married, including same sex couples
- With or without children
- You have a spare room in your house or apartment – you can be renters or owners
- You are a non-smoker or you don't smoke in the home or around children

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- You are well and healthy, and have the emotional and physical capacity to deal with the challenges of caring
- Everyone in the household is an active and willing participant in fostering vulnerable children.
- You need to have patience and resilience to build a positive relationship with the child, who may themselves struggle to trust you and be resistant to your care
- You have the time free to focus on the needs and development of the child
- You are willing to partner with the child's birth family and the care team to ensure positive outcomes for the child

If you are interested in becoming a foster carer, please contact 1300 592 227 or carers@lwb.org.au

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