

MARY'S NEWS TODAY

MARY MACKILLOP
today

Autumn 2020

Connecting Communities

Helping Aussies doing it tough

Dear friends and supporters of Mary MacKillop Today

As the new CEO of Mary MacKillop Today, I aspire to work diligently, with pride and enthusiasm, alongside our dedicated staff, in serving our vital mission in a way that emulates and honours the legacy and spirit of Saint Mary MacKillop, whilst celebrating and serving you, our generous supporters. Our essential work is only made possible because of you. It is your compassion and kindness that allows us to reach the most marginalised and vulnerable in our communities. In this newsletter you are able to read how important your meaningful support is in bringing education, health,

livelihoods and financial inclusion to those in need, empowering women, men, boys and girls with knowledge and skills to help them transform their own lives.

I ask for your prayers, faith and trust, and look forward working with you, as *"Great is the strength we possess in our unity."*

With gratitude,
Jane Woolford
CEO

Help Aussies having a tough time...



Your ongoing support of our Financial Inclusion Program gives a 'hand up' to those Aussies having a tough time. Our new website was set up to help more low income earners access No Interest Loans (NILS) and StepUP Loans, both of which we offer to those eligible across Australia in partnership with Good Shepherd Microfinance and NAB. Our aim is to not only assist clients with their loan applications but to also assess the issues that might be impacting their budget and steer them away from debt traps like the buy now, pay later schemes. If you'd like more information you can call our friendly team on (02) 6331 2010 or go to:

www.loansmarymackilloptoday.org.au



Mary MacKillop Today is accredited by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), responsible for managing Australia's aid program. To maintain accreditation, Mary MacKillop Today's systems, policies and processes are rigorously reviewed by the Australian Government. Mary MacKillop Today receives support through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP)



Mary MacKillop Today is a signatory of the Australian Council for International Development Code of Conduct reflecting Mary MacKillop Today's Compliance with industry Standards of good practice, transparency and accountability.

Inspired by Australia's first saint, Mary MacKillop Today empowers communities in Australia and overseas to realise their dignity through education, health, financial inclusion and livelihoods.

Mary MacKillop Today acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of the land, past and present, on which our offices are located.

You've made Julio a happy dad!

Mary MacKillop Today relies on your support to make a difference in the lives of parents in Timor-Leste, where many are not able to be involved in their children's education. This is often because they have not had the opportunity to go to school, resulting in a lack of basic literacy, with many not being able to read or write. For parents, not being able to engage at home with their children's learning can be disempowering and it's vital for children's long-term development to have their education supported at home. Mary MacKillop Today partnered with the Edmund Rice Foundation Australia, who received support from the Australian Government through an Australian Aid: Friendship Grant, to address this need. Recently, Julio, 33 years old and father of two boys and two girls, received an invitation to attend our parents program training workshops.

"I was really happy when I received the letter from my children that Mary MacKillop Today will do the training at our place... and I am really thankful and hoping that Mary MacKillop Today will continue to provide more training..."

During our parents program, Julio, along with all the participants, was provided with educational books and games to use with his children at home as well as reading and writing activities. Julio also learned some new action songs and how to develop his and his children's understanding about their rights and responsibilities. At the end of the workshop, Julio was given the opportunity to try out his new and improved skills with a class of children, under the guidance of our amazing parents program team. Julio's wish is that other parents living in remote areas, who have the same hopes and dreams for their children, can also receive the training to help increase their children's future potential.





**Benjamin with
his yummy jam
& BBQ sauce**

Transforming lives one jar at a time!

You might remember in our last newsletter we introduced you to an inspiring young man called Benjamin and we wanted to share with you a wonderful update! Last year, something amazing happened... Benjamin was given the fantastic opportunity to sell his Strawberry & Vanilla Jams and East Timorese BBQ Sassate sauce at Harris Farm Markets in Lindfield, Cammeray, Mosman, St. Ives and Willoughby in northern Sydney. *"Get Jamin For a Good Cause"* was launched on successive weekends in November, with Benjamin manning the tasting tables and selling out on more than one occasion.

There were even insightful articles in local media, including the Sydney Morning Herald featuring Benjamin's story and promoting his delicious jams. All of us here at Mary MacKillop Today are proud of all of Benjamin's achievements. His and his family's hard work and dedication raised an incredible \$3000 of much need funds that will help continue to transforms the lives of so many through our education programs in Timor-Leste. Benjamin saw a need and took action, exemplifying and honouring the legacy of Saint Mary MacKillop:

"Never see a need without doing something about it."



WE WANT YOUR USED STAMPS!

A simple and easy way to support our vital works is to pop your used stamps in an envelope and send them to 'Mary MacKillop Today - Reply Paid 88663, North Sydney 2059. No stamp required!

And why not get your office, school, community groups and friends to do the same. If you'd like more information, please feel free to call, email or write to us.

Be the change...

Mary MacKillop Today supports rural artisans in Peru through our Fair Trade social enterprise; ethica and our livelihoods program. Women in Peru continue to be disadvantaged in areas such as employment and education, especially in remote and rural communities. In partnership with CCAIJO, we support artisans with business training and regular skills development to help generate independent, fair and sustainable incomes. You can support these women artisans by purchasing the beautifully handcrafted Fair Trade products through ethica. The simple act of ethical purchasing helps build environmentally sustainable businesses, respects cultural identity while creating fair, living incomes. To find out more or to purchase ethica's amazing products go to ethica.org.au.

You're transforming lives in PNG!

Mary MacKillop Today's Inclusive Communities is a vital program in Papua New Guinea aiming to increase access to inclusive health and education services while raising awareness of the rights of people with disability in remote village communities. People with disability in PNG face discrimination, segregation, isolation as well as social and physical barriers that restrict their ability to fully participate in society. Our partnership with Callan Vanimo Inclusive Education Resource Centre enables volunteers to be trained to assess, identify and refer people with disability to available health services while also holding community days and raising awareness about the rights of people with disability through engaging, fun and creative activities. It's estimated that 955,000 people in PNG living with disability do not have access to social support, health services or education. Last year, thanks to you, the number of our volunteers increased by 11 to 31 with an additional 77 people with disability identified by our volunteers. Our volunteers work to determine the level of support required to enable all to achieve their social, educational and health goals, transforming their lives. This project received support from the Australian Government through an Australian Aid: Friendship Grant.

*"Believe
in the whisperings
of God
in your own heart."*



New volunteer,
Jenny, with
her son, Galino



Fun in
Kiama

Connecting communities!

Mary MacKillop Today's Community Grants Program partners with organisations to improve the lives of Australia's most vulnerable and marginalised people through education in all its form. Since 1995 our Community Grants Programs has invested in over 600 life-changing projects, including the House of Welcome, run by St Francis Social Services in NSW. The House of Welcome exists to welcome, shelter and empower refugees and people seeking asylum, including providing training and work opportunities with their catering social enterprise. Last year Mary MacKillop Today assisted with the House of Welcome's efforts in supporting the need for social interaction and mental well-being for those living in a new country and new community, with limited resources. One way this was achieved was through a day trip to Kiama, where a group of local volunteers were connected with refugee and asylum seeking families. It was a wonderful cultural exchange opportunity which included a lovely lunch and afternoon tea. The group also visited local attractions giving many families, who are often isolated, the chance to connect and experience a very warm Aussie welcome, all of which was very gratefully received.

*Photos by Mary MacKillop Today
Staff, where required, names have
been changed for privacy.*

MARY MACKILLOP
today

Staying Connected

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THANK YOU...

for your generous support of Mary MacKillop Today's Christmas Appeal.

**If you'd like to join us by becoming a Speaker, running an ethica stall
or collecting stamps, call or email us today!**

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