

# unite

We're stronger together



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Thanks to you, our Lifeline Crisis Supporters are ready to listen and support people during their darkest moments.

# *Thank you* for giving the gift of being heard at Christmas

Because of you, our Lifeline Adelaide Crisis Supporters provided hope and connection to thousands of Australians in their darkest moments last Christmas. Thank you for helping us give the gift of being heard.

At a time when so many other services are closed, access to Lifeline is absolutely vital. Being able to reach out to someone and hear another voice can make all the difference. With your support, we trained more Crisis Supporters and expanded our volunteer team so we could be there for more South Australians in need.

Throughout the pandemic, we've all persevered with the constant changes as best we can. We've ridden each uncertain wave, bracing ourselves for the

next. For many people, the holiday season gave them something to focus on – a goal to reach, a celebration for having made it through another year.

For others, it was the culmination of yet another long period of continuous COVID-19 anxiety. Fear of illness, sadness at missing family and friends or worry about vulnerable loved ones. We've all felt the impact and we've all managed it differently.

For the thousands of South Australians who turned to Lifeline in December, our Crisis Supporters were there for them, thanks to your generosity.

They listened to people who felt bombarded by images of happy families in Christmas advertising, making them feel even more alone. They heard from others who were anxious about seeing family – anticipating the revival of past

traumas and uncomfortable relationships. They were there for those who called after difficult feelings were brought to the surface by family tensions.

Not everyone takes delight in togetherness, and many grieve its absence, especially at Christmas. For so many Australians, it is a very difficult time of year. Being isolated and feeling lonely are huge contributors to people experiencing intense and severe crisis.

Even before the pandemic, Christmas and New Year were always a busy time for Lifeline where we receive an increase in calls. This has only continued to grow in the last two years and, as we moved to our state's most heightened experience of the pandemic so far in the final weeks of 2021, we saw an unprecedented demand for our support.

Because of your generosity, the Lifeline Adelaide phone room was full over the Christmas week. Our Crisis

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On Boxing Day, Isaiah said the Lifeline Adelaide phone room was full of volunteers, wanting to be there for those in need.



During Henry's shift on Christmas Day, he spoke to help-seekers who were simply craving human connection.



Nancy volunteered for Lifeline over Christmas, recognising that the holiday season can be particularly challenging for many people

Our Crisis Supporters received heart-warming messages of support and appreciation as they answered hundreds of calls from South Australians in need over Christmas.

Supporters don't see it as a sacrifice to volunteer for these shifts. They recognise that the holiday season can be particularly challenging for many people. They want to be there for help-seekers who have no place to go, and no one else to turn to.

Following a shift over Christmas, Nancy reflected on those who expressed their gratitude for having been there for them.

"I haven't given up Christmas to be there," says Nancy.

“

They've given purpose to my day; they've made my day feel so much more important.”

For Henry, it's about acknowledging people's feelings and reminding them of the strength they've shown in coping with such stressful times.

“

They've been through a lot,” says Henry.

“We've been living with this for years and there is no solution I can give to a help-seeker that they haven't already heard or talked about.

“It's about being patient, just listening, just giving them the space to hear their own thoughts.”

Isaiah took many calls from people who were simply worn out by COVID – having spent days in isolation or missing family and other support networks. They called because they were just longing to be connected to another human.

“I tell them, ‘I'm here, I'm not going anywhere’,” he says.

“I sometimes don't need to say anything, just be there for them and be non-judgemental. The world needs more people who truly listen.”

You helped make it possible for us to train and support dedicated volunteers like Isaiah, Henry and Nancy, so they could sit with people in their darkest moments.

Thank you for helping us ensure we have enough Crisis Supporters to make sure no one who calls Lifeline Adelaide in a crisis is left alone.

If you or someone you know is struggling or feeling overwhelmed, Lifeline is here 24 hours, 7 days.

Call 13 11 14.



Nadir is grateful for the support and shelter to help him make a new start



Stephen will move out into a new unit soon and hopes to have a dog to keep him walking and provide him with another focus away from his chronic pain

## Thanks to you, a safe home gives me hope

“

The best thing I learned  
is to hope for the best and  
prepare for the worst”.

For Nadir, life is about taking one step at a time. As a long-term rough sleeper with chronic health issues, finding a home through our Housing for Health program was the first step towards a new start.

As a client of the program, Nadir has been placed in short-term accommodation in a group of renovated South Australian Housing Trust units. He receives full onsite support from SA Health workers and a Uniting Communities team who are committed to helping him move into long term, stable accommodation.

“Every day brings new hope,” says Nadir, of a life far removed from what it once was.

Since moving in, he has regained his driver’s licence with full points, has enrolled to study a Certificate IV in Community Mental Health and found casual work laying paving.

The opportunity for support and shelter gives a crucial new start for those with chronic health problems who have been rough sleeping, some for more than 5 years.

It’s thanks to your generous contributions that people like Nadir are starting new lives, in a home environment of safety and dignity, with the things they need to make life comfortable.

With your support, the units have been equipped with simple household items like cutlery, crockery, pantry goods and personal hygiene products – things we take for granted but which mean so much to those who have lived without comfort for so long.

Because of you, Nadir lays down at night on a comfortable bed, relaxes in his own armchair and enjoys a meal sitting at his dining table.

Since July 2021, the program has taken in 36 clients with backgrounds of drug and alcohol issues, mental and physical health problems, and domestic violence situations. With the support of our onsite team, clients are connected to health, social and other support services. They receive the guidance and care they need to transition to independent living.

“Long term chronic pain caused by illness and injury often contributes to homelessness,” says Robert Spaan, Senior Coordinator, Housing for Health.

“Having a safe, comfortable place to sleep aids in our clients’ wellness and improves their ability to focus and to self-manage their issues and lifestyle.”

Thank you for helping turn a house into a home – a safe place for Nadir and others to find new hope.

The Housing for Health program is a partnership between Uniting Communities, SA Health and the South Australia Housing Authority (SAHA).





Children enjoyed a family Christmas celebration in the welcoming environment you helped us to create at Newpin

## Helping children in care to safely return home

Through the kindness of our donors, our Newpin centre at Smithfield continues to provide a safe and welcoming environment for children in care to reconnect with their families.

We are delighted to share the heart-warming news that since Newpin opened in July 2021, we have successfully reunited 14 children with their families. The children, most aged under 6 have been regularly attending the engagement program which helps re-establish relationships so that children can return to live safely with their family in their community.

These wonderful reunifications have taken place in the special spaces made possible through your generosity. Our families enjoy spending time together in the spacious playroom, therapy rooms and outdoor play area, all thoughtfully furnished and decorated. It is so important for these families to have a place where they feel comfortable to come together, reconnect and develop new trusting, loving relationships.



The Newpin team have successfully reunited 14 children with their families, and with a new centre opening soon, looks forward to keeping even more families safely together

“

Newpin is a great way for families to get the meaningful support they need to stay together, while at the same time protecting children who otherwise might be at risk for abuse and neglect,” says Uniting Communities Chief Executive, Simon Schrapel.

A second Newpin centre opened in Port Adelaide in January which includes a space that will be converted into a ‘Men’s Shedgroup’ for cultural activities such as basket weaving and boomerang making. A third centre servicing the southern region is expected to open in the coming months. It’s our hope that we can support more than 200 families over the next six and half years.

We are so grateful to you for contributing towards these valuable reunification outcomes for a much-needed program.



The COVID Mental Health Support Line team provide a safe space for people to call for support if they're struggling with the impacts of COVID-19 on their lives

## Supporting your mental health during COVID

It has been more than two years since COVID-19 was first identified but for South Australians, we've only just experienced our most intense period of the pandemic.

When our borders opened, we quickly moved from living almost COVID-free, to having thousands of new cases reported each day.

Our COVID Mental Health Support Line team have been working hard since the early days of the pandemic, providing counselling to support people who are struggling.

People reached out for help in record numbers during December 2021 to January 2022, with the number of calls tripling to that received during the same time the previous year.

Because COVID has affected everyone differently, our skilled mental health counsellors say it has put strain on people's lives in many ways. Common themes from callers include fear of contracting the virus, loneliness and isolation, financial instability, domestic and family violence, homelessness, grief and loss.

Our counsellors create a safe space for people to talk about anything they feel comfortable sharing. They also advocate for callers by liaising with other services to ensure their needs are met and offer regular call backs if required.

If you or someone you know is feeling anxious or worried, the COVID Mental Health Support Line is here to help from 8am to 8pm every day on 1800 632 753.

The COVID Mental Health Support Line is an initiative of SA Health, operated by Uniting Communities.

To make a donation today please call (08) 8202 5110 or visit [www.unitingcommunities.org](http://www.unitingcommunities.org)  
Thank you so much for your generous support.

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