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The material in this newsletter may be reused for school projects with our compliments

**Beverley** (she prefers Bev) is a remarkable woman and mother. She has faced, and continues to face, many challenges in her life - challenges most of us could not possibly imagine.

She starts each day with an absolute determination to care and provide for her 6 children (ages 4 to 21) and to make sure they stay together. Family means everything to Bev. She believes you can cope with anything life dishes out, as long as you have each other and love each other enough.

Married at an early age, Bev and her husband never had much. They lived in public housing with their (at the time) 2 young children, but didn't have the maturity or the knowledge to properly care for their home. Due to cultural and some acknowledged behavioural issues, they lost tenancy of their home.

With no savings, they found it impossible to rent a home in the private market. So in her early 20's, Bev, her husband and their children found themselves homeless.

Bev said:

**"It was frightening. We lived in our car, in parks, stayed with friends and family members but I never thought that we would end up homeless for more than 10 years. Can you believe that – 10 years!"**

I tried everything and everywhere to get help. I went to every department and agency I could find, and while we did get a few nights motel accommodation and the such, we never found a home. My husband would come in and out of our lives. I can't blame him, it was hard for him as a man to see what was happening to his family.

**I started doing drugs to numb the pain I was feeling. I feel sorry that I turned to drugs, but I couldn't stand it anymore, you know. I ran into trouble and was sent to the Bandyup Women's Prison. I lost my children to welfare. This was the lowest point for me, the end.** But it was also a beginning.

I met Leanne (Leanne Strommen, Executive Manager of Centrecare Gosnells) after being referred by DCS following my release from Bandyup; she and so many other people at Centrecare started helping me in so many ways. They provided temporary accommodation, drug counselling, family support, and helped with all the government agencies red tape.

I slowly started to put my life and my family back together.



Pictured: Krystina Beckerleg, Centrecare case worker, with Bev and the children.

Thanks to Centrecare, my kids and I now have a beautiful Department of Housing home. My case worker Krystina says I am the best tenant in WA because my home is always so neat, tidy and well cared for. When you've been homeless and you finally get a place to call your own, then you appreciate it and enjoy it, you know.

Look, me and the kids still don't have a lot and there are times when food and other stuff is in short supply, but we are together, we love each other, and we are trying real hard. Centrecare continues to help support me, encourage me, and be there for me and the kids. They have changed my life over the past 2 years".

Editor's Comment:

I asked Bev if she could have one wish what that might be. She thought for a moment and said rather quietly... "My own home, one I owned that would always be mine, no matter what".



Pictured: Bev with two of her sons, and her nephew.

## DOING THE BEST I CAN...



**This is Peter's story,  
in his own words....**

Pictured: Peter and his son Dylan.

**" I began smoking marijuana at just 10 years old. I never thought I'd end up using heroin, because I was always scared of needles to be honest. When I was 16 and drunk at a party, some guy injected me with heroin.**

**That was all it took for me to start using.**

At first, I took it on Friday nights, then weekends and eventually every day. I had a great job in the carbon crushing industry and earned really good money, so I could afford it at first. When I needed more, because I had a good credit rating I took out a \$15,000 personal loan, which all went on drugs. My girlfriend at the time hated heroin, so I changed to speed.

**At just 23 years of age, I became a father.**

**My son Dylan was a beautiful baby however he was born with an intellectual disability.**

Doctors told us Dylan's brain would develop slower than normal, which meant by the time he was eight, he would be at the same level of learning as a 3 year old.

My partner and I had a fairly up and down relationship, we were always fighting and arguing and I just couldn't take it anymore. So when Dylan was 5 years old, I left and moved back in with my parents. Dylan and his mum moved into a refuge for single mothers.

**One day, I received a call from welfare officers informing me that Dylan could no longer live with his Mum.**

Thankfully my parents were granted temporary custody and I was given time to prove that I could care for Dylan.

**Six long months later, I was granted custody, which was the happiest day of my life mate.**



*Pictured: Linda Williams from Centrecare Gosnells, with Peter and Dylan.*

That's what first lead me to Centrecare. My parents had decided to move interstate, so I needed a new home for me and Dylan. Centrecare provided us temporary accommodation in a really nice two bedroom duplex while we waited for a Department of Housing home to become available (we ended up staying for 14 months, so much for temporary).

**Centrecare asked if I needed any furniture etc but I had my own stuff, and I said there was probably someone else who needed it more than we did.**

Centrecare has really helped Dylan. He was attending school at a place for severely intellectually and physically disabled children. He didn't belong there. I wanted him to be in a "normal" school, where he looked like every other child, and where he could be given special help.

Thanks to Linda Williams, our case worker at Centrecare, she helped get Dylan into the Cloverdale Education Support Program, and the results have been amazing. His speech is clearer, he is so much happier and confident and I am over the moon that my son has children to play with and learn with.

**I can't thank Centrecare or Linda enough. They are all really nice people, they care about Dylan and me and they continue to be there for us.**

**We all need someone to be there for us, don't we.** That's why I am sharing my story. If it can help anyone, I want them to know that life can get better...with a little help.

I've been drug-free for 2 or 3 years now. While my son is at school, I've been working part-time at a hydroponics store which I really enjoy. I'd love to work fulltime, but I have to be there to care for Dylan.

**We don't have much but we have each other, and mate that's enough. I'm doing the best I can.** ” ”



**Editor's Comments:**

Established in February 2004, the Sky Program provides support and counselling services for children and families living in supported accommodation. Sky has assisted more than 260 families and can work with children of up to 40 families who are at risk of homelessness at any given time and who are living in identified supported accommodation services.



**CENTRECARE:**

**IN THE COMMUNITY...  
...FOR THE COMMUNITY!**



*Pictured: Tony Pietropiccolo (Director, Centrecare), Leanne Strommen (Executive Manager, Centrecare Gosnells) and staff.*

*Pictured (L-R): Leanne, Claire (Receptionist) and Tony welcome you to the Gosnells centre.*

To meet the constantly growing demand from people living in the South East and South West areas, Centrecare has opened a new, purpose built office and support centre in Gosnells. Costing more than \$3 million and officially opened at the end of 2008, the new Centre was funded by Centrecare with very generous support from Lotterywest.

**Leanne Strommen, Executive Manager, Centrecare said:** "We relocated from rather cramped offices in Cannington to this new Gosnells Centre based on the needs of our clients and our Gosnells office is central to the South East Corridor for people in need of our services.

**Our new Centre provides for today and for the future.** We currently have 25 counsellors, case workers, outreach and property management staff, however there is room for upwards of 40 fulltime staff eventually. We now have suitable offices, meeting rooms, counselling rooms, lifeskills training facilities and educational training resources.

Centrecare provides so many children and family services. There are currently over 150 properties, not all are leased from the department of housing, we also lease from the private market for resettling refugee families.

Centrecare provides counselling for addictions, gambling, domestic violence and lifeskills training. We work with young people at risk of offending, people re-entering the community after being released from prison, migrants and refugees.

**Centrecare is assisting thousands of families on an ongoing basis, and every day, we are referred new clients.**

**Editor's Comments:**

Serving communities throughout Western Australia for more than 40 years, Centrecare provides professional services and programs for families and individuals in crisis, people battling addictions, counselling and therapy programs, emergency housing for the homeless, specialist services for migrants and refugees and much, much more. In 2010, more than 25,000 families and individuals will be helped in some way by Centrecare, from Esperance in the south to Broome in the north. In all, over \$20 million in programs and services will be delivered to people who turn to Centrecare for help.

**Centrecare is an organisation funded, in part, by your generous support of the Archbishop's annual appeals. Thank you for your support of LifeLink.**

We work with people long-term to help them acquire the skills necessary to re-establish their lives. It's very rewarding work, professionally and personally. We get to see and experience the remarkable changes that can and do happen in people's lives – when they are given the help that they need".

**Tony Pietropiccolo, Director of Centrecare, said:** "Our new centre responds to the needs of the local community. Centrecare is here, where we can do the most good.

We work in partnership with the community and our clients, providing a range of professional programs and services specifically tailored to meet their individual needs and circumstances.

We do so with **absolute respect**, encouraging people to achieve their full potential and helping in whatever way possible.

Every member of Centrecare is absolutely committed to providing the highest level of professional service and care for our clients. We have a remarkable team of really caring and professional people who serve the local community to the best of their ability – day in, day out".

