



caring



## 2011 Centenary Reunion ~ Bigger Than Ever

Each year the former residents of Burnside gather together to share stories, catch up on what has happened in the past year, reminisce together and make new connections with old friends. In this Centenary year the reunion was bigger than ever.

On 15 October 2011, nearly 400 of the 'Burnie kids' - young and young at heart! - came to visit their childhood homes. For many of us it is difficult to imagine what a trip like that must feel like - tinged with a mix of emotions for many.

For the Burnie kids, these buildings make up a large part of their childhood memories. Many of those visiting during the Centenary Reunion were coming back for the first time. For those who come every year, there was the opportunity to look at the renovations and the upgraded museum, as well as the chance to meet with some of the people they hadn't seen for many, many years.

Burnside was founded on a spirit of generosity and a commitment to help those in need improve their lives. In the early 1960s a fund was set up by the Burnie Kids themselves as a way to give other children like them a helping hand when they were in hospital and sick.

At this year's reunion, to mark the Centenary, the Ex-Burnsiders unveiled a plaque paid for by this fund. The plaque was established in memory of all those who have been through the homes over the years; to mark the memories and stories of those no longer here to join the reunions; and to remember friends far away.

### Thank you Toyota

Burnside would like to thank Chullora Noble Toyota for their generous donation of \$6500 to support Burnside's important work in the community.

Each year staff from Chullora Noble Toyota dedicate a percentage of their pay to a charity fund. In honour of Burnside's Centenary, this year they nominated Burnside as their charity of choice.

Their donation makes it possible for Burnside to continue providing key services to continue providing key services to disadvantaged children, young people and families in NSW.

Michael Moussa, Managing Director of Chullora Noble Toyota attended Burnside's Centenary opening event in June this year. He was moved by the powerful stories of Burnside's service users that revealed such a sense of hope and transformation.

As a result of this, as well as a longstanding relationship between Burnside and Chullora Noble Toyota, Mr Moussa recommended that this year Burnside be the recipient of Noble Toyota's staff giving.

Burnside staff and service users deeply appreciate Chullora Noble Toyota's generosity.



With your kindness and generosity Burnside can help hundreds of disadvantaged children and young people celebrate and delight in the excitement of Christmas. If you would like to support our Christmas Appeal please contact us on 1800 660 866 or complete the attached donation slip. Together we can help more families feel a close sense of belonging to our community and personally experience the respect, care and thoughtfulness of others this Christmas.



### A traditional Burnside Christmas: CHRISTMAS AT BURNSIDE IN THE 1900s

On one special day each year, just before noon, the Burnie kids would march eagerly up the hills of North Parramatta to attend the Annual Christmas Picnic. Led by the Boy's Pipe Band, they would proceed with much anticipation and laughter, with the sound of the bagpipes close ahead.

Since the Burnside Homes were founded, Sir James Burns, or "The Colonel" as the children affectionately knew him, would generously invite the Burnside children, staff and Sunday School teachers to the grounds of his home at Gowan Brae for the celebration. The much awaited event signalled the commencement of the Christmas festivities at the Burnside Homes.

With great delight the children were treated to an assortment of sandwiches, cake, oranges, bananas, lollies and ginger beer at the picnic. They would also enjoy games including flags, relays and somersaults.

Later in the day, the Burnie kids would walk in a single file through the summer house where Miss Burns would present each of them with a Christmas present purchased by "the Colonel".

During the year, the matrons of each home kept a 'good behaviour list'. The best behaved child was permitted to enter the summer house first and choose his or her present. The children at the bottom of the list received the presents that were left.

On Christmas, puddings were made, with all the children contributing to a 'stir and a wish'. Carols were sung around a big tree with gifts in the great hall and a jolly Father Christmas burst into the room with white beard and royal robe, sounding remarkably like the Superintendent, Mr. Albert Jones!

*From Keen, S 1986, Burnside: 75 Years of Caring, Merritt Madden Printing Pty Ltd, Waterloo, NSW*

**"What a glorious time we had on Saturday. At the invitation of Colonel Burns, the children and staff, and the Sunday School teachers, went up to Gowan Brae to picnic. Preceded by the boys' pipe band in uniform, the children marched up, arriving at 12 o'clock. The "billy" was boiling and before long all hands (and mouths) were busy. After lunch, games and races occupied attention until half past three, when Miss Burns kindly distributed the gifts, one for every child, so generously provided by the Colonel. The staff were not overlooked, each member receiving a handsome memento of the Christmas season. It was a pity that the rain started just when it did; had it waited about a quarter of an hour all would have got home dry. As it was, a few got wet, but as the little fellow said when he got the "collywobblers" after the party, "It was worth it!"**

*From The Burnside News, Burnside Presbyterian Orphan Homes, Circa 1916*

#### Round the Christmas tree

**"I remember the church ladies. They took the names of all the children who didn't get toys or books and I remember come Christmas morning I got snakes and Ladders, Ludo and a little lucky charm bracelet and something else and I still remember today the people who gave it to me, Carolyn and Angela Weels from Northbridge. I was so thrilled with this parcel... a child of 12."**

*'Dee', Burnside Resident, 1941 - 1948, Burnside Museum Display.*

### Burnside Centenary Donation Coupon

Thank you for supporting vulnerable children and young people. Please return to UnitingCare Burnside:  
PO Box 495 Rydalmere BC NSW 1701

Please accept my tax deductible donation of:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose my cheque / money order payable to UnitingCare Burnside or please debit my credit card.

MasterCard  Visa

\_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Tel (Hm) \_\_\_\_\_

Tel (Wk) \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Commencing with this donation, I would like to make a regular contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please debit my credit card:

Monthly  3 Monthly  6 Monthly  Annually

**YOU CAN ALSO MAKE YOUR TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION ON OUR WEBSITE [WWW.BURNSIDE.ORG.AU](http://WWW.BURNSIDE.ORG.AU) OR BY PHONE ON OUR FREECALL DONATION LINE 1800 660 866**

UnitingCare Burnside respects and values your privacy and will not disclose personal information without your written permission. Please read our Privacy Statement on our website [www.burnside.org.au](http://www.burnside.org.au)

EMAIL: [fundraising@burnside.org.au](mailto:fundraising@burnside.org.au) | ABN: 78 722 539 923



## A Message from Burnside

2011 has been a really big year for UnitingCare Burnside (Burnside). It is not every year you turn 100 and boy have we really worked hard to celebrate and commemorate the year.

As we move towards Christmas things aren't slowing down. We have our usual *Christmas Appeal* and *Operation Santa* in partnership with Target and other supporters right across NSW; providing gifts for children and families. We also make sure we remember the young people we work with as well. Often Christmas is focussed on young children and their present from Santa, but one of the things we have found is that it is just as important to think about Christmas for young people. Whilst no longer at an age where they can't get to sleep because they are listening out for reindeer hooves on the roof, young people still need to feel part of a family at Christmas time.

In this issue, Hugo Madrid, the Coordinator at one of our residential care homes, Gordon, shares with us his experience of Christmas and sharing this time with the young people he works with.

You can also read in this issue about how your support is directly benefitting the young people we work with through scholarships. Safa's story shows us just how important that support is, not just academically but socially.

We have also included in this edition stories about Christmas at Burnside in the past. This year, more so than most, we have been enriched, entertained and moved by the stories of many of our Ex-Burnsiders and staff. At the recent reunion it was wonderful to see groups coming together.

The way that Burnside works with children and families has changed much over the last 100 years. Although the commitment to care and protection has remained central, the way we work has changed to reflect our understanding of child development, the impact of trauma, the importance of education and the power of connection.

Things will continue to develop and change and Burnside is committed to staying at the forefront of these changes. Even as we come to the end of this year, we are gearing up for another big change in the provision of out-of-home care. As you may be aware from media coverage, the new NSW state government has committed to delivering on the recommendations from the Wood Commission in 2008, and are working towards moving the provision of out-of-home care to the not-for-profit sector over the next four years. Burnside is committed to working closely with the Department of Family and Community Services to provide more foster care through this process.

This will mean we are looking for more respite and short-term as well as long-term carers. If you know anyone interested or would like to find out more please visit our website [www.burnsidefostercare.com](http://www.burnsidefostercare.com).

I would like to wish you and your family all a safe, and happy Christmas and thank you so much for your support throughout this very special year.

Yours sincerely,

Claerwen Little  
Acting Director  
UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families



## William Rubensohn Scholarship

Children, young people and disadvantaged families often miss out on the educational, recreational and social opportunities many others take for granted. One of the ways that Burnside works to ensure children, young people and families have access to the experiences and life choices they deserve is through scholarships.

This year, Burnside has awarded, in consultation with the William Rubensohn Foundation, two Scholarships to high-achieving young people we work with in South West Sydney who have experienced significant disadvantage and challenges in their schooling and lives. These scholarships provide eligible young people with access to flexible, quality education and extra-curricular activities that meet their learning and social needs.

Safa was one of the successful 2011 William Rubensohn Foundation Scholarship recipients, awarded earlier this year. Safa, a Year 9 student, lives in Campbelltown and comes from a family where English is their second language.

Burnside first came in contact with Safa whilst she participated in a Girls Group facilitated by Bridges for Youth. Safa was referred to the program because she was shy and lacked self-confidence. Through our work with Safa we became aware of her great academic potential and excellent performance in her subjects at school in 2010. Safa is a dedicated student who takes her studies seriously and has ambitions to study at university once finishing high school.

As the recipient of the scholarship, Safa received funds to be used for education and extra-curricular related expenses, as well as the basics including having a warm winter uniform.

The funds enabled Safa to choose subject electives such as Visual Arts and Child Studies, as well as participate in school sports. All of these incur additional fees which, without the support of the scholarship, would have precluded Safa's participation.

The scholarship funds also enabled Safa to receive Maths tutoring. As a result, she has seen a big improvement in her Maths marks – obtaining the highest mark in a recent test! However her improvement has not been limited to Maths. Safa has improved

in many of her subjects. Safa's parents were especially delighted to receive a 'Letter of Praise' from her high school commending Safa's efforts in English.

Safa's parents and teachers have seen her blossom over the past year. Her opportunities and subsequent achievements have led to an increase in confidence and a huge development in her leadership skills.

Safa, herself, is thrilled with her improvements. With the support received by her family, friends and Burnside, Safa is committed, now more than ever, to reaching her dream of studying at university.

**Education is powerful for everyone. Its impact in the lives of disadvantaged children and young people, however, can be crucial. It can be a pathway out of poverty and into a world of choices and opportunities. Burnside helps young people engage with education through both practical and emotional support.**

**Making the transition from school to tertiary study can be difficult, especially for young people leaving foster care. For many, the payment of required fees is impossible. You can make a real difference in young people's lives by reducing the financial strain of staying in education through Burnside's Youth Education Support and Scholarship Scheme (YESSS). This scheme helps with the cost of books, extra circular activities, electives, accommodation and living expenses, travel and other associated costs.**



## SANTA REMEMBERS OUR KIDS IN RESIDENTIAL CARE

Hugo Madrid is the Coordinator of the Burnside *Gordon House* residential unit for teenagers in Sydney. Here he shares with us how the young people he works with celebrate Christmas.

"Christmas has always been my favourite time of the year. As a child, Christmas felt magical because I knew that Santa was watching my every step and my priority was to avoid the 'naughty' list at all cost. As a father of two children now, I see them rejoice in the carols, practice their lines for school plays and drop hints for what they really want to get from Santa.

In residential care however, I often see another side, a side where Christmas is associated with sadness, where the kids tend to miss home that much more and where others are reminded of the fact that they never actually had a Christmas.

I spoke to Gus Morgan and Margaret Paterson, Coordinators for the other two residential programs, and we all agreed that Christmas is our chance to introduce our kids to the magic of Christmas; an opportunity to create an alternate story with new memories, where presents, food, carols and plenty of photos are all part of the experience.

Margaret explained that like Burnside's other residential homes *Minnamurra* and *Gordon House*, Christmas at *Byrnes* begins well before Christmas day. The kids are asked to decorate the whole house with tinsel and bells and Christmas trees, thus allowing them to engage with the festive and fun side of Christmas well before the big day.

All three homes ensure that staff are invited to share part of their Christmas with the kids, so that kids can share their day with the people that are meaningful to them. It is also a gift to the staff who look forward to seeing the faces of the kids when they open their gifts and to witness their sadness being replaced by joy and excitement.

Ex-residents of our programs are not forgotten and invited to come along to be embraced by the Christmas spirit. Before you know it we have a house full of people who are sharing gifts, sharing food and above all sharing a moment in time that will stay with them for many years to come."

Merry Christmas!

*Hugo Madrid, Coordinator, Gordon House Residential Unit*



## LUDDENHAM CONGREGATION:

Supporting UnitingCare Burnside's Centenary Fundraising ~ Investing in the Future

At the Chapel of St. Andrew's on Sunday 16 October, the Uniting Church Synod NSW & ACT hosted a Service of Thanksgiving to honour the Centenary of Burnside and pay tribute to its work on behalf of the church.

During this service, Burnside's Chaplin, Rev. Garry Derkenne, was surprised with the presentation of a cheque for \$5,000 from the congregation of Luddenham Uniting Church.

Luddenham Uniting Church is a faithful group of "mature" members who have practiced generosity on a regular basis in a variety of different ways. Most notably, they have managed over the last three years to raise \$60,000 for cancer research through the "Cuppa for Cancer" program.

Inspired by Burnside's efforts in the 'Investing in the Future' campaign and the Centenary Congregation Fundraising Kit, Luddenham Uniting Church's donation will go towards supporting a tertiary scholarship for a disadvantaged child over a period of five years.

"To join in Burnside's centenary with a gift is appropriate, as it reminds us of the wonderful work they can do with children that is a bit beyond us now... even to help one child, particularly through high school, brings us back to the reality of the world that is out there, but we're not quite part of," remarked Chairperson of Parramatta Nepean Presbytery, Reverend David Peters.

The 'Investing in the Future' fundraising packs were distributed late July to more than 450 Uniting Church congregations in NSW and the ACT, providing an opportunity for the whole church to celebrate Burnside's Centenary with us.

"I am aware of the immense love that drives the staff of Burnside and the talent they have in serving children and families," Reverend Peters said. "I urge you to make a centenary gift to this great Uniting Church service in this centenary year, so we can realise their commitment in even greater ways."

On behalf of staff at Burnside, we would like to thank Luddenham Uniting Church for its compassionate contribution that will support a child's education and also recognise all other congregations and individuals for their generosity. We are grateful for all the support we have received during our Centenary year.

*For more information on how your congregation can support Burnside or to order your Fundraising Kit please contact Garry Derkenne on (02) 9407 3229 or [gderkenne@burnside.org.au](mailto:gderkenne@burnside.org.au).*