



A Loving Farewell for a Community Champion

When Cecily Primmer was in the advanced stage of ovarian cancer, aged 85, her seven children were determined to give her a loving farewell at home.

“Mum’s passing was a family affair with all seven grown children staying with her on that final night,” said daughter Susie Douglas. “With Karuna’s help, Mum’s passing was very gentle, wholesome and respectful.”

The Primmer family had originally sought the help of Karuna when Cecily’s husband Conrad was struggling with atherosclerotic dementia in his later years. A Karuna palliative care support volunteer would provide respite for Cecily, at their home in Samford, before Conrad died aged 90 in hospital in 2014.

Both Cecily and Conrad were dedicated to the service of others and Karuna’s philosophy sat well with them. Conrad, a former Rugby Union Wallaby and long-time Obstetrician, and Cecily were both awarded Medals of

the Order of Australia (OAM) for their service to the community. Cecily’s two great passions were fundraising for the high school chaplaincy in Rockhampton and volunteering for the Australian Red Cross.

“Mum would always greet the Karuna volunteers and nurses with a smile and offer them a cup of tea, even when she was very ill,” said daughter Libby Homer. “They gave us the confidence to manage and care for Mum at home and they were so caring and compassionate.”

Susie said that all seven children were able to be involved in the care of their mum with Karuna’s support, and that meant a lot to Cecily who herself had been a nurse in her younger years.

“She was a wonderful mother and as much as we appreciated how the hospital cared for our father when he was dying it was so much nicer to be able to make a cup of tea in Mum’s kitchen, play her *Continued on page 2 >*

CEO Update

As we head towards the end of the year, it's a great time to reflect on what we have achieved together in 2019.

With your support, Karuna has been able to provide hundreds of families with compassionate holistic palliative care in their homes.

We were so grateful for the many hundreds of donations we received in response to our June tax appeal, which featured volunteer Chantelle King and her mum Sharon who died of cancer aged 57 in 2016. Her last wish was to be able to die at home and with your generosity she was able to do that.

For this newsletter, we spoke to the family of Cecily and Conrad Primmer, both of whom gave so much to their community throughout their lives. Karuna was pleased to be able to give back to them when they needed it most.

Almost half of Karuna's running costs are derived from donations and we continue to explore new ways to get people involved in what we do, including the annual Bridge to Brisbane (B2B) fun run.

Team Karuna has just completed it's second B2B race and I congratulate all our runners and walkers who raised vital funds for our much needed service. We thank Chellecorp, who generously provided sponsorship for our team t-shirts.

We watch with interest the Queensland parliamentary inquiry into aged care, end-of-life, palliative care and voluntary assisted dying.

We have provided a submission and will be giving evidence of our unique and compassionate service.

Whatever the outcome of the inquiry, Karuna will continue to serve our community with kindness, compassion and dedication.



Tracey Porst Karuna CEO



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favourite music and listen to Mum talking about her wonderful life all in the privacy of her own home." said Susie. "Mum was comforted by the fact that she was in familiar surroundings with the people who loved her most."

Karuna also provided invaluable emotional support to all family members - children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

"Karuna supports not only the dying person but all their loved ones, allowing the natural process of dying to happen in a quiet supported way," said daughter Gillian.

"This time can be fraught for family members - emotionally and physically - but the sanctuary of being at home softened the often sharp corners of the process as meals can be prepared, washing done, naps taken."

All seven children said they were grateful of Karuna's support and that of the people who donate to such a worthwhile cause.

Karuna Wish List

To assist in caring for our clients, we need your help to purchase some new equipment including -



Nursing Kit - \$600 - All the vital equipment our nurses need for the care and assessment of our clients, including stethoscope, blood pressure machine, and penlight torches.



Gel Cushions - \$300 - We need three gel cushions, which help prevent pressure ulcers and ensure our clients are comfortable while sitting up for a meal or watching television.



Digital Camera - \$800 - We currently pay a photographer for high resolution photos for our newsletter and would like the ability to take our own photos, with some training!



Bariatric Wheelchair - \$800 - We need a heavy duty wheelchair with adjustable width and height capacity that can accommodate any client.

If you can help with our wish list, please phone us at (07) 3632 8300 or email karuna@karuna.org.au

My Gift

Karuna stepped in and helped Joanne Edgar when she needed it most. And now she is giving a gift to Karuna in her Will. This is Joanne's story...

"My experience with Karuna was life changing in the most surprising way. My mother had suffered with breast cancer over 14 years, from age 50, but it wasn't until she was in the final stages that I was introduced to Karuna.

Karuna arrived and were only with me for my mum's last 8 days but they saved my life.

Karuna nurses came every morning to help with medication, shower Mum, provide care and spend time with her. I felt supported, safe and cared for by a wonderful, compassionate team for the first time since Mum became sick. When I offered to pay, they explained there was no charge.

I had never experienced such unconditional generosity and compassion before and this changed my life course in ways I never imagined.

In those final days, I made a commitment that I would help Karuna the only way I knew how – financially. I hoped that someone else could experience what I had, a real life-line when I needed it.

I help Karuna when I can but life can get in the way, so that's why I have decided to make a bequest in my Will.

I know how much the service relies on the generosity of donors to continue their work.

I hope my final gift will enable Karuna to continue helping people facing terminal illness long after I'm gone - with care, compassion and kindness to clients, carers and families. In a very small way I feel like I am a part of that."

If you would like to leave a gift in your Will for Karuna and help us support more families, please email karuna@karuna.org.au

Christmas Market

Friday 29 November 2019, 1-8pm

We need your help to make our Christmas Markets a success. We would be grateful for donations of:

Raffle Prizes - a holiday, restaurant or entertainment vouchers, wine or spirits or homewares.

Cooking - Sweet treats, such as fudge, rocky road, shortbread, Christmas cakes, puddings and jams, or savoury chutney and relishes. Jars are available at reception.

Sewing - We are grateful for any donations of homemade gifts and crafts, such as hand-embroidered tea towels, washers or hand towels, Christmas decorations, children's clothing and aprons.

Volunteer - We need people to help set up, pack down and help out on the stalls.

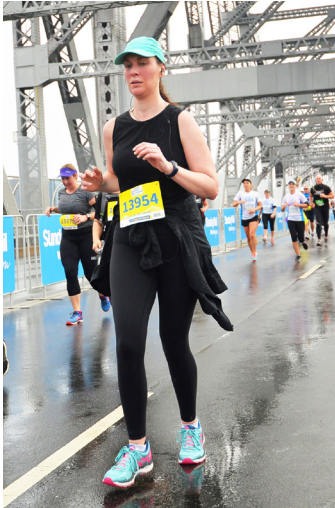
Let us know how you can help by phoning Karuna on (07) 3632 8300 or emailing verena@karuna.org.au

SAVE
the
DATE

Team Karuna Crosses the Line!

The 2019 Bridge to Brisbane (B2B) was a great success thanks to runners like Meagan Killer who completed the 10km race, raising much needed funds for Karuna, for the second year.

Meagan joined our team after her Dad Ross Killer was diagnosed with a terminal illness in October 2015 and was cared for by Karuna in 2016. “We were very lucky to have Karuna in our lives during the most difficult time and it’s important for me to give back to ensure others can benefit from Karuna’s service in the same way that my family did,” said Meagan. Meagan had never run in a long distance race before deciding to join Karuna’s B2B team last year.



“I’m not a runner, and being part of last year’s B2B was a big stretch for me both physically and mentally. Participating this year was another test, and something I needed to work towards to be able to run the 10km,” she said.

Last year Meagan raised \$1600 for Karuna. This year she hoped to not only raise funds but help promote Karuna’s important work. “Before my dad became sick, I wasn’t aware that this type of palliative care support existed in our community,” she said. “Prior to finding our way to Karuna, we’d had a negative experience of the health system which had left us feeling helpless and let down. Once we found Karuna, my dad was able to take control of his pain management and the nurses provided us with the skills to care for Dad. We never felt lonely or isolated with Karuna.”

Meagan said she hoped her efforts would help other families in similar circumstances. “There is nothing that can replace knowing that there is someone on call for you, at any time of day or night.”

Volunteering Changed My Perspective

Before volunteering at Karuna, Niam Todd had no experience of death. At 18 years of age he had no idea that a good death at home was possible. “Volunteering changed my perspective, I had a lot of misconceptions about death but at Karuna I’ve worked with a lot of people who’ve had really fulfilling and interesting lives right up until the day they died. I really didn’t expect that,” said Niam.

Niam, who now works in marketing, has spent nearly seven years volunteering at Karuna in administration, as a palliative care support volunteer and as a biography volunteer.

“My mum was a Karuna volunteer, so I decided to follow in her footsteps. I consider it a very valuable part of my life, everyone can benefit from the experience of volunteering.”

He said the families he’s worked with have been so grateful for the support and he’d met a lot of ‘really special people’ many of whom had become friends. “I spent about two years hanging out with a client every weekend, watching movies with him while his wife took a break from caring for him. It was a great experience, we had a lot of fun.”

He said now that he works full-time, he helps out with the biography program. “When we finally hand over the biography, it’s a real source of joy for the families at a really difficult time. Many of the clients don’t really feel they’ve had exciting lives, but after recounting they rediscover a lot of lost memories and realise they have had full lives.”

Niam said he loved being part of something that had a real impact on people’s lives.



Donors Deliver Vital Equipment

Without a crucial piece of equipment - a syringe driver - most of our clients would not be able to choose to die at home.

"Syringe drivers are vital to provide appropriate pain relief and other medicines to our clients at home, we couldn't do without them," said Karuna nurse Trina.

In February we put out a request for donations to purchase a new fleet of syringe drivers as our current fleet were approaching their used by date. "The cost of repairing a syringe driver often exceeds the purchase price (nearly \$3000) and some were already starting to break down," said Karuna CEO Tracey Porst.

Karuna didn't have to wait long as the Indooroopilly Golf Course generously donated \$10,000, raised at a charity golf day in May. "The money raised allowed us to buy three syringe drivers which ultimately means we can continue to deliver compassionate, holistic care at home for those with terminal illnesses," said Tracey. "We also received a generous donation from an individual donor that allowed us to buy another two drivers."

If you would like to make a donation towards purchasing other vital nursing equipment, please contact Verena on (07) 3632 8300.



Spring Newsletter 2019 - Donation

I would like to help Karuna provide essential care to the community.

Title:..... First Name:..... ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Diners ☐ Amex.....
Surname:..... Name on card:.....
Address:.....
.....
Suburb:..... State:..... Postcode:.....
Phone:..... Mobile:.....
Email:.....
Credit Card Number:
.....
Expiry Date:...../...../.....CVC:.....
Signature:.....
Expiry Date:...../...../.....

☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ or \$.....

Please tick preferred payment option:

- ☐ Cheque/money order payable to "The Karuna Hospice Service Ltd"
☐ Please charge my credit card for the amount above
☐ Please deduct the regular amount of \$..... each month from my credit card
☐ **Please send me details on making a gift to Karuna in my Will.**

Donations to Karuna of \$2 and over are tax deductible. Our Privacy Policy is available at karuna.org.au

ABN 28 055 211 473

The Karuna Hospice Service Ltd
27 Cartwright Street
Windsor QLD 4030
Phone: (07) 3632 8300
Email: karuna@karuna.org.au
www.karuna.org.au



Ways to Donate to Karuna:



Online at
www.karuna.org.au



Phone Karuna on
(07) 3632 8300



Fill in donation form
and send in reply paid
envelope enclosed



Direct debit to Karuna
BSB: 484-799 ACC: 036 747 582
Ref: Name/Donor ID

Words of Wisdom *From His Holiness The Dalai Lama*



I believe that to have world peace we must first have inner peace. Those who are naturally serene, at peace with themselves, will be more open towards others. I think this is where the very foundation of universal peace lies.



Karuna Workshops



Spiritual Care With the Dying - Retreats

Focusing on understanding death and dying from a spiritual perspective, these residential retreats draw from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and its application to end of life care. The course is intensive and deeply experiential. The more we face and prepare for our own death, the more present we can be with others in preparing for theirs.

October 17th – October 22nd 2019, Springbrook, Queensland
November 10th – November 15th 2019, Adelaide, South Australia

Presenter: Venerable Tenzin Chödrön

Please phone (07) 3632 8300 or email karuna@karuna.org.au to register your interest.



Good Grief - Living With Loss

Good Grief is a free program for the wider community offering guidance on grief and loss. The program, which is run over two consecutive sessions, offers practical suggestions for living with grief, including information on self-care, mindfulness techniques, what grief looks like and how loved ones can help.

Locations and Dates:

Wednesday 11 September & 18 September 2019 at Karuna House.
Time: 1-3 pm

Please phone (07) 3632 8300 or email karuna@karuna.org.au to register your interest. Information on Living with Grief is also available on our website.



How to Care for the Care Givers

Karuna has invited Geshe Thubten Sherab to give a public talk on “How to Care for the Care Givers” towards the end of October. Those who attended Geshe-la’s talk in 2017 were inspired by his knowledge and insight. While the date is yet to be confirmed, you may register your expression of interest by calling Karuna on (07) 3632 8300 as this will be a wonderful opportunity for all to learn more about compassionate care.