



## READ TO LEARN MEET THE TUTOR

Following a successful Semester 1, the Read to Learn program is back for Semester 2 at Preston North East Primary School and will be an ongoing project of the Order of Malta and Australian Catholic University (ACU) Community Hub in Melbourne.

Read to Learn aims to support primary school children from culturally and linguistically diverse and refugee backgrounds, who have been identified as requiring additional support to develop their reading and literacy skills. It involves volunteers providing one-on-one tutoring to the primary school students during weekly sessions during school Term.

At Preston North East Primary School more than 50% of the parents speak English as a second language with many reportedly struggling to help their children complete reading and homework tasks. Currently there are 16 primary school students in the program with many more students on the waiting list. The group of volunteer tutors are made up of members and volunteers of the Order of Malta and ACU students as part of their course requirements.

We speak with Order of Malta member, Keiron Long about his experiences as a Read to Learn tutor:

**Q: Keiron, tell us about the students you tutor in the program?**

A: The program assigns one tutor per student. The idea is to build a rapport with the student and come to understand their learning needs. Let's call my Year 3 student "Francesca." I told Francesca the meaning of her (beautiful) name in Italian and we google searched her Italian surname and found a town with the same name and then we explored the town on google photos. We did the same with her mother's English name.

Francesca lives with her grandparents. She finds it hard to concentrate for very long so in between working on a writing or reading exercise we would talk about her favourite apps, and she would tell me the things she liked most about each App. When Francesca was reading to me, I would explain the meaning of difficult words as we went along and answer any questions.

**Q: What impact did you see on the student during the first term of the program?**

A: The one-on-one relationship with a student provides another adult support, even if ever so briefly, to children who in some instances go home to dislocated family environments. Also, in a school class of twenty plus students, individuals rarely have the full attention of the teacher. This is something which the tutoring program provides. I suspect that in the limited time we have each week

the positive affirmation we give to the students is far more important than the learning experience.

**Q: What do you think the students and their parents/guardians think of the program?**

A: Francesca was happy to be part of the program and wanted to continue when the semester was finished. The other students also seemed keen to continue with the program. Francesca's Nonna was pleased with the time we were giving to her grandchild and offered her thanks on the last day.

**Q: What impact has the project had on you as a volunteer?**

A: The program reinforced how important a friendly and supportive environment is if students are to fully embrace any learning opportunities so as to reach their full potential, especially given many students have hurdles to overcome, such as language or family instability.

**Q: Did anything surprise you about the student, program or volunteers?**

A: I was surprised by how receptive the students were once the program was up and running. The ACU university student volunteers also embraced the program and built up a good rapport with students.

**Q: What would you say to anyone considering becoming a Read to Learn tutor?**

A: Grandparents would find it easy as they only need to treat the students as they do their grandchildren. I think anyone who joined the program would find it rewarding because they would quickly build a bond with their student. However, I think it important to see yourself as a mentor more than a tutor and be willing to be flexible and occasionally wander down lanes that the student may wish to explore.

## VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION

### Coats for the Homeless – across Australia

As our 2023 Coats for the Homeless distribution gradually comes to an end, our planning team turn their focus to the 2024 distribution. The volume of our manufacturing order, that needs to be placed before Christmas to arrive in time for winter, will depend on funds available for the project.

**Please consider a tax deductible donation to this project. Visit [coatsforthehomeless.org](http://coatsforthehomeless.org) or complete and return the coupon on page 5.**

### Food service in Brisbane

Every Sunday the Emmanuel City Mission (ECM) in Brisbane provide a free food service for the disadvantaged. On the second and fourth Sunday of each month, Order of Malta members and volunteers undertake the cooking and serving duties, whilst also welcoming and conversing with guests.

### Community Care Vans – Sydney, Paramatta and Melbourne

Our Order of Malta Community Care Van volunteers make regular visits to the homeless to distribute warm items of clothing, hygiene packs, socks, and nonperishable food items. A special mention to the Australian Catholic University (ACU) students who assist our van services.

### Mobile Community Café in City of Darebin

Every week, members, volunteers and ACU students make visits to two locations to socialise with residents living in areas where many people experience high levels of social isolation and/or poverty. Our volunteers provide a morning tea where they can also chat, play games and socialise with residents.

### Food Service in Darwin

The food service is provided by members and volunteers on the last Sunday of each month. It is delivered in a manner that respects the dignity of our marginalized brothers and sisters across Darwin and provides an opportunity to listen to their life stories. The Region is considering the expanding the reach of the service, via collaboration with St Vincent de Paul Society.

### Gardening Assistance in South Sydney

Our volunteers returned to provide assistance to elderly supporters in South Sydney, who are no longer able to tend to their garden following an accident. The grateful recipients rewarded our volunteers with delicious treats and large smiles.

Interested in volunteering? Learn more at [orderofmalta.org.au/volunteer](http://orderofmalta.org.au/volunteer)



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Members and Palliative Care volunteers, Vincent Volpe and Jeremy Barth, at training

## PALLIATIVE CARE VOLUNTEERS AT THE FOREFRONT OF 'BEING FOR OTHERS'

For many years the Order of Malta in Victoria has been involved with community palliative care through Eastern Palliative Care, which it runs in conjunction with St Vincent's Melbourne and Outer Eastern Palliative Care.

Thanks to a generous bequest from the Richard Divall Trust to the Order of Malta, a new project to provide hands on volunteer support to care for frail, sick and dying patients and their families in the western and southern suburbs of Melbourne is underway.



The Order of Malta is funding volunteer co-ordinators to oversee the recruitment, screening, training, and scheduling of over 135 volunteers (including members and friends of the Order) across Mercy Palliative Care and Calvary Health Care.

"Our volunteers are an important part of a diverse team, who are focused on providing the best possible person-centred care" explains Tony Reeves, Order of Malta member and project leader for the Calvary Health Care partnership.

"Whilst not substitutes for staff, our volunteers bring their own skills and experiences to help care for and support our patients, their families and friends".

The volunteers provide an array of services. For families and carers,

volunteers can provide respite assistance and bereavement support. For patients, they provide companionship and legacy work, such as writing to family. Staff also benefit from administrative support at the facilities.

For volunteers it is a demanding but rewarding and enriching experience.

"Volunteering in palliative care requires genuine purpose and commitment" explains Richard van der Merwe, Order of Malta member and project leader for the Mercy Palliative partnership.

"It's a great feeling that you're out and giving somebody support that they really appreciate, and in lots of cases, really need."

Volunteers receive a detailed orientation prior to commencement and are provided ongoing training and support.

A biography writing service is also in the works with a training session to be completed before Christmas and aims over the next two years to recruit and train 80 further volunteers to provide this service.

The project is also looking to expand the volunteer activities to include photography and driving duties.

"The volunteer program is an integral part of the way that we provide services to our residents with the special touch and connections the volunteers bring each day to the lives of our residents living in care" reports Jo, Lifestyle Coordinator, Calvary Health Care.

"Mood appears to improve during a volunteer-led activity".

The Order of Malta and ACU Community Hub rely on the generosity of donors to continue serving the Melbourne community. Gifts of \$2 and more are tax deductible for Australian taxpayers.

## ROSES IN ROME

Member, Leonie Harle, visited the Grand Magistry at the end of August to deliver one of our Our Lady of Philermos Roses. She was then invited to attend its planting in the rose garden at the Magistral Villa the following day.

The Our Lady of Philermos Rose project directly aligns with the mission of the Order of Malta. It has both spiritual significance and offers hands-on engagement with our Lords the poor and sick.

Volunteers will distribute roses to patients in palliative care facilities, care homes and hospitals. The charitable act of gifting the rose, and the interaction with volunteers, intends to bring the recipients comfort and joy.

A limited number of roses are available for purchase with all profits will be invested back into the project.

Rose plants can be purchased from [www.orderofmalta.org.au/rose](http://www.orderofmalta.org.au/rose)



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The Kitchen frequently welcomes visiting members from across Australia and even overseas. Pictured: a member of the British Association volunteering at the Bondi Kitchen.

## ‘THE KITCHEN’ PROVIDING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR HANDS ON WORK

In 2021, Order of Malta members in Sydney decided to redouble its focus on “hands on work”, with Members and Volunteers working directly on projects to serve Jesus in the poor, sick and otherwise needy.

Conventual Chaplain Ad Honorem, Fr Anthony Robbie came up with the idea of a Community Kitchen, modelled on a project run by the British Association of the Order in London following an incident at his parish, St Patrick’s Catholic Church in Bondi, shortly after he had been appointed there.

On a rainy night, one of his young parishioners came onsite to find a homeless man sheltering from the elements. “The parishioner gave him his own take away dinner and made him a cup of tea,” explained Fr Robbie. “After hearing of this encounter, I decided that the underprivileged were a real presence in our midst and that it was time we did something for them.”

Following discussions with Steve Christie, the Regional Hospitalier for the Order of Malta, they investigated how they could provide a service that complemented other food services for the needy in Sydney. They quickly realised there was a lack of food services providing evening meals and shelter to eat them.

In the first week of December 2021 the Order of Malta Community Care Kitchen launched at St Patrick’s, offering anyone in need a warm nutritious homecooked meal, cooked and served by our friendly volunteers.

The opening night saw our members and volunteers serve just one takeaway meal.

Undeterred, over the following months, awareness of the Kitchen’s charms spread by word of mouth, social media and the distribution of flyers by volunteers. The number of guests slowly but steadily climbed and, almost two years later, the Kitchen serves between 20 and 30 guests every Wednesday evening.

At each service there are six volunteers rostered. Our volunteer cooks plan, prepare and cook the meals and frequently reproduce their family favourites for our guests. Rather than offer a canteen format, the Community Care Kitchen

is more akin to a restaurant, where volunteers serve our guests their meals and clear away their plates. They use these interactions as an opportunity to chat with guests and make them feel welcome.

“We aim to provide a hearty home cooked meal of the standard that we would serve to valued visitors in our own homes. For many of our guests it will be the only nutritious quality meal they will eat all week and the social interaction is very important for them as well” said Fr. Robbie.

A strong sense of community has been established between the guests and volunteers. “On any night there is usually one or two newcomers to the Kitchen, however the bulk of the guests are from a large group of regulars who come for a warm meal and company when needed” explains Steve Christie. “Guests tend to live in the area, usually in hostels, public housing or other lower cost accommodation options, although guests who sleep rough also regularly attend the Kitchen.”

The project running costs are minimal thanks to the generous support of Fr Robbie and his parish providing the facilities, and members, volunteers and parishioners ‘staffing’ the Kitchen.

Donations have also enabled the purchase of a new fridge, freezer and oven to meet the demands of cooking for 30 guests each week. However, with the cost of food and supplies increasing the Community Care Kitchen appreciates any donations to cover these expenses. Gifts of \$2 and more are tax deductible to Australian taxpayers.

## ORDER OF MALTA CHRISTMAS CARDS NOW AVAILABLE TO ORDER

Every year since the early 1980s, the Australian Association of the Order, has been providing an Annual Christmas Card for use by Members. It always maintained the same theme, an image of the Madonna and Child Jesus with his cousin John, very familiar to us as John the Baptist, the Patron Saint of our Order.

This year on the front cover we have The Madonna and Child with young Saint John the Baptist, by Polidoro da LANCIANO (Italian, c. 1515-1565), from the Kerry Stokes Collection, Perth.

On the back of the card is a note about the Order’s history and inside there is a Christmas greeting that reads:

‘May the Joy and Peace of Christmas be with you throughout the Year’

Members, Candidates and friends of the Australian Association are urged to support the spiritual and charitable works of the Order by ordering these exceptional cards.

\$45 for a pack of 10 (plus postage)



ORDER NOW  
shop.orderofmalta.org.au



## GROWING THE ORDER’S MISSION IN TIMOR-LESTE

The Order of Malta Medical Clinic in Timor-Leste has introduced regular nutrition classes, to assist in its missions to improve maternal and infant health and wellbeing.

The people of Timor-Leste continue to suffer the highest malnutrition rate in South-East Asia. Malnutrition is the single greatest contributor to premature death and disability as it weakens the immune system and can lead to a heightened risk of illness and disease.

The effects of chronic malnutrition are irreversible if it left untreated by the time a child reaches three years of age. An estimated 50 percent of children in Timor-Leste suffer from a form of malnutrition

called stunting. A recent report notes that Timorese are on average the world’s shortest people: with adult women reaching an average height of 4 feet 11½ inches.

Whilst poverty does impact nutrition, education is a key factor. The classes, led by the clinic’s staff, are a low cost but high benefit initiative, with a focus on ‘prevention rather than cure’.

However, whilst improved diet will benefit the attendees and their families, other environmental factors cannot be ignored.

“Unfortunately, medical services and adequate diet are only parts of the equation which enhances people’s capacity to flourish and live a full life” explains Order of Malta member and Clinic Manager, Alastair Furnival. “Other development factors, including availability of clean water and hygienic waste facilities, are holding back poorer Timorese: especially those outside the capital Dili. Integrated development strategies are needed to address the interlaced problems which lead to poor health outcomes in Timor-Leste”.

The next step in the Order’s mission in Timor-Leste is to bring together healthcare, nutrition and WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) into a single program.

The Clinic team in Dili recently hosted a representative from the Order’s International Relief Agency, Malteser International, to provide advice on how to develop an integrated development plan.

Malteser International has a wealth of experience working on the frontline helping communities recover from disasters, and longer-term initiatives to relieve suffering among the sick and the poor. This includes delivering programs in the remotest corners of the developing world.

The first objective identified from the visit was to identify a single underserved district on the outskirts of Dili, requiring the full mix of health, nutrition, and WASH support to focus efforts. Potential locations have already been identified within the current weekly clinic outreach schedule.

The second goal is to partner with a local Timorese NGO, to ensure that the project is not only achievable but sustainable. This will ensure that when the project is mature, the Order can pass on its continued management to a local partner and move on to new districts with unmet need.

“This initiative would be a natural extension of the capabilities, relationships and goodwill the Order has established since it first set foot in Timor-Leste” explains Alastair. “But as always, it will require ongoing financial support to make it a reality.”

Donations of \$2 and more to the Timor-Leste Medical Clinic are tax deductible for Australian taxpayers.

## LOURDES DAY MASSES

A pilgrimage to Lourdes represents one of the most significant moments in the spiritual life of the Order’s members and volunteers, and each year Lourdes dedicates the first weekend in May for the Annual Pilgrimage of the International Order of Malta.

For Australians unable to visit Lourdes, Lourdes Day Mass celebrations are held annually in around Australia where those attending receive a blessing for good health and a bottle of Lourdes water for their personal use.

All are welcome to attend these special celebrations.



### Upcoming Masses

✦ Saturday 2 December 2023, 10am at St Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney

✦ Saturday 10 February 2024, 10am at St Patrick’s Cathedral, Melbourne

## I WANT TO HELP

You can make a donation by visiting [www.orderofmalta.org.au/donate](http://www.orderofmalta.org.au/donate) or by completing this form and returning it in the reply paid envelope provided.

I am happy for the Order to allocate my donation to where the need is greatest; or

I would like to support:

- Community Care Kitchen Bondi
- Camp for Disabled Youth
- Medical Clinic Timor-Leste
- Coats for the Homeless

REMEMBER, GIFTS OF \$2 AND OVER ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

- Send me information about leaving the Order a bequest
- Please remove me from your mailing list.

Donations will be allocated to projects as requested by the donor. However if the needs of a project have already been met, we will allocate funds to another Order of Malta charitable activity.



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Please find enclosed a Cheque/ Money Order (payable to ‘The Order of Malta’) for \$  or,

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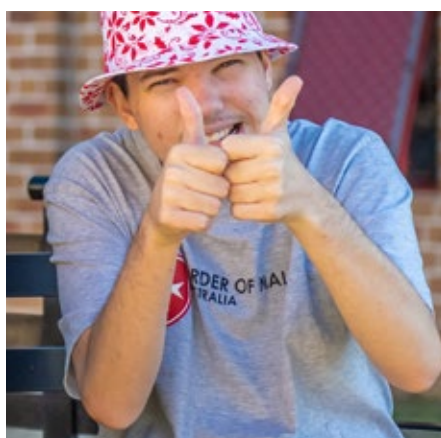
Frequency  Once only  Monthly Card Type  Visa  MasterCard

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Expiry Date  Cardholder name

Signature

## 2023 ORDER OF MALTA CAMP FOR DISABLED YOUTH



Youths with disabilities, and their families often experience higher levels of social isolation compared to the rest of the population. This can have a painful impact on their development of life skills and social wellbeing, therefore creating further barriers to participation in society.

The Order of Malta Camps for Disabled Youth aim to support its guests by helping them overcome personal barriers by providing a safe space to enjoy sports, have fun and interact with others, regardless of ability. They also forge a sense of community amongst the guests and volunteers, who come together through group activities, social events and both physical and mental challenges. The camps can also provide respite for families.

The 2023 Order of Malta Camp for Disabled Youth, to be hosted in Western Sydney in November is set to be our biggest yet. Expressions of Interest from attendees have come in from across Australia - a testament to the value of these camps that guests and their carers will travel interstate to attend.

The Order of Malta has received generous gifts to host the camp, however we are still short of our target.

Please consider a tax-deductible donation to the Order of Malta to allow us to offer this experience to all the disabled guests who have applied. We need to raise a further \$10,000 for the accommodation, meals and activities.