

MOTHER GOOSE PROGRAM

Keeping mums and their kids connected

There is nothing more important than the bond between parent and child. Sadly, this special relationship can be challenged when a family has been impacted by family violence and this can lead to life-long repercussions.

Family violence impacts, not only the mother, but also the child. Whilst the child may not be directly targeted, there is tension in the home environment leaving the child feeling unstable. Due to the family violence, the mother often doesn't have the ability to spend play-time with the child.

In 2018, Eastern Health FaPMI, the City of Whitehorse and Kara House formed a partnership to begin trialling the Parent Child Mother Goose (PCMG) Program at Box Hill Library. Each organisation provided different expertise including social work, enhanced maternal Child Health Nursing and our specialist family violence services.

Mother Goose is an evidence-based program that strengthens the attachment and interaction between parents and their young children by introducing them to the pleasure and power of using rhymes, songs and stories together. The rhymes, stories and songs can be used to cut through emotional and

stressful situations in daily life – like a toddler meltdown at the supermarket.

The group takes place on a weekly basis for 2 hours throughout school terms. The program is primarily aimed at parents who have experienced family violence or mental illness with children aged 0-5 years. The program is enjoyable and fun, and is available to participants free of charge.

At the end of the singing session the Specialist Family Violence Children's Practitioner is available for a one-on-one meeting with the mother to discuss the impacts of family violence on the child and assist with strategies to overcome these.

Our Kara House Specialist Family Violence Children's Practitioner says, *"Mother Goose allows uninterrupted time between mother and child, to nurture attachment and bonding through song, providing a sense of fun and normalcy back into the child's life."*

The Mother Goose Program plays an important part in creating a strong bond between mothers and their children who have been impacted by family violence. For these families early intervention programs can be the key to creating a happier and more positive future together.



Welcome

Our hearts go out to those affected by the recent bushfires and floods this year and we continue to be impressed boundless generosity of the Australian community. Kara House is incredibly lucky to experience the same generosity and kindness of the community year in and year out. A special thank you to our donors whose gifts really enriched the lives of our clients over the Christmas season.

Catherine Lockstone
CHAIR
KARA HOUSE BOARD

Family violence is the main driver of homelessness for women and children



Dr Angela Spinney, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Urban Transitions, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne and Board member of Kara House writes about the intersection of Domestic and family violence and homelessness.

Family violence is the main driver of homelessness for women and children in Australia. Many women who have experienced it are owners or tenants of a home that they have fled as a result of violence. It is quite extraordinary to think that a woman may be a victim of a crime and become homeless as a consequence while the perpetrator remains living in the property. Yet this is the norm.

For the past 45 plus years the refuge movement has done a terrific job of keeping women safe, but it means that we view the problem of family violence as being solved by removing the victims from their homes. It is too easy to think, "job done, they are safe now". This solution does not acknowledge that for many women and children being forced to leave your home and become homeless is deeply disturbing, and that subsequent substandard housing conditions compound the trauma of the violence.

We know that after fleeing, women and children are generally forced to make a series of moves between temporary accommodations, and that the loss of their home can have devastating and long-term consequences.

Entry into refuge and then transitional accommodation means two moves. Moving to private rental accommodation can lead to many more housing moves over time, as increasing rents force women and their children further from their communities and networks.

Choice is important. Some women may no longer feel safe at home, or may be so unhappy there they wish to leave and start afresh. There will also be circumstances when police advise women that they are

unable to ensure their safety. However, that is very much the exception.

Stay-at-home schemes require skilled workers to help women undertake effective risk assessments of their individual situation, assist with the provision of security upgrades to properties, provide ongoing support, and link people with empathetic peers who have had similar experiences.

Secondly, it relies upon ensuring that a perpetrator is removed and kept away. This relies in turn upon an appropriate and strongly enforced justice response to family violence. Family violence is not solved by hiding women away, but rather by a perpetrator being assured that there will be serious consequences for his actions. If perpetrators are dealt with strongly enough by the criminal justice system (including imprisonment, with heavy penalties for breaches of exclusion orders) then women can remain safely in their home.

Crisis accommodation will always be needed as an option, but let us work together to make sure that women who have experienced DFV are increasingly given real choice. I would love to hear your views.

This article is adapted from a piece I wrote for The Guardian newspaper at the time of the RCFV in July 2015 Domestic violence perpetrators deprive victims even of roof overhead, (24 July 2015) Dr Angela Spinney

The read the full article go online to www.karahouse.org.au >

Also available to download free of charge from the ANROWS website.

5 QUICK BITES

1. The average length of client stay in refuge is 6-8 weeks

Clients stay for about 6-8 weeks on average in our secure refuge accommodation, while others stay significantly longer.

2. Clients disclose multiple risk factors in their relationship

The leading risk factors disclosed are 'Controlling behaviors', 'Threatened harm' and 'Obsessive behavior'.

3. For many of our clients we use an interpreter to communicate with them

31% of our clients are from CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) backgrounds and often we use an interpreter service to communicate with them.

4. To keep them safe, we provide women in crisis with new phones

To ensure their safety we are able to supply clients with basic new phones through the WESNET Program when they arrive at the refuge.

5. 41% of the women we work with are aged between 30-39 years

We accommodate women from 18 -79 years and children 0-17 years no matter their background.

[Go online to find out more about what Kara House does >](#)

CASE STUDY

Matida

Matida, a 27 year old Sudanese woman was referred to Kara House with her daughter, Rayan 15 months for family violence crisis accommodation. Matida was 6 months pregnant.

Before coming into Kara House, Matida had minimal antenatal care as her husband, the perpetrator of the violence, limited her leaving the house. Despite being overwhelmed due to her current situation, Matida appeared well; however, the first priority was to refer her to the local hospital for a check-up and to book her in for antenatal care.

A few weeks after intake, Kara House transferred Matida and her daughter to a transitional property. We enrolled Rayan in a local childcare, to enable Matida to attend her many medical appointments without having to take her daughter. This allowed Matida to have some resting time at home and Rayan some play and socialising time with other children.

We contacted a service which provides recycled nursery supplies and ordered baby goods to be delivered to the THM, to enable Matida to set-up a nursery for her baby – cot, change table, double pram, toys, nappies, baby clothes and linen. Kara House linked Matida with the in-home Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Nurse, who could visit her in the home following the birth.

As Matida did not have family or friends who could care for Rayan when she was in hospital, we linked her with a service who would provide respite care. Matida delivered a healthy baby boy, Kajuac, and was discharged from hospital two days later. Rayan returned home the same day. Matida has recovered well, Kajuac is thriving, and Rayan loves having a baby brother.

On average, we provide support to **4 women per year** who give birth while in the care of Kara House

DONOR STORY CHRISTMAS 2019



Christmas time was extra special this year

This Christmas we were amazed by the generosity of our donors. Through their kind donations, we were able to provide every mother and child Christmas gifts and food to make their day extra special. Thanks to:

- Impact for women
- Rotaract Club of Boroondara
- Mums Supporting Children in Need
- Doncaster View Club
- Lucy Walsh and Alex
- Knitting for the Needy
- Rotary MASH
- Zonta Club of Melbourne's East
- Probus Club of Mont Albert North
- Eastern Emergency Relief
- Ferntree Gully View Club
- Rotary Club of Doncaster
- Full Gospel Assembly Melbourne



Now and next

Catherine Lockstone CHAIR – KARA HOUSE BOARD

2020 is looking to be a very busy and exciting year for Kara House.

Our garden project is progressing with the generous help of **The Rotary Club of Mont Albert and Surrey Hills**. A new retaining wall with tiered garden beds and drought resistant plants will greatly improve the back yard. This is a space our families come for quiet time and play time, and a beautiful environment is good for them in more ways than we can count.

Kara House will be hosting our first Corporate Volunteer Day with our wonderful partners at the **Dulux Group**. The Dulux volunteer team will paint one of our large rooms in the refuge, and will contribute to the garden project by painting the back courtyard walls of the refuge. This refresher is much needed and will improve the whole aspect of the refuge.

The new Kara House development is currently out to tender and the build will begin in the near future. We are talking to other refuge services who have recently been through a similar project to learn from their experience and get insights into best practice in developing the site.

Our student placement program has commenced. This year we will offer field placement to four students who are completing their Diploma of Community Services or Bachelor of Social Work. The program enhances our capacity for service as well as educating emerging family violence practitioners for the sector.

Thank you to everyone for your ongoing support and creative generosity.

Catherine



Thank you for your kindness

We'd like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their support, kindness and generosity.



- Forest Hill College Leo Club
- Stephen Crosby
- Susan Goldie
- Andrea Dillion
- James Maurer
- Sook Ch Ng
- Echelon Planning
- Waverley Day View Club
- Liahua He

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the **CHRISTMAS PRAM APPEAL**



Thanks to Rotary MASH, Stephen Crosby, Susanne Goldie and everyone who contributed to our Christmas Pram Appeal. A pram plays a pivotal role in allowing mothers get out and about to access services like supermarkets, chemists and schools. Enough was raised to purchase 5 prams over the next year.

Interested in finding out more?

Please contact **Ruby Lampard – Development Officer** Email ruby.l@karahouse.org.au or phone **1800 900 520**



Health
and Human
Services

We would like to thank the Department of Health and Human Services who provide our operational funding under the Funding and Service Agreement and to the staff in the Eastern Region who have assisted with their donation collections and ongoing support.

Kara House is a child safe and child focused organisation.

Kara House respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the traditional owners of the land we work on and pay respect to their Elders past, present and future generations.

