

Enjoy catching up on all things
Family Life!

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Dear volunteer,

Welcome to the first edition of our Volunteer Newsletter for 2025! We certainly ended 2024 with a bang, expanding our Op Shop family with the opening of two new stores! Our Brighton Community Store, located in the heart of bustling Church Street is celebrating its grand opening on Friday, 14th of March – join us for a glass of bubbles! We also launched THE EDIT, a unique concept store featuring themed, ever-changing collections. Don't miss our latest Slumber Party Edit, offering gorgeous linen, loungewear, and more!

We're thrilled to welcome many [new volunteers](#) to the team – be sure to say hi and show them your wonderful Family Life Op Shop hospitality.

Looking ahead, we're hosting new Volunteer Information Sessions, so please check your inbox for details. There is also a great opportunity to contribute to shaping Family Life's new Strategic Plan – again, you will have received an email inviting you to participate in a focus group this month.

We also encourage you to spread the word about our [Site Tours](#) for anyone interested in volunteering with us. A great way to get a 'behind the scenes' glimpse into your amazing work. We currently have [retail positions available](#) to join our stores – feel free to share this opportunity!

Thanks for being part of our journey - here's to a fantastic 2025!



National Volunteer Week 2025

National Volunteer Week (NVW) is held this year from the 19th-25th of May. NVW is Australia's largest celebration of volunteering, highlighting the important role of volunteers in our community.

The theme for this NVW is "Connecting Communities", celebrating the power of bringing people together through volunteering opportunities. Volunteering creates lasting relationships that enrich lives and strengthen communities. Join us in May as we explore how giving to others fosters community engagement, connection and belonging.

To celebrate NVW, Family Life will be hosting a lunch for all of our volunteers to get together and celebrate the incredible impact you bring to our organisation. Keep an eye out on your inbox for a Save the Date and details for this year's lunch.



Donation Card Drive Success: A Little Goes A Long Way

A heartfelt thank you to our amazing Op Shop community, staff and volunteers for your incredible support during our Social Enterprise Donation Card campaign throughout December 2024.

Throughout the month, \$5 donation cards were available for purchase at our Family Life Op Shops, with all funds raised going directly toward our annual Community Christmas toy and food drive. We were overwhelmed by the generosity shown, with 1,521 cards sold and \$7,605 raised! This was an increase of over \$1,500 compared to the previous year.

A big congratulations to the Mornington Op Shop, who sold the most donation cards (220!). And also to new store THE EDIT, who had the most creative display of cards. Both stores received prizes to celebrate their wins.

Thank you to all our volunteers for promoting this valuable initiative for local families!



Our Response to Family Violence: An All-of-Family Approach

At Family Life, we focus on an all-of-family approach to addressing family violence, recognising that true and lasting change comes from supporting every member of the family. By

offering tailored support to both individuals and the entire family unit, we create pathways for healing, growth and transformation.

From early intervention to specialised programs, we offer services that provide families with the tools they need to thrive. For those impacted by family violence, we provide trauma-informed care that helps them feel safe, supported, and empowered to rebuild. For those causing harm, we deliver programs that encourage personal responsibility, promote behaviour change, and nurture healthier relationships.

As part of this commitment, we are excited to announce the development of an innovative new philanthropically funded program, designed to address the evolving needs of families navigating the challenges of family violence.

Home In Focus Program

Home In Focus is a comprehensive all-of-family support program tailored to the unique needs of each family member through a mix of office-based and in-home sessions. Its goal is to address family violence and harmful behaviours while uncovering how past experiences influence parenting and family relationships. The ultimate goal is to break the cycle of family violence and intergenerational trauma, creating a safe, nurturing home environment where children can thrive.

The program places a strong emphasis on the voices and wellbeing of children, equipping families with tools to cultivate healthier, safer interactions. Tailored interventions for fathers provide a non-judgmental space to reflection their actions, understand the impact on their family, and foster personal growth. By addressing the root causes of family violence, Home in Focus supports parents to rebuild trust and develop positive, violence-free family dynamics.

[Click here](#) for more info on Home in Focus



Celebrating Yvonne's 15 years of Dedication

Yvonne's remarkable journey with Family Life began 15 years ago, sparked by a recommendation from two friends. Initially unsure what to expect, she took the leap and discovered a rewarding experience.

"I enjoy working with the team; we have fun together." Yvonne shared "I also love buying and finding shoes that fit!" But it's not just about the shoes. Yvonne cherishes the memories she has made volunteering. Her favourite memory was participating on the Chelsea Fashion catwalk, where she showcased three different outfits. Another fond highlight was the Christmas Carols Special, where the community came together to sing carols outside the store.

Yvonne wholeheartedly recommends volunteering at Family Life: "Go do it! Every week is different, and you meet new people." She enjoys sorting the donations and finding hidden treasures. Yvonne even found a special cup and saucer for her volunteering morning tea break, although she cheerfully recollected that it quickly got sold, but it did not her take long to find another.

Yvonne's love for volunteering is shared by her family. Her six great-grandchildren (and one due soon) are always eager to hear about her latest finds in the store. After 15 incredible years, Yvonne still

looks forward to her shifts at the Mordialloc store each week. Her dedication and enthusiasm are truly appreciated. Please join us in celebrating Yvonne's remarkable commitment to Family Life.



Store Spotlight – Elwood Community Op Shop

When we asked Elizabeth what she loved about the Elwood Community Store, she shared the following (thank you Elizabeth!)

"The Elwood Op Shop has a broad appeal across a range of age groups. It seems to be becoming a 'go to' place to find something a little different and of excellent quality. We are very fortunate to regularly receive high quality donated items.

"Deb, our talented Elwood Manager has excellent window display skills, earning praise from passersby and customers alike. People regularly come in saying they had spotted something eye-catching in the window when passing after hours and were in to take a closer look. It keeps us Volunteers on our toes, eager to see what's fresh and fabulous on the mannequins!

"There are regular feel-good moments when you witness the joy that a customer experiences when they find an item that they love, even if they don't end up taking it home. It's fun being part of the conversations between customers and staff, creating a vibrant atmosphere in the store. I don't think too many people leave their house in the

morning with a 'must buy a vintage upholstered rocking chair' on their to-do list, but an item like that in the front window certainly gets people talking!"

A favourite Elwood store memory was also shared by our store manager, Deb:

"A young Irish backpacker came into our shop for a t-shirt, she had little money as she hadn't found a job yet. Whilst shopping she found a faux fur jacket that looked amazing on her. She absolutely loved it! But as she explained, "I must be practical as I simply can't afford it, so I won't be able to buy it". Then out of the blue another older customer says, "Yes, but I can!" At first, we all thought she meant she would buy it for herself. Then she explained, "I have the money and can afford to buy it for you... let me give you a gift". At first the young backpacker refused, but the woman insisted. She said, "Let me feel good knowing that I helped you on your journey and that the jacket will always hold a special place in your memories of Melbourne". Sold to the young Irish backpacker along with a plain white t-shirt! Community connection at its finest!"

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