



# Newsletter | February 2019

**My Forever Family NSW**

## Welcome to the February edition of the My Forever Family NSW Members' Newsletter.

It's been a busy time as we've launched our very first campaign aimed at informing friends in the LGBTI\* community on foster care opportunities. You'll see we've attended Mardi Gras Fair Day in Sydney on 17th February. This event celebrates rainbow families and attracts over 80,000 people each year.

We're also working tirelessly to support our wonderful carers with additional training. Please check our calendar below. We have training sessions across New South Wales and are always keen to have your suggestions and feedback. We also

expect to launch our Online Training through the My Forever Family website very soon. Watch this space!

There are approximately 17,387\*\* children in out-of-home care in NSW. With your help, we can spread the word and inspire potential carers to foster a child. That's why My Forever Family NSW is always keen to hear from you. Please send through any stories, questions and/or feedback to our team anytime. Your experiences will help inspire others to follow your example.

Thank you for being part of the My Forever Family NSW journey, and caring for kids!

### Peter Goslett

Head of Operations & Advocacy

\* LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex)

\*\* Data supplied by Family and Community Services

## FAIR DAY 2019

On Sunday 17th February the My Forever Family team headed out to the Sydney Mardi Gras Fair Day event at Victoria Park. With over 80,000 people at the event and more than 200 stalls, it was a great day to showcase the good work MFF does, as well as spread the word to the LGBTI community about how they can become foster carers.

Located near the Doggywood event, and across the way from Taronga Zoo's exhibit, the team was in a great position to hand out bags of goodies and meet and greet the thousands of people who came past.

Though the team had a tonne of goodies to hand out (like jelly beans, bags and colouring pencils) the real draw of the day was the fantastic photo booth.

With a shimmering backdrop, a myriad of props and our very talented booth operators, My Forever Family saw a range of happy families, couples, singles (and even some cute pets) come through and get some happy snaps.

The day was a huge success; with lots of fun had by both My Forever Family and the people who stopped for a chat to learn more about the foster care space. If you happened to come by on the day and snapped a photo, be sure to tag us on Facebook or Instagram so we can see.



Share your life. Foster a Child.  
myforeverfamily.org.au



## MFF TRAINING CALENDAR 2019

Our training calendar for February to April 2019 is now up on our **website**. Have a look at what training is available in your area and book your place online.

Information about Carer Support Groups around NSW will now be located on a new page currently being developed on our website. If you are involved in a group that we are not aware of please contact us and we can add your contact information and meeting dates.

## FAQs

### What does the Carer Support Team do?



#### Answer:

The Carer Support Team exists to help carers provide children and young people with the stability, care and nurture they need to thrive.

We do this by focussing on three key areas: recruiting new carers, supporting both new and experienced carers, and advocating within the sector to address issues that are causing problems for carers.

#### Recruitment

You may have seen our social media and advertising campaigns encouraging more people to consider becoming carers. When an interested person calls or emails us, or talks to us at an event, we take the time to answer their questions, find out more about them and refer them to a foster care agency in their area.

#### Support

It won't be a surprise to hear that the better-supported carers are, the better the outcomes are for the kids they care for. Our Carer Support Team make a real difference supporting carers who support vulnerable children by providing guidance and listening ears.

Making sure our carers not only feel supported but are given useful information and advice about their rights and responsibilities is a key part of our work.

Sometimes when a situation becomes more complicated than usual, we support carers more directly. Below you can read some glowing feedback from a carer who recently received individual support from one of our team members.

#### Advocacy

We also work alongside various partners in the sector, including FaCS, foster care agencies, and the Office of the Children's Guardian.

MFF collects data\* about the types of problems and questions that we help carers with – so that we can identify common issues, and advocate with our sector partners to address these issues.

We want to retain the wonderful carers that we have – those who have already done the hard yards and have so much more to offer kids. This is where our recruitment, support and advocacy come full circle – the better we can support and advocate for carers, the more likely they are to continue in their fantastic roles and inspire others around them to step up and become carers.

\* Data is de-identified in accordance with our privacy policies

## REAP THE BENEFITS WITH MFF DISCOUNTS!

Registered foster and kinship carers, guardians and people who have adopted children from out-of-home care can be entitled to some great discounts when they shop!

Stores include Woolworths, Coles, Caltex, Kmart, Target, Hoyts Cinemas, Bunnings, JB Hi Fi, Priceline, and David Jones to name a few.

Other benefits include access to advocacy, support and information, and free entry into most MFF and partner events.

## Carer Case Study

## A PROUD GRANDMA

Sarah has been the sole carer for her four grandchildren for many years. She told My Forever Family about the pride she has in her oldest grandson Caiden.

My grandson Caiden has been in my care since he was five. He is now 16 years old and is the most wonderful young man. He has come through a lot of adversities and really turned his life around.

It has not been easy for Caiden – he went into foster care for six months until I could have him come and live with me. It was very hard for him to understand. I had to give him lots of reassurance, and he saw a counsellor for a while.

He has tried to have a relationship with his mother and with his father, but he decided not to pursue these as it was too hard on him.

Two of his favourite teachers left the school last year, and he was really upset and said to me that he wanted to leave school.

I said to him, "Why do you want to leave? Those teachers want the best for you and are hoping you stay and do really well!" So he stayed, and will do his HSC in 2020. He keeps winning awards and has just won \$2000 for his school in a competition against four other schools.

He goes from one milestone to another and is seen as a leader at his school. He was chosen by the principal to go on a school trip to the Philippines and he had a wonderful time. He's also travelled to America with his school, he plays tennis, and has great bunch of friends.

Caiden's three cousins live with us and now he is helping them to shape their lives to become better.

I have kept all the information about his awards, holidays and other important things in his life and have put them into books. Now when I look at these, I see a motivated young person changing his life for the better.



## TELL US YOUR STORY!

Why did you become a carer? Do you speak another language? Are you a city carer? Regional carer? Do you have a child in care, or a sibling group?

We'd love to hear from you, whatever your story. Please tell us about your experience as a foster or kinship carer, guardian or adoptive parent.

We are looking for real stories from all types of people. Your story will inspire others to open their homes and their hearts to a child.

All stories will protect your identity and that of the child/children mentioned. Please send your story (up to 300 words) via [evelyn.santoro@myforeverfamily.org.au](mailto:evelyn.santoro@myforeverfamily.org.au)

## PURSUING PERMANENCY OPTIONS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

We often receive questions about the process for surrounding restoration, guardianship and adoption.

There is a hierarchy of care options for children in out of home care in NSW. Restoration is the first priority (after family preservation) that will be reviewed, and forms part of best practice case management. This should have been considered when the child first entered out of home care, and will typically have already been explored before the option of guardianship or adoption is considered for a child.

When applying for guardianship or adoption of a child who has already been in your foster/kin care long term, the permanency options will need to be shown to be in the best interest of the child and evidence will need to be demonstrated to this effect. Contact with family members is also a key factor in considering guardianship or adoption.

This is a complex topic, so should you require more detailed information, check our Training Calendar to consider attending a Guardianship session, or call our Carer Support team, or visit the Family Community Services website to find out more about Becoming a guardian and Adopting a child.

**CARER**   
**SUPPORT LINE**  
**1300 782 975**  
Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm

**CARER**   
**SUPPORT**  
[enquiries@myforeverfamily.org.au](mailto:enquiries@myforeverfamily.org.au)  
[myforeverfamily.org.au](http://myforeverfamily.org.au)

The My Forever Family NSW newsletter is produced by the Communications team.

Disclaimer: The information and advice provided in this document/website is general information. It may not apply to a particular case, and as such, must not be taken as legal advice.

## SPREAD THE WORD IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

### Help others to consider the foster carer path.

Please download our posters and pin them on noticeboards in your local community groups. We also have ads you can include in school, community groups and local council newsletters. Grassroots action is the most effective!

If you need ads in picture format (jpg) please email us.

## WHAT INFORMATION CAN I SHARE WITH MY FOREVER FAMILY?

MFF staff hear a lot of confidential details from carers about the children and young people in their care. We need to find out as much as we can to provide you with support. Carers can share information with MFF as part of our agreement with the NSW Government.

In turn, MFF complies with NSW privacy legislation\*. In other words, we keep information about children in your care confidential.

\* We must share information with authorities if we have concerns for the safety of a child or young person.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR CARER SUPPORT TEAM!

I would like to let My Forever Family know that I requested a support person for a meeting I was having with my agency.

I have been having multiple issues with my agency and believed I couldn't do the meeting without this support. One of the Carer Support Team came to my meeting and I cannot fault her. We met before the meeting to go over different points and for her to give me points that may need to be covered. I believe if she wasn't there at the meeting the outcome would have continued to be negative and with her there, I believe the agency acted in a different manner and that all points were able to be discussed.



**My Forever Family NSW**