

Annual Report of the Chair to the supporters of the Katina Woodruff Children's Foundation, INC for the fiscal year 2020-2021.

This annual report will differ from previous reports, but that is not surprising after a year of COVID-19 fuelled uncertainty for all organizations, I am sure. However, the changes we have experienced have not been negative, but have simply demonstrated the resilience of the work to which we are committed, the creativity not only of Katina as the practitioner, but the that of each the membership of the Foundation, and the abilities and commitment each of the committee members brings to our joint mission.

I am reminded, first of all, of why we exist. Our charter and purpose clearly state:

3 (1) The objects of the Association are to assist and provide direct relief of such suffering, distress, misfortune or helplessness suffered by young migrant and refugee children recently arrived in Australia and young children who are hospitalised due to terminal or chronic illness by facilitating and promoting their adjustment and wellbeing, including-

- (a) Assisting young migrant and refugee children and their families in the children's cultural, linguistic and ethos adjustments while adapting to Australian life;
- (b) Monitoring and facilitating the transition of young migrant and refugee children into the standard classroom, first in the ESL (English as a Second Language) school system and subsequently in standard schooling;
- (c) Assisting young children who are hospitalised due to terminal or chronic illness to transition beyond the fears of their current circumstances through the "Pretend Play" strategies of imagination, fun and creative expression; and
- (d) Bringing and providing temporary relief to young children who are hospitalised due to terminal or chronic illness through quiet activities customised to each child's individual needs, disabilities and energy levels.

The particular needs of the refugee and migrant children have demanded our full attention and rightfully so when we realize that we are unique in this space in the services we provide and the nature of our approach. If the needs in the migrant space were ever to diminish, we are reminded that the mission also includes other children in need of Katina's approach, in the case of our constitution – the children listed above who also face uncertain future or shocking pasts due to extreme illness.

Incorporated on the 21st of September, 2004, the Foundation has had 17 continuous years of uninterrupted service with, we believe, unparalleled success in outcomes in the lives of children and in its worth being recognized by those whom work alongside us with these same children. Our website records some of these endorsements.

This past year, despite the COVID-19 issues, has not slowed nor faltered. As I reported mid-year, Katina has been able to serve children from 13 different nations in settling into their new lives. This, of course, has included support to and communication with the families or

carers of the children. New opportunities are even now arising as I write this report. For instance, you would have read in the news of Children who were separated from their parents for months on end because the parents had come ahead of the family to gain employment, secure a home and prepare life before sending for their children. When it was time to send for the children borders had closed and the children were not allowed to come to Australia from India – a full three years transpired with the children being separated from their parents, they were isolated in India and the parents were already here. Living with grandparents has been a wonderful fall-back position but, as the news reported, there was trauma both for the parents and for the children as they did not know when they would finally be reunited. The children had not attended school been had been home schooled by the grandparents with their iPads, so upon arrival in Australia they had to adjust to school, school in English, bonding with parents again etc. It is feeling strange for both the parents as their children were missing their grandmother and wanted to be with her rather than immediately bonding with parents again. I have not been able to share with you is this news update from our vantage point. I have learned that Katina has recently been working with these children and facilitating their moving beyond that shock of uncertainty and parental presence to readjusting to becoming a part of a new language setting, family unit and schooling experience. Both the children and parents are benefiting from the service we provide.

Another rapid change has been the sudden changes in Afghanistan with the horrors of people at risk because they supported our forces and the forces of other world powers during the conflict there. While some families have been evacuated safely in the final days before Australian forces left Afghanistan, it is shocking to think that some have been left behind to face a hostile enemy who seems bent on revenge without our support. However, many were brought out. One such family has just arrived in our area: The first Afghanistan family with whom Katina has worked since the recent political changes has just arrived in our area – they were evacuated from Afghanistan with only days to spare, not knowing if they would make the deadline or not. The trauma of this experience affected the whole family.

Katina was called into the office of the Deputy Principal as this family enrolled their oldest child into school in a strange language and strange country: She said “I would like to introduce you to Katina.” She told this family that she believed Katina could make a difference to their little daughter as she settled into her new experiences. She introduced Katina, explained what Katina does, and asked the family if they would be interested in having Katina work with their daughter as she settled in. Not only were they interested, but they were delighted and relieved to see what a difference not only the wonderful IEC staff and administration could offer but, further, the individual approach that Katina could bring to serve their family. The first session has already occurred with great success and to the delight of the little girl. THIS IS WHY WE EXIST!

Now, as I conclude this report, my thoughts turn to you, the supporters.

Firstly, I have been reminded how committed not only Katina is to this cause, but the same commitment from the supporters of the Foundation: You have persisted in your support for which we are so thankful.

Secondly, we are ever exploring new ways for people to assist: Some people have asked about options for crowd funding and projects that they could sponsor on our behalf such as marathon participation, social media campaigns etc. In the past we participated in the EverDay hero platform that some have used, but that facility no longer exists. We have trialled the GiveNow Crowd funding site on one such trial event and are happy to share the details with anyone interested in using this function to help them help us.

I cannot thank you enough for each of your contributions and encouragements to our joint mission: Each of you has given in a year that has many voices calling for support, and we thank you for selecting the Katina Woodruff Children's Foundation as a cause in which you have invested. Thank you each one. It has been a joy to serve this cause for this past year. You have contributed to this joy.

Sincerely Submitted with thanks:

Robert L Woodruff BSc, MDiv, DMin, PhD
Chair