



10 Year Anniversary Presentation

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We received a card in celebration of our anniversary, it read, "Big journeys begin with small steps". It only seems like yesterday that Mike and I waited on the front veranda of 80 John Street, waiting for someone to come, so we could support them on the first step of their journey. Little knowing that 10 years on, not only our clients, but our volunteers and community at large, have all been on this journey together.

Collectively, and only possible with the support of our community partners, it's been a mission on a scale that we could have never imagined. To date, roughly 480 supporters have contributed to our mission on at least one occasion which could be monetary donations, providing pantry supplies, vouchers for petrol or groceries, and material support. This doesn't include repeated donations or the people that anonymously leave groceries on our front porch. We have registered 1160 people and have had roughly 26 active volunteers at any given time. 5 members of our current team have served an average 7 years, a testament to the dedication and commitment they hold. Thousands of hours undertaking numerous tasks, many hours behind the scenes that most are not aware of but are essential for operating this much needed support system in our community.

Our first statistics in October 2013, indicated that we provided pantry support for 5 men, who also needed financial, legal and counselling assistance. Jump ahead a few years, and we are now serving on average 80 people over 3 days, providing this year so far, \$200,000 worth of grocery items, \$34,000 worth of vouchers (opal, petrol and, grocery cards) and in August alone, we registered 41 new people.

There is no doubt its hard work, its messy, its emotional, and its hectic by no stretch of the word, but I can confidently say on behalf of the team, it's totally worth it. We asked our clients and the team, to jot down a couple of sentences, describing their feelings about the centre. Here are a few of the comments: I think this place saves people, love the

volunteers, love the friendships, I like the feeling of being a family, a safe space to be yourself and feel accepted, there's no judgement, everyone is welcome, it has made a huge difference in my life.

Our team commented on the joy of seeing lives changed, connections made, I love helping others, I feel like a make a difference, it's a friendly inclusive atmosphere with people that have a passion to serve others, I feel useful and valued.

These are all incredibly powerful statements, expressing feelings of reassurance, of a sense of community, support, fun, safety and value. Inclusion, respect, purpose, appreciated, useful and accepted. It's a little piece of heaven for anyone who comes through our doors.

2020 was a year not to be forgotten. In January the Australia Day Awards hosted by Camden Council were held. We were voted Community Centre of the Year. What a wonderful time of celebration we had. The week was full of well wishes from our clients, supporters, service providers partners, family and friends. This acknowledgement was significant to all of us, it further united us as a team and ignited another level of passion to serve our community.

Little did we know that we would need every bit that passion, when the world experienced the Covid-19 Pandemic. How can we continue to support our most vulnerable when we are all in the same boat. Hence the birth of our own Click and Collect style of pantry support. The phones ran hot, while the team worked on connecting with clients, to develop a modified version of this service delivery. It all came together with the backing of our incredible supporters who didn't hesitate to offer support even when they themselves were impacted.

People could access contactless donation and collections and it ran without a hitch. We have continued with this service for people who are unwell or cannot collect during our opening hours. The team made themselves available to chat with our clients over the phone and to give them a sense of connection during forced isolation. This was a lifeline for many who were incredibly scared about the future, completely overwhelming those who already experienced depression, anxiety and isolation.

Then came the two floods in 2022, particularly the July event that brought us to our own Turning Point. Where do we start? and without hesitation, the team were up to their elbows in filth with pretty much everything in the cottage, soaking wet and ruined. With Mikes support with flood relief applications, our landlord got straight to work. He and Mikes team produced what we operate in today. Better than we could have ever expected.

We have operated out of 3 locations during our 10 years. Each move was met with eagerness, as the team packed up multiple times without hesitation, settling now at 15 Edward Street where we hope to be for as long as possible. We have actually moved 4 times, as we spent 3 wonderful months at the Narralling Centre, run by Baptist Care. We relocated to this

amazing community centre with the generous support of their team, during the period when our cottage was being renovated. This is now where we run our Christmas Appeal.

Our greatest successes have been witnessing the transformations of the clients who entrust their stories with us, who bare their souls, their shame and their traumas. This is a process, and a lengthy one at that, as nobody reveals their full story all at once. Trust needs to be gained, and it's a privilege for the team to experience this raw level of vulnerability. To be entrusted with this information and allowed to speak goodness into another person's life is not taken lightly. The proof of this is seen with the growth of both our Men's Community Breakfast Program and Women's Support Network. Both these groups have doubled in size, roughly 35 men each Friday and the women's group having to be split into roughly 2 groups of 20.

These men and women now connect in their own time. They go fishing, have a coffee and offer transport to the centre. They have become their own support network. We feel this is a great achievement as no one should do life alone.

We have added 2 new resources to our service provision. We are now a Work Development Order Sponsor and an EAPA provider. Community needing to access this support will be experiencing financial hardship amongst other challenges, which will bring them to the centre where we can unravel what has led them to this position, and then offer the support they may need. We are always on the lookout for opportunities for people to access our service.

And the icing on the cake is the long-awaited acquirement of a community bus. We have on order a 12-seater bus from LDV, thanks to the generous donations received through separate fundraising, you know who you are, our sincere thanks. This bus will add a new dynamic to our service. We will be able to offer some transportation, drop off hampers to vulnerable people not able to access the centre due to their mental illness and utilise the bus to collect Secondbite supplies from our local Coles Camden store. We will provide an outreach service throughout the Camden LGA to areas we are aware of that are experiencing complex welfare issues and venture out of town where public transport is minimal.

Over these 10 years, we have had experienced much joy and sadness. With life, so unpredictable and fragile, we sadly farewelled a number of clients. Some after long battles with health issues, and some sadly could not live with their demons any longer. Mike and I spent time with the families of these people, supporting them through their grief and conducting funeral and memorial services. We also lost 3 volunteers through sudden illness, each of them playing a significant role, all long-term team members and dearly missed.

Today there are some significant team members who were unable to attend due to travel commitments and prior engagements. Mike and I wish to acknowledge each of them and the team who are here today. We also wish to acknowledge the Turning Point Board, who meet throughout the year, overseeing the accountability of our organisation as it meets its charity

requirements. They are incredibly supportive and encouraging. We are a unique team, all with a heart for community, to serve and to listen, not with their own agenda, but with a greater cause first and foremost. The consistency of our team has made a significant impact on the growth of our clients in so many ways, enabling them to reach their Turning Point and move forward with their lives, to live the best life they can.

We have been incredibly fortunate to meet individuals and families who have entrusted us with their giftings, for without these, we could not open the doors. Dr Arthur and Mrs Merril Ban for trusting us with this mission back in October 2013 when they generously provided use of the cottage at 80 John Street to open the doors of Turning Point.

Sincerest thanks to the McIntosh family, for their operational support and fundraising opportunities. Thank you to the volunteers, both past and present, for their gift of time, tireless physical, administrative and organisational support. Thanks to our "Friends of Turning Point", our supporters, made up of schools, social groups, church congregations, day care centres, businesses, organisations, families and individuals, who keep on giving, who can see the worth in our mission. And thank you to my husband Mike, for his partnership in this journey, encouragement, support and his passion to see people reach their full potential, no matter what that looks like.

Turning Point is a place for everyone, and we can't wait to see what happens next on this incredible journey that we take together.

Thankyou.

Some further thankyou's before you continue to enjoy the afternoon

Thanks to Chris Boardman from Camden's Argyle Deli for our delicious spread of tasty treats
To Teresa, Manager from Woolworths Camden, for the donations of refreshments and supplies towards today's celebration

Trish and Mark, the Honey Slippers, our local entertainers

The Turning Point volunteers for all the leg work and organising

Ian and Susie McIntosh for the use of this incredible space, more leg work and gorgeous decorations from the Denbigh garden

Thanks you to the volunteers coordinating the car parking

Thank you to Luke, Mat and Alex for being so willing to share their journeys with us.