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Statewide celebrations a chance to acknowledge and grow Mallee Family Care's Foster Care community

As Foster Care Week 2024 approaches, Mallee Family Care is celebrating the extraordinary contributions of its foster care community and calling for more people to consider opening their homes to children in need.

Running from September 8 to 14, Foster Care Week is a state-wide event that highlights the invaluable role foster carers play in setting the foundation for positive futures for children and young people in care.

Mallee Family Care CEO Teresa Jayet paid tribute to the agency's carers, acknowledging their compassion and commitment.

"Our Foster Carers are ordinary people. But the difference they make is quite extraordinary," Ms Jayet said.

"From providing stable home environments and ensuring children get to and from school safely each day, to helping young people develop self-confidence and navigate complex challenges, we see firsthand the transformative impact foster care can have."

"We have an amazing group of carers providing respite, short term, long term and emergency placements, but unfortunately more carers are needed right across the state of Victoria, and indeed here in the Mallee," Ms Jayet said.

During the last twelve months Mallee Family Care has supported more than 100 children through its foster care program, and the agency expects demand will continue to grow in the coming years.

"One of the biggest challenges we face is that many of our carers are retiring after years of dedicated service so we need to ensure that there are homes available when vulnerable children need them most."

Swan Hill-based carer Deri Singleton urged people to consider exploring Foster Caring.

"I think if you're thinking about it, it's best to just go for it," Deri said.

"So much of what we do in today's society is really meaningless, but fostering is one of the most meaningful things you could ever do."



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Deri said it was incredibly rewarding to see a child settle and become comfortable when staying in her home.

“When a child is finally relaxed enough to play, or you take them to a family event and they say that they’ve ‘never seen a community quite like this before’; that’s when the reality of what you’re doing hits home,” she said.

During her five-year journey as a carer, Deri says Mallee Family Care’s support - which includes ongoing training, a 24-hour phone service, practical help and regular opportunities to connect with other carers - has been invaluable.

“The beauty of fostering with Mallee Family Care is you do have constant support for both yourself and the child.”

All types of people can and do become carers, including couples with and without children, single people and those whose own children may have grown up and left home.

“Our wonderful carers come from a variety of backgrounds and range in age from their 20s through to their 60s. We have people who support children on weekends and others who have children in their homes for the long term,” Ms Jayet said.

Mallee Family Care will host a special event in Mildura to celebrate the contributions of local carers and raise awareness about foster caring later this month.

Foster Care in Conversation will be held at Powerhouse Hall from 1pm to 3pm on Wednesday 18 September. This free event will include a high-tea style afternoon tea and a panel discussion facilitated by Mallee Family Care CEO Teresa Jayet.

“We’re delighted to be welcoming Foster Care Association of Victoria CEO Samantha Hauge back to our region to be part of our Foster Care Week celebrations and to provide insights on the sector through a state-wide lens,” Ms Jayet said.

Swan Hill-based Foster Carer Leanne Ibbs, Aimee Nairn, who experienced the foster system as a child, and Tracey Sherlock, who grew up with many foster siblings will join Samantha Hauge as panellists for the event.

“It is our hope that this event will showcase the incredible contributions of our foster carers and provide an insight into being a carer for those who may be contemplating the role.”

To register to attend or find out more information call Ange Johnstone at Mallee Family Care on 03 5023 5966 or email ajohnstone@malleefamilycare.com.au

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