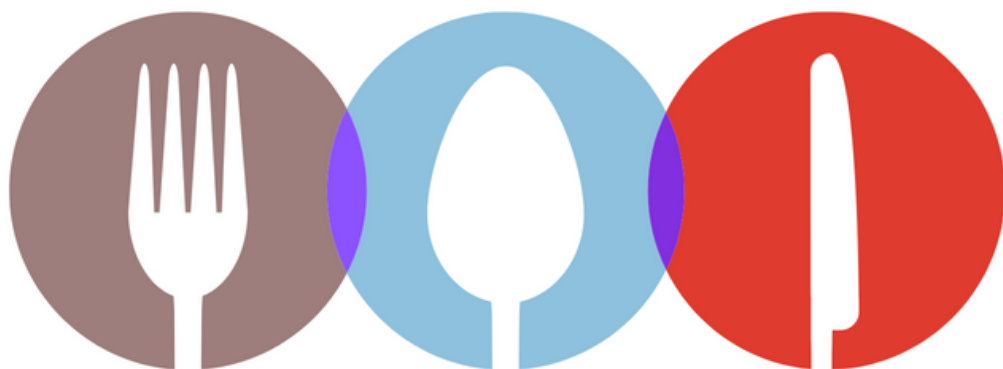




EXTEND YOUR TABLE

AND RAISE FUNDS FOR KIDS IN OUT OF HOME CARE



Your impact

As a guest or host of an Extend your Table event, you'll likely have donated to A Better Life For Foster Kids. Read on for information on our key services and impacts to find out how your donation helps kids in care and their carers

A Better Life For Foster Kids provides:

- Crisis Cases with everything needed to get kids through their first week in care
- Furniture and equipment for foster and kinship carers, young adults transitioning out of care, families being reunified with children and families that need to relocate due to family violence
- Advocacy, support and referrals for carers
- Others Do Care fund, providing financial support for children in care to take part in normal childhood activities
- Annual camp for carers and children.



Crisis Cases: Comfort and Dignity in the Midst of Trauma

The experiences of most children who are removed from their homes for their own safety are unimaginable for most of us. While many take with them from their homes deeply traumatic experiences and stresses, the majority of them are not able to take any of their belongings. A Better Life For Foster Kids estimates 85% of children removed from their homes and placed into out of home care with foster or kinship carers arrive with nothing but the clothes they are wearing.

These children have to adapt to new surroundings and people while processing what has just happened to them: it isn't fair that they need to do it without the comfort of a toy, well fitted and age-appropriate clothes or other daily necessities.

A Better Life For Foster Kids was founded by Heather Baird, who herself grew up in the foster system, to ensure children entering foster care or being moved to a new care placement are provided with the **essential items they need to get them through their first week of care with dignity.**

We provide Crisis Cases, a wheeled suitcase stocked with approximately fifty age and gender-appropriate items to case workers and carers in Victoria, ensuring they have what they need for the child immediately.

Too many times to count, we've had children arrive with nothing but what they are wearing, but this time stood out... Late at night I had a sibling group of four children come into emergency care. All children arrived with nothing but what they had on their backs, which was very little. Three were wearing shorts and singlets in the middle of winter, no jocks, socks or shoes or anything, and the youngest, a little girl had only a very oversized jumper (possibly a parent's) and nothing underneath. **These children deserve someone to take a little bit of time just to think of their needs for a second and give them a little dignity.**" - Foster Carer

"Of all my horrible experiences from the many orphanages and many foster homes I lived in from around 2 years old, **the experience that stuck in my mind was going to school in rags and all the other kids knowing that we were "homies" from the way we were dressed.** I remember wishing and praying that I could have nice things like the other kids. **A Better Life For Foster Kids helps children in similar situations.** We provided Crisis Cases to two brothers, under 4 years old who arrived at their carer's house covered in filth. **The carer couldn't convince either boy to take a bath or shower...until she showed them the pyjamas we provided.** The boys quickly hopped in the bath, knowing once they were clean they would get to try on their pyjamas and all the other clothes in their Case, which they enjoyed doing all weekend." - Heather Baird

BETTER OUTCOMES FOR KIDS THROUGH ADVOCACY AND CARER SUPPORT

Siblings and grandmother reunited

Carol's* nephew was already in her care, and now she was fighting for custody of her niece, due to her sister's drug addiction. Baby Angela* had been removed and placed into her care for just a few days, but was then returned to her mother.

The next time Angela was removed, the Department called Carol* to tell her they were bringing Angela into her care. Carol was dealing with a traumatic event in her life and asked the caseworker to find Angela a temporary placement for a few weeks until she could recover and ready herself to take care of a baby.

Heather from A Better Life For Foster Kids got involved when Carol called for help: while she was taking those few weeks to get her life in order so she could first grieve and then care for her niece, the Department had made a decision. They were going to place Angela into permanent care with another carer because, they alleged, Carol had let her father visit. This was not possible as the father was in jail at the time.

Heather went with Carol to advocate with her at a meeting with the Department, and after checking Carol's records against the Department's, it was found that the decision was based on erroneous administrative data. Heather spoke to the mother's solicitor, who advocated in court for Carol to have care of Angela. The siblings are now re-united and living with their aunt.

**identifying features have been changed for privacy*

