



UNDERCOVER NEWS

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WHO WE ARE

OUR VISION

Where no young person in our community is homeless.

OUR MISSION

Providing young people at risk of homelessness the foundations to strengthen their connection to family, community and education, and make a lasting difference in their lives.



ADAM'S STUDIO HAS GIVEN HIM THE SPACE HE NEEDS

HOMELESS PREVENTION WEEK

A CHANCE TO REFLECT



JO SWIFT, CEO

I had the opportunity during Homelessness Prevention Week in August to talk to the media about our work at Kids Under Cover and as always I was both encouraged and dismayed.

While encouraged by people's compassion and commitment, I was also dismayed there is still widespread ignorance about the growing but largely invisible population of homeless young people in Australia.

Many still see homelessness as something that only happens to other people, but the reality is a confluence of circumstances can drive even the most secure of us into this situation. For young people, the experience of homelessness can be particularly devastating and can be the start of a spiral into long-term homelessness and the health and social problems that come along with it.

We know severe overcrowding at home is the fastest growing risk factor for youth homelessness and we firmly believe the most effective way to reduce the number of young people experiencing homelessness is through prevention.

Our studio program has been particularly effective in keeping young people connected with their families and communities. It provides them with a vital and personal sense of stability and security. This preventative strategy is also an efficient way of tackling the problem because once the studio is no longer needed, it can be relocated to accommodate another young person in need.

I am also very proud that our work in preventing youth homelessness has recently been recognised by our peers. In mid-September Kids Under Cover was the recipient of the Victorian Homelessness Achievement Award - Excellence in Ending Homelessness Among Young People. The award was presented by the Council to Homeless Persons which is the peak Victorian body representing organisations and individuals with an interest in, and commitment to, ending homelessness. We were nominated by one of our key partners, Melbourne City Mission.

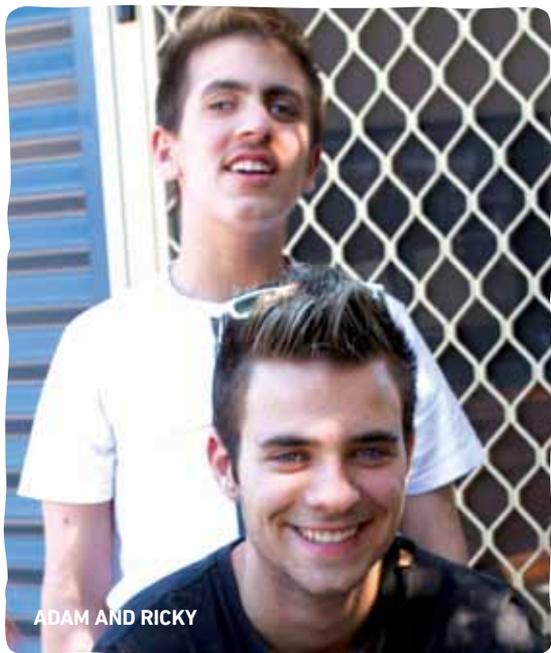
I hope you enjoy this edition of Undercover News where we share some of the ways we are working with our generous supporters to create a community where no young person will be homeless.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jo Swift'.

Jo Swift
CEO

WINTER APPEAL MAKES A DIFFERENCE



ADAM AND RICKY

Thank you to everyone who generously supported our Winter Appeal, and of course, a big thank you to Adam, Ricky and their mother Silvana who kindly agreed to let us tell their story. Before we provided Silvana's family with a Kids Under Cover studio, the combination of critical illness, disability and overcrowding meant Ricky had no space of his own to recover, and Adam was at risk of leaving home before he was ready.

Silvana said she was amazed at the generosity of Kids Under Cover supporters who donated more than \$45,000 during the appeal.

"Please tell everyone who donated thank you very much – I know what this will mean for another family when they get their studio," said Silvana.

"Our studio has relieved so much pressure and now the family dynamic is much happier. It kept us together. I don't like to think where we'd be without it," she added.

The donations made through the Winter Appeal, combined with support from the Victorian government, and trusts and foundations, have meant we have already been able to make significant inroads into our studio waiting list.

These new studios will change the lives of numerous disadvantaged young people and families in need.

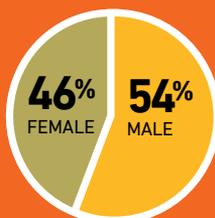
None of this would be possible without your generous support. Thank you.

OUR CURRENT REACH



YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED THROUGH OUR PROGRAMS

ABOUT THE YOUNG PEOPLE WE SUPPORT



11%

have a diagnosed mental illness



are of Indigenous or Torres Strait Islander descent



Active scholarships for education and job training



studios on the ground



Average age of studio occupant is



metropolitan
41% regional/rural



have an intellectual disability

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

OUR CSO PARTNERS

Kids Under Cover works with more than 70 Community Service Organisations (CSOs) in Australia. These organisations may already be working with families and young people on a number of issues, such as substance abuse, child protection or domestic violence, and during this process the case worker identifies the young person or family in need of our service. The case worker then applies to Kids Under Cover on behalf of the young person.

Our CSO partners rely on Kids Under Cover to provide stable and secure accommodation to young people at risk of homelessness. We value our close relationship with CSOs and their help is vital in identifying young people in our community who need our support. The article below is from one of the wonderful case workers who applied for a studio on behalf of a young person and provides a unique insight into the difference we make, and how great the need is for our services. The author of this article is anonymous to protect the identities of those involved in the case.

WORKING TOGETHER BRINGS GREAT OUTCOMES

By an Anglicare Kinship Care Worker, Western Kinship Program

The first time I met Peter, David and *Anne (aged 9, 10 and 15 years) was to introduce myself as their Kinship Case Manager. I entered the lounge room and noticed the three children sitting in a row on a couch with an expectant look in their eyes as if they were thinking “what next?”.

The children had come into the care of their grandmother suddenly due to neglect and abuse. The couch that the children sat waiting upon was in fact Anne’s bed. Each night she made up the couch and her brothers made up foam mattress beds on the lounge-room floor. They had been sleeping there for almost two years. The crowded three-bedroom home also housed two other young children, three young adult children and a sole grandmother/kinship carer. To address the overcrowding seemed at first to be a difficult task. My manager and I began to explore the possibility of Kids Under Cover **providing a studio. Our application was successful and in little time, Kids Under Cover undertook the necessary planning and built a two-bedroom studio on the property. Two of the young adult children moved in and this created room inside the house for Anne to have her own room and for Peter and David to share a room. This also resolved the chronic overcrowding that the whole family had endured. In our experience, addressing overcrowding is one of the most effective ways of making a significant difference for children and their families. Peter, David and Anne are doing really well. The provision of the studio, along with Anglicare support, has helped move the goal of permanent care closer for these children. Importantly, it has also meant that these three siblings are growing up together. Of course, this was only possible due to the commitment of a hard-working grandmother.

WHAT IS KINSHIP CARE?

Kinship care is provided by relatives or a member of a child’s social network when a child cannot live with his or her own parents. “Statutory” kinship placements occur when a Child Protection intervention has occurred and a decision has been made to place a child with relatives or a significant friend, and may also involve an order made by the Children’s Court. “Private” or “informal” kinship care is the term used for those arrangements where children are cared for by relatives without any Child Protection intervention.

Being cared for by relatives helps children avoid the trauma of being placed in unfamiliar environments; may reduce the number of home placements children experience; and allows children to maintain connections to communities, schools and family members. A common issue for many kinship carers is having the space to be able to take in young people and then coping with the overcrowding that can occur once the young people are in their care. The provision of additional space through a studio helps to keep families together and relieves the issue of overcrowding, which in some cases may be a barrier to ensuring the placement is permanent.

*pseudonyms were used to protect identities.

**Anglicare Victoria would like to gratefully acknowledge the provision of the Kids Under Cover studio mentioned in this article. This Kids Under Cover studio was made possible by funding generously provided by the Pierce Armstrong Trust and Gandel Philanthropy.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

“One of the best feelings in life is to help someone else”

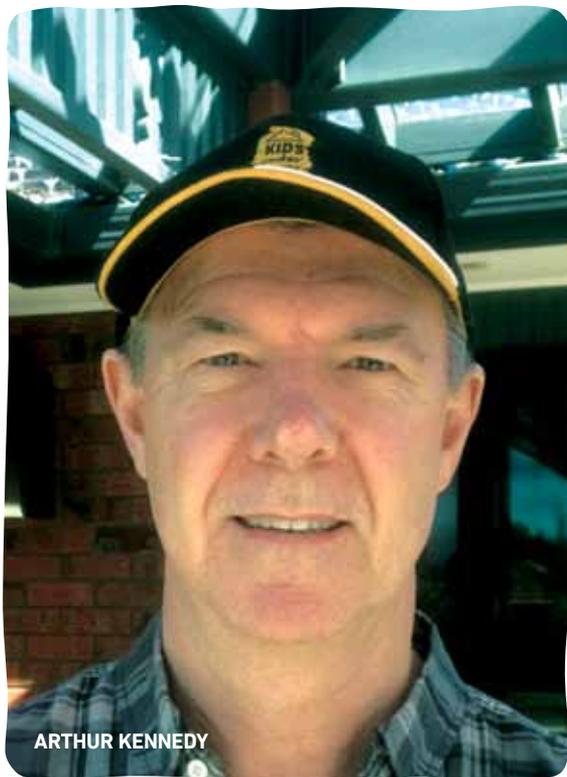
Since my association with Kids Under Cover began a few years ago, I have been continually impressed by the services offered and the difference Kids Under Cover makes, not only to young people but also to the lives of carers and parents.

When Kids Under Cover made it known they needed additional volunteers to assist with inspections of their studios, I agreed immediately as I felt this was something to which I would be well suited. The situations you come across can be wide-ranging and all have their individual set of circumstances. I thoroughly enjoy doing the inspections and try hard, whenever the opportunity arises or is appropriate, to encourage occupants to take ownership and pride in their studio.

I remember the very first studio I inspected and how, when I reinspected it 12 months later, I could not believe the level of improvement I saw; it was seriously like a different house. I don't know the reason for the difference, but I feel that Kids Under Cover had a lot to do with it.

Conducting inspections provides me with a sense of being a part of something that's making a huge difference in people's lives. I really love that. In my role, I'm particularly lucky that I get to see that difference. One of the best feelings in life is to help someone else.

Arthur Kennedy



ARTHUR KENNEDY

VOLUNTEER STUDIO MONITORS VITAL TO SUCCESS.

Our Volunteer Studio Monitors provide a vital service observing and correcting studio maintenance issues before they become a problem. The inspections have also led to useful changes in studio design, including installation of larger bathroom fans, the placement of security lights, a change in door springs and carpet choice.

As well as the literally hands-on support the studio monitors offer, they also provide an important, additional channel of communication between Kids Under Cover and the families supported through our studio program, which helps us ensure we provide the best service we can.

We are not currently recruiting Volunteer Studio Monitors, however if you are interested in supporting Kids Under Cover, please visit the “Get Involved” section of our website kuc.org.au.

IN TUNE WITH A GOOD CAUSE

ANDREW HAGGER: GIFTED FUNDRAISER

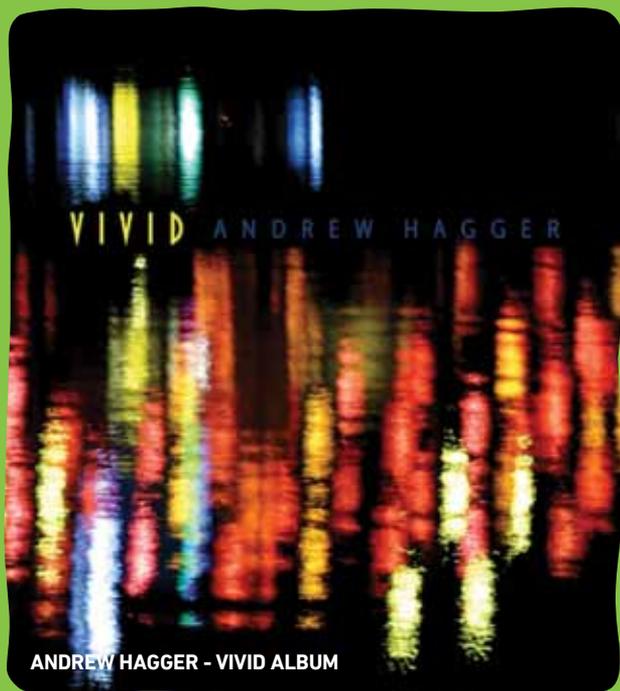
Depending on where your interests lie, you may have heard of Andrew Hagger as either a leading banker or as a critically acclaimed pianist and composer with three albums under his belt.

Andrew, who shows an amazing ability to balance two disparate passions, is the head of National Australia Bank's wealth division.

He has also just released his third album, *Vivid*, which climbed to number two on debut in the ARIA charts for its classical-crossover genre. *Vivid* also entered the top 20, at 14, for Australian artists across all genres.

Andrew followed this up with a successful concert tour, performing at the Sydney Opera House as well as venues in Melbourne and Adelaide.

Andrew is also a supporter of Kids Under Cover and is donating proceeds of the new album to Kids Under Cover, the Leukaemia Foundation and the Australian Children's Music Foundation.



GIVING LOCAL YOUNG PEOPLE A MUSICAL VOICE

The Rotary Club of St Kilda recently launched its Local 'n' Vocal album, a community fundraising project focussed on youth homelessness. The Local 'n' Vocal project was a collaboration between the Rotary Club and more than 40 young, emerging and established Melbourne musicians.

Original tracks were donated by established bands, while school-based musicians had a three-hour professional recording studio session funded by the Rotary Club of St Kilda and mentored by Jack Howard, from the group Hunters & Collectors.

All profits from sales of the Local 'n' Vocal album will go to three organisations who work with homeless and at-risk young people: Kids Under Cover, Open Family/Whitelion and St Kilda Gatehouse.

Julia Topliss, of the Rotary Club of St Kilda, said the project aimed to raise awareness of issues concerning young people at risk of homelessness and to help the nominated charities raise money for their work tackling this issue.

"The project had a three-pronged aim," she said. "Firstly, we wanted to engage local young people in music making. Secondly we wanted to raise funds for charities working in the area of youth homelessness. Thirdly, we wanted to run a subtle awareness campaign to make young people and their social networks aware of the resources that were available for anyone who needed them, or who might need them in the future.

"The project was a great success in all three aspects," said Julia.

If you're interested in purchasing a copy of the Local 'n' Vocal CD, visit our website kuc.org.au. They would make terrific gifts for Christmas!

OUR FUNDRAISERS START EARLY!

Kids Under Cover depends on our generous supporters to help us with our goal of preventing youth homelessness - and some of our supporters start very young!

Nine year old Riley, from Kent Park Primary School, recently did some fundraising by persuading his teacher Stephanie to make a donation to Kids Under Cover.

Stephanie said that she had set a persuasive writing task for her class and was amazed at the response by the students. "They had expressed interest in trying to help others so I set them a task of creating a poster for the charity of their choice using research, statistics, anecdotes and persuasive language.

"Riley really embraced his topic. He'd seen a newsletter for Kids Under Cover and he used that as his starting point for developing his argument.

"He was very passionate and knowledgeable about what the charity did and used the information as a call to action. He was certainly successful because after reading his poster I donated to Kids Under Cover!" said Stephanie.



RUNNING FOR (KIDS UNDER) COVER



Kids Under Cover supporters are a hardy lot and 36 of them fronted up for the annual Run Melbourne event, despite dire weather forecasts threatening hail storms. Fortune favours the brave, however, and the rain held off long enough for runners to enjoy a beautiful crisp winter morning with glimpses of sunshine throughout the event.

As well as a fundraising opportunity, Run Melbourne and its associated charity marquee allowed Kids Under Cover staff and volunteers the opportunity to spread the word about the work we are doing to prevent youth homelessness.

The weather is improving and there are still plenty of fundraising events scheduled for this year throughout Australia. If you're interested in using your participation to help the work of Kids Under Cover, visit everydayhero's list of events or check out Kids Under Cover's Go Fundraise page.

RENO RUMBLE STARS GIVE KIDS UNDER COVER A BOOST

We were thrilled when Carly and Leighton chose Kids Under Cover as their charity to compete for in the Nine Network's Reno Rumble and humbled when Carly shared her thoughts on the experience.

When the opportunity came up for us to participate in Reno Rumble, the biggest renovation competition yet, Leighton and I both jumped at the chance not only to play for ourselves, as a team, and take out the title, but to compete for a huge cash prize for a charity of our choice. Together we chatted quite seriously about which charity we would choose, as there are so many amazing people running incredibly worthy charities.

We have seen first-hand how the family unit can be very complicated and nowhere near as simple and as easy as we had experienced in our childhoods. We know three children who are at risk of being separated into different foster homes.

These three children haven't had a great upbringing, but are still so well-behaved and pure and, most importantly, they still have each other. The thought of them being separated just doesn't make sense to us. We feel that being able to grow up with your siblings is extremely important and so this was our deciding factor and our reason for choosing Kids Under Cover as our charity in the competition.

We competed in the toughest elimination competition of our lives - we battled and we rumbled! We gained a win midweek during the Grand Final week and earned

an extra \$10,000 for Kids Under Cover and ended the competition as Runner-up, which meant we could donate another \$25,000 to Kids Under Cover. Our \$35,000 winnings will go a long way to providing a secure and stable space for a young person who really needs it.

This opportunity has allowed us to learn more about Kids Under Cover and its history. What an amazing group of people helping young people at risk of homelessness! Everybody deserves their own space and a place to call home. We will continue for the rest of our lives to raise awareness about what Kids Under Cover does and how many lives it is changing.

All the best, Carly and Leighton



RENO RUMBLE STARS LEIGHTON AND CARLY WITH KIDS UNDER COVER STUDIO OCCUPANT KAYLA.

JOIN THE FUN



WE NEED DESIGNERS, BUILDERS, SPONSORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Our annual Cubby House Challenge brings together members of the building industry to design, build and decorate a highly creative and unique childrens cubby houses that are exhibited and sold to raise vital funds to prevent youth homelessness.

The cubbies are displayed in a village setting at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show in March each year and we need your help to make the event a success.

To participate contact Kerry Butcher on: (03) 9429 7444 or by emailing Kerry@kuc.org.au

www.cubbyhousechallenge.org.au

CHOICE HOTELS TAKES UP THE CHALLENGE

Kids Under Cover partners with businesses which want to collaborate to prevent youth homelessness. All good partnerships are mutually beneficial and so Kids Under Cover strives to help businesses achieve additional benefits for their organisation from the partnership.

A few ways we do this is by helping to engage staff, clients and customers and finding unique ways to leverage and demonstrate the core skills of an organisation. A great example of this approach is our partnership with Choice Hotels.

Choice Hotels have raised \$55,000 for Kids Under Cover through a Corporate Golf Day and through the donation of \$2 for every room sold during Homelessness Prevention Week in August. In addition, Choice Hotels provide free accommodation for our staff and volunteers when they are travelling on Kids Under Cover business.

Choice Hotels have also been able to engage their staff directly in the work of Kids Under Cover. Through Studio Care days they help

maintain our studios, and they will be taking part in a Corporate Build in the coming months to help build a new studio for a young person in need.

We thank Choice Hotels for their wonderful support and look forward to achieving even more together for young people at risk of homelessness.

If your business would like to explore a partnership with Kids Under Cover, please speak to **Kerry Butcher on (03) 9429 7444 or email Kerry@kuc.org.au**



CHOICE HOTELS STUDIO CARE TEAM HARD AT WORK



WE'VE MOVED!

Kids Under Cover's national headquarters has moved – but just around the corner! We are now located at:

383 Swan Street, Richmond VIC 3121.

AGM AND SUPPORTER FUNCTION

The 2015 Kids Under Cover Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Supporter Function will be held on Thursday, 12 November, at 5pm for the AGM and 6pm for the Supporter Function.

At the AGM we will present a report on the organisation's activities and finances for financial year 2015 as well as address our formal and legal governance duties. Following this, the Supporter Function will provide an opportunity to hear first-hand from those we work with and to share a drink with staff, board members and other wonderful supporters of Kids Under Cover. If you would like to find out more or to receive an invitation, please contact Martin Murley, Donor Relations, by emailing **martin@kuc.org.au** or calling **(03) 9429 7444**.



**IF UNDELIVERED
PLEASE RETURN TO**

PO Box 3038
Victoria Gardens
Richmond VIC 3121

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA



YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Every day in Australia, disadvantaged young people as young as 12 become homeless. It's a grave misconception that young people become homeless by choice. The reality is vastly different.

The issues that lead someone to become homeless are complex and varied. For at-risk young people, their lives have become emotionally and often, physically unbearable. Their home life may be burdened by the disadvantages of poverty, neglect, abuse, unemployment, substance abuse, health complications, disability and mental illness.¹

This cycle of events cause some young people to feel there is no other option, but to leave. They are not ready, have nowhere to go and become isolated from mainstream society.

**Around 44,000 young
Australians under
25 are homeless on
any given night.²**



A figure that
increased by

17%

OUR WORK

THE PROBLEM

A young person may have many harmful experiences in their life, such as the breakdown of family relationships, mental illness, domestic violence, unemployment and parental drug and alcohol abuse.

When this is combined with a severely overcrowded home it leaves young people without the physical and emotional space needed to deal with the effects of their experiences.

HOW WE SOLVE IT

Kids Under Cover is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to preventing youth homelessness. Our early intervention approach is simple, unique and effective.

At the heart of our work is the relocatable studios that provide stable and secure accommodation for young people at risk of homelessness. We complement this with scholarships for education or job training to empower young people to achieve their goals.

This combination is proven to prevent young people from becoming homeless and keep families together.

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS TO PREVENT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

1 Dept. of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Literature Review: Effective interventions for working with young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, 2012.
2 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of population and housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2011.

kuc.org.au