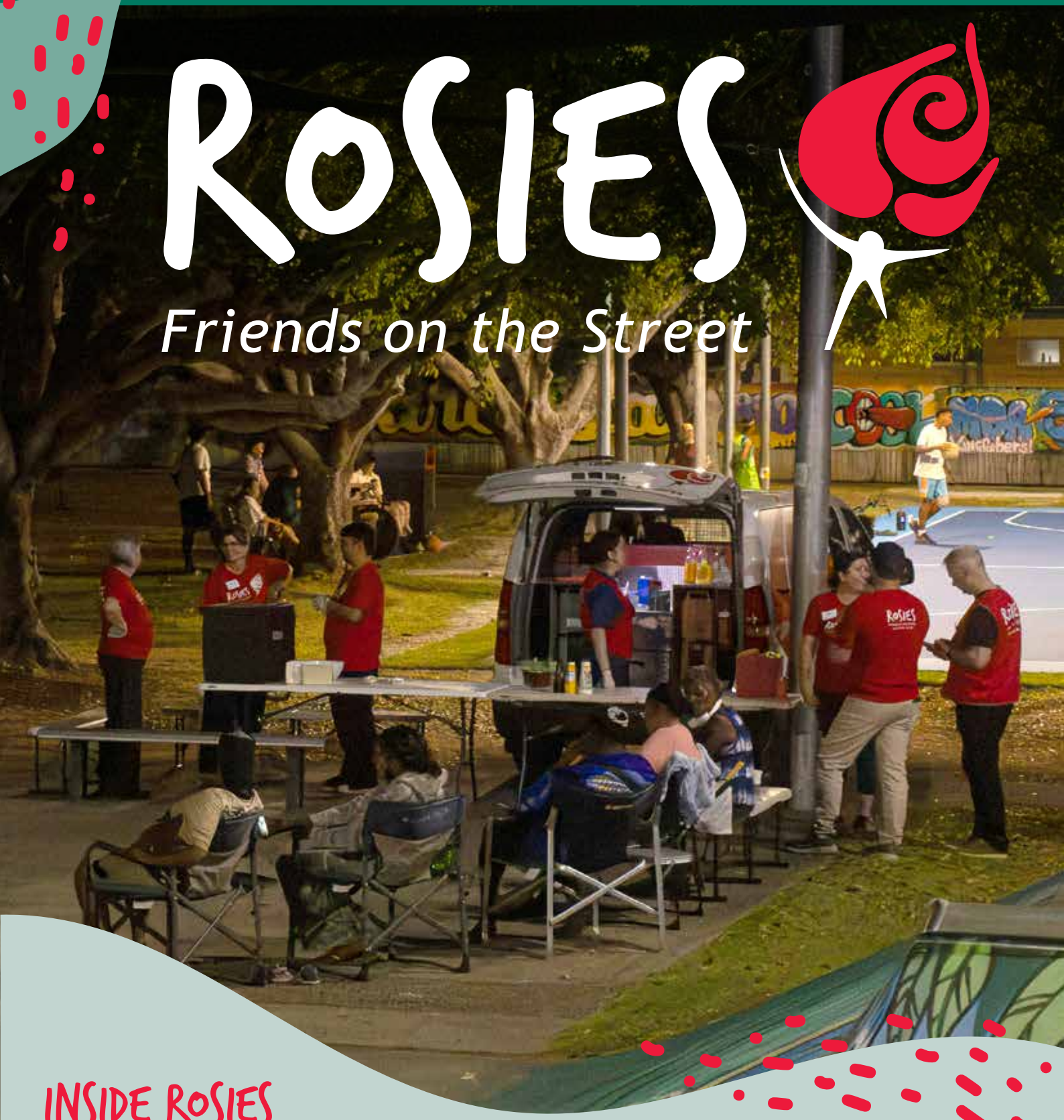
Sharing friendship creates belonging, dare to reach out together. SUMMER 26

ROSIES

Friends on the Street



INSIDE ROSIES

A thought-provoking message from

OUR CEO

Jayne talks about the true spirit of Christmas

Event info on

39 YEARS OF ROSIES

Find out more about our event on Nov 19

Sam's powerful story of

COURAGE & RESILIENCE

Once a homeless teen still making it to school, now a school teacher.

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THE GIRL WHO WOULDN'T GIVE UP

MEET SAM

When Sam Malcolm looks at her fourteen-year-old daughter today, she often finds herself asking one question. "What the hell? How did I do that?"

It's a question that takes her back more than thirty years, to a time when she was fourteen herself. While most teenagers were worrying about homework, friends and what the future might hold, Sam was living alone in a caravan, trying to finish high school and, before long, raising her younger sisters.

Today, Sam is a teacher, a mother, a woman of deep faith and a Rosies volunteer in Mareeba. She laughs easily, speaks with remarkable honesty and has an extraordinary ability to see the good in people. Yet the road that brought her here began with a childhood marked by violence, fear and homelessness.

It's a story she shares not because she wants sympathy but because she knows there are still young people living through experiences much like her own. If sharing her journey helps even one person feel seen or understood, then it's a story worth telling.

"The first time I experienced homelessness, I was about thirteen," Sam begins.

Looking back now, she believes her mother was living with significant, undiagnosed mental illness.

"I don't remember a lot about my mother except that she was very violent and she drank a lot," she says quietly.

Violence was an unpredictable part of everyday life. Most nights, Sam would lie awake pretending to be asleep until everything settled, hoping she wouldn't become the focus of her mother's anger. But one morning, that hope disappeared.

"I woke up to her standing over the top of me. It was a violent situation."

She remembers pleading to leave.

"I kept saying, 'I just want to leave. I need to leave,' because I knew if I stayed there it would escalate."

Terrified but determined, Sam walked away from the only



Sam sharing her story at the Rosies 2026 Long Lunch

home she had ever known. Years of being told that something terrible would happen if she ever left, had left their mark.

"I'd had years of being told that if I ever left, someone would attack me. I remember walking down the road absolutely frightened."

As she walked, unsure where she was going or what would happen next, a neighbour recognised her and stopped. It was a small act of kindness; one that Sam has never forgotten. Looking back now, she sees that moment as the first of many people who quietly stepped into her life when she needed them most.

Returning home however, didn't last.

Months later, after another violent assault left her with a broken nose, thirteen-year-old Sam made the heartbreaking decision to leave for good. Home had become more dangerous than the uncertainty waiting beyond its front door.

With nowhere else to go, she survived however she could. Some nights she stayed with friends. Other nights, she slept wherever she could find somewhere safe.

"I was so scared of ending up back there that I'd sleep in public toilets because I could lock the door."

It's an image that's difficult to imagine—a thirteen-year-old girl choosing the floor of a public toilet over her own home—but for Sam, it made perfect sense.

"I never felt desolate because home was worse."

Home wasn't where she felt safest; the public toilet was.

"There was one night I slept under a bridge. It was really scary. That's why I went back to the toilets. At least I could lock the door."

Despite everything she was carrying, Sam never gave up on school. "I only missed one day."

School became the one place where life felt normal, even if no one knew what was really happening once the bell rang at the end of the day.

"I felt a lot of shame. I told everyone I was staying somewhere because I was terrified people would know I was homeless."

Like so many young people experiencing homelessness, she became skilled at hiding the truth. Every day she did everything she could to appear like everyone else. Behind the scenes, life was a constant struggle.

"I'd go at five o'clock in the morning and nick a loaf of bread after it had been delivered to the local shop."

Then, one teacher noticed but they didn't make a fuss. They simply recognised that something wasn't right and helped Sam apply for a homelessness allowance. It was another seemingly ordinary act of kindness that would change the course of her life and with that support, she was finally able to rent somewhere to live.

"I ended up getting a caravan for myself. I look at my daughter who's fourteen now and think, 'What the hell? How did I do that?'"

The caravan wasn't much. It had a tiny kitchen, a small table, one double bed and two single beds, but to fourteen-year-old Sam it represented something she hadn't experienced in a very long time – safety.

For the first time since leaving home, she had somewhere she could call her own. It didn't stay just her home for long. When her younger sister Angela* was also forced to leave home, she moved into the caravan too. Not long afterwards, their mother arrived with Sam's four-year-old sister.

"She basically said, 'You think you're big and tough looking after yourself? Try doing this.'"

Then she drove away.

Overnight, the responsibilities resting on Sam's shoulders became almost unimaginable. While she was still trying to finish high school, she suddenly found herself caring for a four-year-old, organising childcare so she could attend school and doing everything she could to create a stable home for her sisters.

Life in the caravan wasn't easy. While Sam was at school, her mother would sometimes break in.

"She'd steal my food or trash the place."

Even now, she shares those memories without anger or resentment. They are simply part of her story. Despite everything happening around her, every morning she got dressed, went to school and kept putting one foot in front of the other.

Eventually, after years of legal battles, Sam's father succeeded in bringing her and Angela to live with him in Sydney. For the first time in years, she was physically safe but that didn't erase everything she had experienced.

"I've done a lot of therapy," Sam says.

The years she spent living in survival mode had shaped the way she saw the world. Even now, she instinctively reads the people around her, noticing the things others often miss.

"If I didn't know what mood my mum or stepfather was in, I was screwed."



That constant need to anticipate danger became second nature.

"I'm very hypervigilant. I pick up on people's energy really quickly."

Trauma, she has learned, doesn't simply disappear when circumstances change. Healing takes time. After everything Sam has endured, there is no harshness in her voice or demeanor only compassion.

"I wish someone had fought for my mum. If someone had fought for her... maybe someone could have fought for me."

It's an extraordinary perspective. Rather than dwelling on the pain she experienced, Sam wonders what might have been different if someone had recognised that her mother needed help too. That compassion has become one of the defining qualities of her life.

Years later, when Sam decided to become a teacher, another challenge lay ahead. Although she had escaped the violence of her childhood, the doubts that had been planted there were much harder to leave behind.

"There were times I thought, 'My mother was always right. I'm not going to be able to do this.'"

The degree that might have taken someone else four years took Sam almost ten. Not because she wasn't capable, because years of trauma had convinced her she wasn't.

**Name changed for privacy reasons*

With the encouragement of her husband and psychologist, she kept going. One assignment, one semester, one year at a time.

"I know I'm a great teacher now," she says with a quiet confidence that has been hard earned. "I know I've helped a lot of kids."

Her lived experience has given her something no university could ever teach. When a young person is struggling, she doesn't see difficult behaviour or poor choices. She sees a child who may be carrying more than anyone realises.

"I remember exactly how those feelings felt," she says. "When a young person is struggling, I don't tell them to get over it. I understand."

Years after leaving home, Sam discovered something she had never known. Parents of children at her school had quietly packed extra lunches for their own children so there would be enough to share with her. She still becomes emotional talking about it. "I always wanted to give back because I knew there were people in my life who cared."

As she reflects on those years now, it's not the fear she remembers most - it's the people.

The neighbour who stopped when she was walking alone.

The teacher who quietly helped her access a homelessness allowance.

The church members who brought food to the caravan.

Small acts of kindness, offered without expectation or recognition, became the moments that helped carry her through.

Most of those people will probably never know the difference they made. **Sam never forgot.**

Today, those memories are what bring her to Rosies each week.

She doesn't volunteer because she feels sorry for people experiencing homelessness. **She volunteers because she remembers exactly what it feels like to be frightened, to feel invisible and to wonder whether anyone cares.**

"I know how humble you become when you're homeless," she says. "There's a lot of shame."

She understands something that can't be taught in a textbook or learned from a training session. She knows that every person who approaches a Rosies outreach has a story, and that very few of those stories are visible on the surface.

"I never wanted people to feel sorry for me. I just wanted someone to care."

It's a simple sentence, but it says everything.

Sadly, Sam's story is far from unique. Every night across Queensland, Rosies volunteers meet children, young people and adults whose journeys into homelessness are complex, painful and often hidden in plain sight. Behind every conversation is a story that most of us will never fully know. Sam understands that better than most.

She knows what it's like to carry shame, to hide the truth and to feel as though no one could possibly understand what you're going through. She also knows how profoundly a small act of kindness can change the course of someone's life.

Once upon a time, she was the young girl who simply needed someone to care. Today, she's one of the people standing beside a Rosies outreach van, offering that same kindness to someone else. Because Sam knows, perhaps better than anyone, that while we can't change a person's past, we can change how they experience today.





EVERY ACT OF KINDNESS LEAVES A MARK

CELEBRATING 39 YEARS OF ROSIES

As Rosies celebrates 39 years of friendship, connection and community, we're marking the occasion with a very special collaboration featuring someone whose story is woven into our own – Queensland artist and Rosies' first-ever Ambassador, Jake Moss.

Jake's journey with Rosies began several years ago when he was experiencing homelessness and social isolation. For six months, he regularly attended our Sunshine Coast outreaches, where he found more than a meal or a warm drink. He found friendship, acceptance and a community that made him feel valued.

Reflecting on that time, Jake shared, "The best thing you can offer someone who is socially isolated is good company and Rosies' volunteers gave me that in droves."

Today, Jake is an accomplished artist, filmmaker and storyteller who uses his creativity and lived experience to challenge perceptions of homelessness and champion the importance of human connection. From creating artwork for our Logan and Brisbane Hubs to sharing his story with the wider community, Jake has remained a passionate supporter of Rosies.

His appointment as our first Ambassador marks a beautiful new chapter in that relationship.

To celebrate Rosies' 39th birthday, Jake has created Nurturing Growth, a large-scale, collaborative

paint-by-numbers artwork featuring two red roses symbolising growth, resilience and the power of friendship.

On 19 November in Brisbane City and 21 November on the Gold Coast, members of the community will be invited to pick up a paintbrush and contribute to this special artwork, bringing our birthday theme, Every Act of Kindness Leaves a Mark, to life.

Just like the thousands of friendships formed through Rosies over 39 years, every brushstroke will become part of something bigger.

Jake's story is a wonderful reminder that sometimes the smallest gestures of kindness can leave the most lasting impression.

COME CELEBRATE

39 YEARS OF ROSIES

Thursday, 19 November 2026

8:00am – 2:00pm

Reddacliff Place, Brisbane City

Come along, pick up a paintbrush and leave your mark! Everyone is welcome.

Please note: The Gold Coast activation on 21 November is a closed event for school leavers participating in Schoolies celebrations.

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A MESSAGE from our CEO

"CHRISTMAS WILL ALWAYS BE AS LONG AS WE STAND HEART TO HEART AND HAND IN HAND" DR SEUSS

The Christmas holiday season is often presented as picture-perfect with celebrations, decorations, gift-giving and busyness all around us, but the magical story of hope comes from that first Christmas that did not begin in a place of comfort and grandeur. It began with the journey of Mary and Joseph, a vulnerable family travelling far from home and arriving in a crowded and busy town that had no room for them. Tired, alone and needing a place to rest, they found shelter in the stables with the animals and gave birth, with baby Jesus placed into a feeding trough filled with fresh straw.

The birth of baby Jesus carries a powerful message of hope, joy and love, particularly for those who are struggling at this time of year – those who are experiencing homelessness, disadvantage, loneliness or feeling forgotten and unseen. This Christmas story reminds us that true richness is found in love. Simple acts of care, kindness and generosity that demonstrate that something powerful and transformative can come from circumstances that seem isolating and almost unbearable.

The strength of Rosies is seen each time we reach out and offer the hand of friendship to someone we meet at outreach, offering compassion and kindness and creating genuine moments of care and hope. This Christmas, take time to join hand in hand and heart to heart with those who are in need. Slow down enough to notice that person who may be carrying an unseen burden and have the courage to reach out with understanding and genuine care. By doing so, we experience the true spirt of Christmas – a spirit that lifts us up, joy that we share and kindness that brings us closer together.

Thank you for generously supporting Rosies, our volunteers and most importantly those whom we serve on the street.

Wishing you a blessed and joyful holiday season.

Jayne Shallcross
CEO, Rosies – Friends on the Street

ROSIES PRAYER

O Jesus,
make our hearts so human,
that others may feel at home with us,
so like Yours,
that others may feel at home with You,
so forgetful of self
that we might simply become the place
where You and they meet
in the power of Your love and the joy of
Your friendship
Amen



CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

FROM FR JOSHUA NASH OMI

The mission of Rosies is to offer hospitality and welcome to those experiencing homelessness and disadvantage, so that they feel like they are our friends, a part of our family. Christmas is often a time of many gatherings, with family and friends. Lots of food, exchanging of gifts and the experience of joy and merriment. For many in our community, this won't happen with their actual family; this won't happen in nice houses with air-conditioning and swimming pools. But will happen in a park, on the side of the road, or by a train station. It will happen out the back of a van, but with the same amount of love and joy. Because our Rosies volunteers are out 365 days a year, including Christmas Day.

As Rosies Oblate Chaplain, I have the privilege to serve on many Rosies outreaches, but serving on Christmas Day is something extra special. A day that is extremely significant for those who believe it was the birth of salvation; and a day that carries equally significant amounts of love, hope and joy for many others. My beliefs tell me that no-one should be alone on Christmas Day and I am grateful that I can serve as a part of Rosies to ensure that it is true.