



CAN Community Support

CAN WINTER APPEAL JUNE 2025

CAN YOU **GIVE A TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION** THIS EOFY?

From Virginia Moebus-Nelson, Executive Officer

To our generous supporters,

In the wise words of my grandmother, "A problem shared is a problem halved." There is nothing like a friendship forged through challenging times – a friendship forged in the trenches stays for a lifetime. And the challenges of re-settling in a new country is made easier when the journey is shared.

Here at CAN we are all about building community, and cultivating spaces and opportunities for friendships to grow and flourish amid all of life's challenges; a place where people from all walks of life can walk together as they navigate all that life throws at them.

Kawther and Alaa are no exception. Their friendship is a ray of sunshine to all they meet and a living example of all that they have overcome. They share their hopes and dreams of finding safety and security in a new country and the highs and lows of raising their families.



Please read their story and consider supporting us this tax time. Our programs offering food security, educational support and community are bursting at the seams. Your support will help us to continue to support people like Alaa and Kawther and their families with practical support and community connection as they navigate the challenges of life TOGETHER.

A Bond Forged in Friendship: Kawther and Alaa – a heartwarming story of CANnection

On a warm, sunny Wednesday, the backyard of CAN Community Support buzzes with laughter and companionship as we gather for our weekly community lunch. Amongst our guests are two radiant souls, Kawther and Alaa, whose friendship has blossomed over the years. Their intertwining stories illustrate the power of connection and support in building a community that feels like home.

I approached them during lunch, a little hesitant to break into their cherished moments. But as I asked if they would share their reflections over a cup of tea, their faces lit up with smiles as warm as the sun on our backs. It was clear they were excited to embrace this opportunity together.

Alaa's infectious smile has brightened the CAN community pantry for nearly a decade. Arriving in Australia in 2012, she fled the turmoil of Iraq with hopes of a brighter future for her family. The early days in Melbourne were challenging, as Alaa moved from one public housing block to another, seeking peace and stability while raising her three energetic young sons. It was during this vulnerable time that she discovered a local church offering fresh produce and support.

Grateful for the helping hand, like many of our volunteers Alaa soon transitioned from recipient to giver, volunteering at the community pantry and becoming a pillar of support for others in similar situations. Over the years at CAN, she has cultivated strong relationships within the community, becoming a trusted and beloved figure. Her friend Kawther proudly remarked, "She loves working for the church!"



Alaa also discovered CAN's Family Learning Program at Kathleen Syme Library, which expanded her network and enriched her children's educational journeys. Here, she met countless volunteers and families, who have gone on to play a significant role in her life.

Kawther's journey to Melbourne from Sudan in 2016 was driven by the hope of a fresh start and a safe environment for her family. Initially, she felt isolated, as her husband worked long hours and she struggled with the cultural and language barriers of a new country. However, a chance encounter changed everything – Kawther was lucky enough to meet the delightful Alaa!

Their friendship ignited from that first meeting. Alaa, with her deep knowledge of Melbourne, instantly became Kawther's guide. Together, they explored the city—venturing from Lygon Street to the Yarra River, uncovering parks and museums, and the ever-important Woolworths supermarket for all your daily needs, all while wrangling their lively sons. Alaa's enthusiasm for life brought joy and adventure into Kawther's world, helped her find her feet in Melbourne and ensured she could access all that she needed.

With Alaa's encouragement, Kawther found her way to CAN Community Support, where both women connected with others in the community. Every Wednesday, they gather at the mid-week community lunch, sharing meals and laughter, bridging their cultures and experiences. And on Tuesdays they come along to Women's Group – a great opportunity to meet other local women, learn, eat, practise their English and find community. For Kawther, CAN has become a second home. "Carlton and the church are like home," she says, reflecting on the sense of belonging she has found.

In a delightful twist of fate, 2023 brought them even closer as both women discovered they were pregnant again. Their baby boys, Abas and Yousef, were born just a month apart, and the bond of new motherhood has further enriched their friendship. Together, they attend CAN's bi-lingual playgroup, sharing the challenges and joys of parenthood.

After playgroup, they take walks to lull their babies to sleep, carving out time for coffee and heartfelt conversations. "Alaa was like sunshine for me," Kawther shares, expressing how Alaa has been instrumental in helping her navigate life in Melbourne. They exchange clothes for their children, plan outings during holidays, and celebrate religious occasions together, forming a tapestry of shared experiences.

Kawther and Alaa's friendship epitomizes the beauty of community support and the transformational power of connection that happens in a million different ways around CAN Community Support. In a world where isolation can feel heavy, these two women remind us that warmth and understanding can light the way, creating bonds that flourish amidst life's challenges.



We are so excited have received a grant from StreetSmart Australia to support our food security program. This money will ensure that we can continue to offer community and support through food to our neighbours.

[Click here](#) to find out about their DineSmart program.

STREETSMART

ACTION AGAINST HOMELESSNESS

Become a CAN Community Support partner through regular giving!

As you may know, funding for our programs can be unpredictable and unreliable at times. Regular monthly donations from CAN Community Support Partners gives us some predictability and stability in income, so we can plan into the future. We would love you to consider becoming a CAN Community Support Partner by committing to a regular gift each month:



\$50 a month provides stationary for students needing extra educational support through tutoring in our Homework Club

\$100 a month provides a weekly nutritious shared meal and companionship for someone who is lonely and unwell.

\$150 a month provides 10 food parcels for neighbours doing it tough in our community.

Click below for to sign up for regular monthly donations.

Sign me up!

CAN fundraising concert

We are excited to be holding our annual Choirs in the Round fundraiser for CAN Community Support on Saturday 14th June!

During the darkest week of the year, you are invited to warm body and soul at the Church of All Nations and enjoy musical offerings from the Melbourne Mass Gospel Choir, Thursday's Children, Gorani and other special guests.



This year's event is held in special recognition of National Reconciliation Week.

[Book tickets here!](#)

In other news...



Student placements

In May we said goodbye to Tad and Patrice who have been completing their placements in social work and community development. They both worked tirelessly with whatever we threw at them - staffing our pantry, cooking lunches, driving the van and giving one-on-one administration support to clients.

We are so lucky that Tad has accepted a part-time role as Community Lunch Manager with us until the end of the year!



A big thank you!

CAN is proud to have been selected to receive a donation from The Dirt Company of a year's supply of laundry detergent for our pantry. You can read more about their low-waste, sustainable products [here](#).

Detergent can be accessed by our clients every month as part of a pantry parcel, and we are very grateful for this generous gift!



Celebrating our volunteers

Our huge team of volunteers is the life-blood of CAN. We rely on these wonderful people to staff our pantry, pick up food orders, cook and clean up after community lunch and run our Homework Clubs.

In National Volunteer's Week, we dedicated our Wednesday lunch to all our volunteers, and shared a special meal together.

Thank you to Brunetti's for supplying dessert!

Your donations to CAN Community Support mean that we can continue to say 'yes' to everyone who comes to our door. We wish we could convey how grateful they are - and how much of a privilege it is to do this work on your behalf.

Click the link below to make a tax deductible donation today!

Give Now

CAN Community Support is a part of Carlton (Church of All Nations)
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