



QUEENSLAND
**CHILD
PROTECTION
WEEK**

7 - 13 September 2014

ISSUED UNDER EMBARGO | EMBARGO EXPIRES 1PM THURSDAY 4 SEPTEMBER

REAL LIFE 'ANGEL' GIVES FOSTER CHILDREN WINGS

Pyjama Angel volunteer wins State's top child protection honour

A real life 'angel' who reads stories to children in foster care will tomorrow be named as the winner of one of Queensland's top child protection awards.

For the past seven years, Cathryn Crowe has volunteered through the Pyjama Foundation's 'angel' volunteer program, to read to abused and neglected children in care. On some weeks she will work with up to five different children.

The not-for-profit Pyjama Foundation supports the literacy and numeracy of children in foster care and kinship care placements. 'Pyjama Angel Volunteers' are in weekly contact with children in care, with whom they are matched. Aside from reading to and with children, these 'angels' also act as mentors. Their efforts typically improve the children's academic outcomes, self-confidence and social growth.

"With more children in foster care than at any point in Australian history, the role of volunteers has taken on even greater importance," said Queensland Child Protection Week chair Lorraine Dupree.

"Volunteers are crucial in responding to abuse, particularly as the demand for services and assistance keeps increasing," Ms Dupree said. "The work of 'angels' such as Cathryn Crowe gives children in care both immediate comfort and lifelong benefits. Volunteers work without fanfare or much recognition, but when they work to help or support children who have suffered abuse or neglect, their work is absolutely vital."

Research shows that reading to children, even up to the age of 10-11, has a lifelong positive impact on their reading and cognitive skills, and improves schooling outcomes irrespective of parental income, education level or cultural background¹.

A record nine Queensland Child Protection Awards will be awarded at tomorrow's formal awards' ceremony. Past award winners include Bruce and Denise Morcombe, and Braveheart's Hetty Johnston.

Queensland Child Protection Week is run by representatives from 21 of the State's leading child protection, education, health and welfare agencies, as well as law enforcement and government. The State Government provides nearly \$107,000 to support and promote the week, which will include more than 100 community events held across the State between 7-13 September. Visit <http://childprotectionweek.org.au/>

Further information

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