



April 2020

Mackillop Family Services C19 Crisis Appeal Rewrite

Revised Crisis Appeal written by Lea Ann Peterson

Johnson Box:

Abused & Neglected Children in Crisis!

Your urgent help is needed to ensure every child in our care has a safe home during the Covid19 pandemic...

Dear (Salutation),

I'm writing urgently today to request your help solving a national foster care crisis.

In a minute, I'll tell you a heart-breaking story about a 4-year-old girl named Mia. But first let me tell you how you can help right away.

When you donate [\$Ask1] today, you'll help protect at-risk children in imminent danger of harm.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a critical shortage of foster carers.



Job losses, school closures, and social distancing add to the pressure on families. Children in need are experiencing terrible upheaval and even more trauma.

I've just been on the phone with Jasmine Perry, our National Foster Carer Recruitment Manager. She told me,

"The foster carer shortage has reached an emergency level. Hundreds more children need foster homes than we can provide."

Strict social distancing measures have halted the recruitment process for new carers. Right now, loving, generous fosters can't even consider fostering without your financial support.

I assured Jasmine I would reach out to you immediately.

Your [\$Ask2] donation will recruit and train foster parents. You can provide a safe place for a scared child during this crisis. Give by 30 June to include your tax-deductible donation in the 2019 tax season.

Ensure your gift goes to work protecting vulnerable children right away!

Donate online at donate.mackillop.org.au or by calling 1300 218 935. Otherwise, you can use the enclosed form and reply-paid envelope to post your gift.

The shortage of eligible foster carers was an ongoing worry before the COVID-19 pandemic. Now it's a crisis.

The foster carer shortage means kids get shuffled from one foster home to another. Often, with little warning or time to prepare.

(Salutation), you know moving is stressful at the best of times. Imagine being a small child who's forced to move three or more times... In a matter of weeks!

And, into the homes of complete strangers.

Even though foster carers are loving generous people like you, imagine how scary that is for a child.

Jasmine shared this heart-breaking story with me about a little girl named Mia...

“I think back to one child in particular –4 year old Mia.

Mia had just started to settle in with her foster family when her carer became unwell and needed to be admitted to hospital.

There weren't any other available foster carers in the area, so I drove her to her new foster home... over 2 hours away.

Two hours away from her friends... her kindergarten... her remaining family... and any support system she had ever known.

By the time we arrived, **she was so upset that she was hyperventilating**. I tried to calm her down as best I could. I went to unbuckle her from the car seat, and she threw out her arms and wouldn't let me.

She was kicking and screaming ‘I want to go home.’

It must have taken 4 hours of pacing, sitting in the car, walking around the car, talking with her... All to convince her to get out of the car and go into a new foster carer's house.

That's despite the fact that the new foster home was completely lovely. It was cosy and warm. But Mia was so upset by the upheaval and unexpected change... it was so hard for her.”

You're like me. You just want to wrap your arms around her and tuck her safe to your chest.

The sad truth is children like Mia experience this terror every day... and the pandemic is only making their situation worse.

You can make sure Mia... and children just like her... never experience terror like that again. You can provide a safe haven in the home of a loving foster family.

Will you give [Ask2] or even [Ask3] today? Your generosity will help more foster carers get the training and support they need, fast.

Your gift today can ensure Mia isn't forced to move from one foster home to another like unwanted baggage. Your love and generosity will make sure little girls and boys like Mia grow up safe and happy.

That's what MacKillop Family Services is all about. We strive to create what we all want - a stable, loving home to grow up in.

Your gift can make that possible!

Imagine for a moment, how a stable foster home could change everything for Mia. She's had a traumatic early childhood... neglected in her most formative years.

But because of you, there's a family who can take her in... for as many years or months are needed. Or until Mia's own family can get back on their feet.

Mia can feel like she's at home with this family. She can help decorate her bedroom... make friends in her neighbourhood... and get settled in at school.

What a difference stability can make for a child!

That's why I'm hoping you can urgently help with a [\$Ask2] gift today, [Salutation]. The support of generous, compassionate people like you in [State] make a real difference for abused and neglected children.

Your gift will provide long-term foster carers for children in need, so they can grow up safe and happy.

That's why your gift is so important. You can make sure we have enough long-term foster carers available in every community.

Your gift today will ensure no child is traumatized by moving from foster home to foster home.

You can make that difference today. With your [\$Ask2] gift, we'll be able to recruit and train hundreds more foster carers.

[Salutation], you can help solve this critical shortage of foster carers with a [\$Ask2] or even a [\$Ask3] gift today.

There has never been a time quite like this. So many children from all walks of life facing enormous challenges. I know you may be facing challenges of your own. I only ask you to do what you can—what is right for you and your family.



PETERSON MEDIA DESIGN

Vivid Words for Visionary People

Before I sign off, I will leave you with something that our case manager Kate asked me to share with you:

“You should know that any donation you give really goes towards helping children feel loved. What we’re wanting to do is make sure that children feel loved and cared about and wanted. Our foster carers are amazing people who have really wonderful hearts, and they’re all doing the best that they can, but there’s never enough to go around.”

Your donation makes it possible to recruit, train, and support foster carers... so every child in need has a stable home where they can grow up safe and happy.

Stay healthy, be careful, and watch out for your loved ones and neighbours. We will get through this together! On the children’s behalf, I thank you.

Yours urgently,

Dr Robyn Miller Chief Executive Officer

P.S. **Your support is needed urgently in this time of global crisis.** Your donation of \$ASK will ensure every child will find safe harbor with a stable, caring foster home. Every gift will be put to work right away to recruit, train and support children and foster carers.

P.P.S. Your health and safety are important, too! If you prefer to give from home, donate online through our secure payment portal:

donate.mackillop.org.au

Or, call 1300 218 935.



Lift Note:

Tragic Results of the Critical Foster Care Shortage

"I've seen a lot of kids go in and out of different foster care placements. Often they will say, 'I just want to stay in one house, in one home.' Just recently we had to move an 8-year-old boy to three different foster placements over the course of a week and a half. We know it has a profound effect on children. Moving them from home to home is very unsettling. Unfortunately, it's the reality of situation.

When a child has to go to 3 or 4 different carers in a short period of time—to them that feels like rejection."

- Kate, a foster care case manager

ORIGINAL LETTER →

Dear [Salutation],

Thank you for standing with MacKillop Family Services as we care for the most vulnerable children in Australia. I'm writing urgently today to request your help solving a crisis. The shortage of foster carers has reached a critical level—we need to act immediately to protect children in imminent danger of harm. I've just been on the phone with Jasmine Perry, our National Foster Carer Recruitment Manager. She says that the foster carer shortage has reached an emergency level, the worst she's ever seen, with hundreds more children needing foster homes than we can provide.



The global COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing measures have slowed down the recruitment and accreditation process for new carers. The economic downturn has made it impossible for many families to even consider fostering. And intense pressure on at-risk families means that even more children will need a safe place to go to.

The shortage of eligible foster carers has been an ongoing worry. Now it's a crisis. The Australian Government says there are 4,000?? children who will need foster homes this year. With the added pressure on families from job losses, school closures, and social distancing, that number could soar. Without adequate foster families, children in need will experience terrible upheaval and even more trauma.

I told Jasmine I would reach out to you immediately to see if you could help with a [\$Ask2] donation today or by 30 June at the latest. To ensure your gift is put to immediate use, you can donate now at donate.mackillop.org.au or by calling 1300 218 935. Otherwise, you can simply use the enclosed form and reply paid envelope to post your gift.

The unfortunate result of this foster carer shortage is that we've been forced to shuffle children from one foster home to another, with little warning or time to prepare. Moving a child from foster home to foster home is so stressful for a child that it's always a last resort. Sadly, it's a last resort we're often forced to take because of the critical shortage of carers. Just the process of moving a child from house to house can be extremely upsetting in and of itself.

As I was speaking to Jasmine about the critical shortage, she told me about a little girl named Mia:

"I think back to one child in particular - 4 year old Mia. Mia had just started to settle in with her foster family when her carer became unwell and needed to be admitted to hospital. There weren't any other available foster carers in the area, so I drove her to her new foster home...over 2 hours away. Two hours away from her friends, her kindergarten, her remaining family,



and any support system she had ever known. By the time we arrived, she was so upset that she was hyperventilating. I tried to calm her down as best I could. I went to unbuckle her from the car seat, and she threw out her arms and wouldn't let me. She was kicking and screaming 'I want to go home.' It must have taken 4 hours of pacing, sitting in the car, walking around the car, talking with her...all to convince her to get out of the car and go into a new foster carer's house. That's despite the fact that the new foster home was completely lovely. It was cosy and warm. But Mia was so upset by the upheaval and unexpected change...it was so hard for her."

Will you consider a gift of [\$Ask2] or even [\$Ask3] so MacKillop Family Services can rapidly recruit, train and support more foster carers? Your gift today can ensure that children like Mia aren't forced to move from foster home to foster home, and that they grow up safe and happy.

In speaking with our front-line staff, I've heard some very concerning stories about the situation children like Mia are facing.

Kate, a foster care case manager, has seen firsthand the results of the critical foster carer shortage:

"I've seen a lot of kids go in and out of different foster care placements. Often they will say, 'I just want to stay in one house, in one home.' Just recently we had to move an 8-year-old boy to three different foster placements over the course of a week and a half. We know it has a profound effect on children. Moving them from home to home is very unsettling. Unfortunately it's the reality of situation.

When a child has to go to 3 or 4 different carers in a short period of time—to them that feels like rejection."

To be perfectly honest, it's difficult for me to share this information with you.

My colleagues and I strive to provide the very best foster carers for children in need. But this issue is too important to



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be anything but 100% transparent. Getting an abused or neglected child into a safe foster home is only the beginning of our work. What comes after is just as important.

Children like Mia really only want one thing: a stable, loving home to grow up in. Your gift can make that possible.

Imagine for a moment, how a stable foster home could change everything for Mia. She's had a traumatic early childhood..neglected in her most formative years.

But because of you, there's a family who can take her in, for as many years or months are needed until Mia's own family can get back on their feet. Mia can feel like she's at home with this family-- she can help decorate her bedroom, she can make friends in her neighbourhood, she can get settled in at school.

What a difference stability can make for a child!

That's why I'm hoping you can urgently help with a [\$Ask2] gift today, [Salutation].

If I can get the support of enough generous and compassionate people like you in [State], we can make a real difference for abused and neglected children. Your gift will provide long-term foster carers for children in need, so they can grow up safe and happy.

You probably know all too well the harm that can befall a child left in an abusive home. We hear about it on the news far too often. But you may not know about the harm a child can experience when they're forced to constantly move from one foster home to the next.

When this happens, children can't form healthy attachments. It affects their entire lives—their future family and romantic relationships, their job prospects, their educational prospects.

It's all connected.



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That's why it's so important that we have enough long-term foster carers available in every community. Your gift today will ensure that no child has to experience the upheaval that comes with moving from foster home to foster home. You can make that difference today.

With your [\$Ask2] gift, we'll be able to recruit and train hundreds more foster carers.

Even with the COVID-19 pandemic, we've adapted our training and recruiting sessions to take place via video chatting and using other online tools.

Given the scale of the foster carer shortage, and the fact that just [\$Ask2] can help protect a child, I've directed our Foster Care Recruitment team to launch a full-scale campaign to the Australian public.

If you live in my hometown of Melbourne, you may have already seen our public awareness advertisements on a tram passing by.

My hope [Salutation], is that you can help solve this critical shortage of foster carers with a [\$Ask2] or even a [\$Ask3] gift today.

There has never been a time quite like this, with so many children from all walks of life facing enormous challenges. I know you may be facing challenges of your own. I only ask you to do what you can—what is right for you and your family.

Before I sign off, I will leave you with something that our case manager Kate asked me to share with you:

"You should know that any donation you give really goes towards helping children feel loved. What we're wanting to do is make sure that children feel loved and cared about and wanted. Our foster carers are amazing people who have really wonderful hearts, and they're all doing the best that they can, but there's never enough to go around."



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Your donation will make it possible to recruit, train, and support foster carers so every child in need has a stable home where they can grow up safe and happy.

Stay healthy, be careful, and watch out for your loved ones and neighbours. We will get through this together! On the children's behalf, I thank you.

Yours urgently,

Dr Robyn Miller

Chief Executive Officer

P.S. You can make sure your [\$Ask2] gift reaches us as quickly as possible while avoiding a trip to the post office...simply make your donation at donate.mackillop.org.au or call 1300 218 935. I'll make sure your gift goes to immediate use recruiting, training, and supporting foster carers.