



Providing Heartstrength
to Adult Survivors of
Childhood Sexual Abuse

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Heart to Hearts

Issue 49

July 2019

A Message from our CEO...

A heartfelt welcome to our winter edition. I hope you find a comfy chair and a nice warm place to read our newsletter. We have lots to share with you so please enjoy. Good news following on from our last newsletter. We have now been accepted onto the national referrals database by the [Blue Knot Foundation](#). This means that we meet the standards for treatment of complex trauma and trauma-informed care and service delivery. Our work will be guided by values set by the foundation of safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment. We look forward to this new partnership to better support survivors in our community.

♥ We've recently had some staff changes and have had to say goodbye to Nerida Hanly and Kim Coulson.

We thank them for their services to Heartfelt House and wish them well in their future endeavours.

♥ And as we embrace change we are now **hiring!** We have a new position available for a *Program Development Facilitator*. We are seeking a passionate professional with highly developed communication skills, who is driven by innovation and can help us expand our programs. They must have experience in group facilitation; possess knowledge of the impacts of complex trauma; be willing to drive forward the vision and strategic goals of Heartfelt House and work with the CEO and the Board of Directors to provide high quality service delivery. Applications close 16th August. More information is available on our website or click here for a full [job description](#) and application process. This position has also been advertised in [Ethical Jobs](#). We look forward to having a new team member join us soon!

♥ All the very best to Group 42 'Rainbow Galaxy Voyagers' who have completed their 18 week program with courage, strength and pride. What an inspirational group of ladies! May your travels be safe, bring you joy and fulfilment.

♥ Welcome to our Group 43! Dancing Topaz have commenced their group program and we wish them well in their first steps toward self-discovery, learning, growth and healing.

♥ We welcome Margie Smith to our Executive Team who is our new Fundraising Coordinator. Margie is an enthusiastic team member who has already organised a successful fundraising day! A big shout out to the [Alstonville Plateau Bowls and Sport Club](#) for hosting the event in June! A heartfelt thank you to all our supporters who donated generously and to those who provided fantastic prizes! Thank you Sarah Moore for being our MC extraordinaire for the day. We had a great day playing bowls and lots of fun and laughter was shared. All proceeds raised are used to provide services that support the healing of adult survivors and their families.

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about." – Margaret J. Wheatley

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Tuesday and Thursday 8am-3pm

Letters of gratitude from our past participants

Hello

To the brave woman who is reading this. First of all, I am sorry for what happened to you and led you to Heartfelt House. You are a survivor in pain but you are in the right place now. Heartfelt House is a safe, embracing space for you to start taking the first steps to understanding yourself and to be kind to yourself.

When I arrived at Heartfelt House I felt that I had no future in which I wasn't permanently sad and full of self loathing. Through the classes each week I have gained a little piece of myself back each time and now I am in a situation where I can show myself real compassion and I can envisage a brighter future.

The course is hard, challenging, and exhausting but the rewards are that you will have new skills and strategies to face your new life. I am grateful to have met the other beautiful women in my group and growing with them.

The facilitators of the group are amazing, I feel I have blossomed under the sun of their knowledge and compassion as you will too!

This is life— changing.

Best wishes for your journey ahead

From Lisa

Dear funding bodies

Please support and enable the Heartfelt House program to continue! It is a very worthwhile program that in all honesty, probably saves lives.

I am grateful to be informed that the service has a program for male survivors, on the cards.

This is well needed. I myself have a son who would benefit. One of the very unsavoury and tragic realities of childhood trauma and abuse is that survivors can unwillingly contribute to the perpetration of said trauma. I myself am an autistic woman who became homeless and pregnant as a teen. As a result I have brought children into the world who I could not protect because I have never been protected or taught how to protect myself or my children.

Please fund generously to help us address intergenerational trauma. This is world changing stuff. Thank you Nerida

To all the beautiful people seen and unseen behind the scenes of HFH, to all the volunteers & support networks to make sure this program runs effectively, comprehensively and smoothly, THANK YOU!

This program is LIFE CHANGING. All the details that make it what it is, all the thoughtfulness that has gone behind it, and to all the support team behind the scenes to make sure that it runs smoothly, that the women going to group feel at all times safe, supported, loved, cared for. THANK YOU!

You have no idea how the small details that all play a part in the big scheme of the essence of this program has been making a big difference to the participants! We all have talked amongst us about when seeing the food, letters, the little gifts, all the little things, how we feel SO very loved each time, thanks to ALL OF YOU!

Tremendous gratitude and heartfelt love to all those who are involved. Thank you Phoebe

Volunteering In Our Community

Did you know volunteering produces positive hormones to the brain creating a "warm glow" effect?

Numerous studies have shown that volunteering and donating make us feel happier, promotes cooperation and social connection, reduces stress and promotes feelings of gratitude. It's a win-win situation.

We rely on the generosity of donors, service clubs and other community organisations to keep our doors open.

The local Lions Clubs of Alstonville, Ballina, Goonellabah-Wollongbar, and Lismore have been committed and loyal supporters of Heartfelt House since our inception.



These clubs put the 'fun' in fundraisers. It's not just sausage sizzles and cake stalls; they hold community events such as fun runs, Christmas Carols and Halloween nights, as well as many other events.

Please think about joining Lions or another community group. You may even make some new friends!

Pictured: Our finance and admin manager, Carolyn, at the recent Lions Goonellabah-Wollongbar & Districts Changeover dinner.

DO
GOOD

FEEL

GO

A grateful heart from our participants

Dear Potential Participant,

I have been where you are now. I was so tired, overwhelmed and scared by my own thoughts and haunted by abusive memories from my past and I knew I needed help, I knew I could no longer do this on my own, I needed to reach out and finally accept some support. I was terrified.

It was not easy, in fact some weeks were really hard and challenging especially in the beginning but each week I also learnt something that helped me and gave me hope and slowly my mind became clearer and calmer. I knew I was not alone in this anymore and that the other women in the group understood me and my story and they did not turn away from me or blame me but listened and nodded and I felt heard and so relieved. It felt so good to tell the truth and be heard in that and to be given new tools and strategies to choose what I want now for my life.

Coming to Heartfelt House has been a big journey from where I was in the beginning – a bit of a mess actually and not coping at all well with my life to here... now, where my past has receded way off into the distance and I can feel myself here in the present moment and being able to make good choices for my life and move towards my dreams. I can't change my past but it no longer rules or ruins my life and I'm feeling very hopeful and sometimes I feel happy which I have not felt for a very long time.

This program is SO worth the effort, the time and the courage it takes to make this huge step towards help and hope and to invest in yourself...YOU are so worth this.. to give this to yourself, because you deserve to move away from your past and let go of all that has held you down or kept you silent and to know freedom in yourself and to be genuinely happy in your life.

Trusting you will find your way

With much love

R



Education from the Heart

Recommended books about trauma and healing

To support recovery there are many ways survivors can educate themselves about the impacts of child abuse, neglect and trauma. Reading can be an important part of the healing process. Below you will find books that may help you to gain a deeper understanding of the effects of complex trauma on your wellbeing, and give hope to post traumatic growth and recovery. Some of the books focus more on a specific type of trauma, while others are more generic. Pick a book that you resonate with the most.

Word of caution: Before starting, please create a safe space and time to read about trauma. If you feel highly traumatized, you may find it difficult to read books about trauma. Trust yourself. Safety is the first rule in trauma therapy. Choice is another. Don't push yourself to read anything that activates your nervous system or triggers flashbacks. Attend to your needs and seek other sources of education if you need. But if you want to know more and feel ready, these are the books that are recommend.

The Body Keeps the Score by Bessel van der Kolk MD

If you want to have a good understanding of what trauma is and the solutions that are available to help you cope and heal from trauma, this is the book for you. Also, if you are new to trauma and not sure what help you should seek, this book will give you a good overview of all the possible solutions.

Waking the Tiger by Peter A. Levine, PhD

This book addresses the essential role that our body plays in trauma. By working with your body and self-regulating your bodily sensations, you bypass the thoughts and emotions process. This book is suitable for people who had tried talk therapies and didn't get much result from them. It's also useful for someone who doesn't wish to talk about their traumatic experiences.

Trauma and Recovery by Judith Herman

This book explores the various types of trauma from child abuse to rape, domestic violence to war, in great detail. It also explores the effects on trauma survivors and explains the three stages of recovery – safety, remembrance and mourning, and reconnection.

If you want to understand more about trauma or you want to understand your friends and family members who have been traumatized, this is the book to read.

We welcome feedback . Let us know what you think or if you would like to recommend a book for our list .Please send us an email at info@heartfelthouse.org.au. We would love to hear from you!

Board Report

Hello supporters,

The board has been humming along over the last few months, focussed as always on the big issue for HFH - a stable future with a balanced income stream to allow us to plan effectively and deliver the best possible programs for our participants.

Donations play a huge role in our financial viability and our new board member Margie Smith has brought great energy and enthusiasm to the fund-raising and events role - the first of which kicked off successfully at Alstonville Bowling club last month.

We have traditionally had the financial and in-kind support of many local service clubs, churches and community groups. While these donors have been our life blood, unpredictability of funding is a huge weakness for certainty of program delivery - especially with over 40 people on our wait list.

That's the issue we're trying to address through the launch of the **100 Hearts corporate sponsors campaign** - more stability around revenue. We're trying to attract the interest of corporate donors to commit regularly – on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis. Many businesses and companies have well established corporate giving programs, where employees and employers make regular donations to local charities.

We want to tap into these programs and also build our relationship with a broad range of interested Northern Rivers businesses and employees who would like to nominate Heartfelt House as their charity of choice and make a huge difference to the lives of survivors by supporting our programs.

You'll be hearing more from us about this soon!

We Thank YOU!

- ♥ **Lions Club of Alstonville**
- ♥ **Goonellabah-Wollongbar & Districts Lions Club**
- ♥ **Alstonville Plateau Bowls & Sports Club**
- ♥ **Our 100 Hearts Club members**
- ♥ **Anglican Diocese of Grafton**

Essential Energy

Lions Club of Lismore

Our private donors

Our garden maintenance team

Alstonville Bargain Basement



Australian Government

Department of Social Services