Co-Design Showcase

Brighter Futures for Young People Transitioning from Out-of-Home-Care

Wednesday 24 May 2017

Bram Leigh Receptions, Croydon
“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime”.

- Chinese Proverb

Sponsored by the Outer Eastern Children and Youth Area Partnership

The Co-design Showcase: Brighter Futures for Young People Transitioning from Out-of-Home-Care is proudly sponsored by the Outer Eastern Children and Youth Area Partnership.

The Outer Eastern Children and Youth Area Partnership is part of a Victorian whole-of-government collective impact initiative aiming to find new approaches to improving the lives of vulnerable children, young people and their families.

The Outer Eastern Children and Youth Area Partnership covers three local government areas, including the Cities of Knox and Maroondah and the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

The Outer Eastern Children and Youth Area Partnership brings together representatives from government, services, business, philanthropy, service users and the community to make a difference in the lives of those who need it most.

For more information, go to https://melouteast.areapartnerships.vic.gov.au/

Acknowledgement

The Outer Eastern Children and Youth Area Partnership operates across the land of the Wurundjeri people. We acknowledge their Elders past and present and their continuing connection to their Country. We acknowledge the important place of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live in our area as the first people of Australia.

We are proud to welcome people from all cultural, religious and language backgrounds as part of our community.
Welcome to the Co-design Showcase: Brighter Futures for Young People Transitioning from Out-of-Home-Care. This showcase is the culmination of many hours of discussion over many months, about supporting every young person transitioning from out-of-home-care to thrive in their local community beyond their eighteenth birthday.

Of most importance, this work has been informed and shaped by a remarkable group of young people who know what it means to ‘leave care’. We would like to thank you for your honesty and commitment, and for journeying beside us over the past three months. Time and time again, your insights have challenged our thinking and inspired us to believe that change is possible.

We would also like to thank our five co-design teams for the passion, expertise and empathy you have brought to this endeavour. You have dedicated considerable time and skills over the past three months, and we are excited to hear more about your best ideas.

This showcase marks the beginning of a challenging but exciting journey to ensure that young people transitioning from out-of-home-care dare to dream and achieve their personal goals, whether that be getting involved in a local sporting club, getting their first job, or buying their own home.

We know from our work over the past three months that these goals, and some of the barriers to achieving them, are inextricably linked. As one young person put it: “to have a house you need to get a job, to have a job you need to get an education, and to get an education you need to be surrounded by people who care”.

The Outer Eastern Children and Youth Area Partnership Steering Group commits today to adopt or adapt the prototypes presented at the showcase, and to advocate for change within the service system and broader community.

We ask that you consider what you hear today and join with us to make a positive difference to the lives of young people transitioning from out-of-home-care in your local community.

Anthony Raitman      Sally Richmond

Co-Chairs of the Outer Eastern Children and Youth Area Partnership
Background

What’s it about?

Did you know that 35% of young people living in foster, kinship and residential care (out-of-home-care) will experience homelessness in their first year out of care?

Young people need our support to realise a Brighter Future. Whether it’s getting their first job or learning what it takes to own their own home – we all have an important role to play.

For the past 3 months we have been working to co-design innovative approaches that support young people transitioning from out-of-home-care in Outer Eastern Melbourne. We want to support young people to access sustainable housing, build skills for employment and connect to their local community.

Who’s involved?

We are a diverse group of professionals and community members passionate about making a difference for young people transitioning from out-of-home-care. Our co-design teams comprise representatives from state and local government, community service organisations, businesses, local community members, young people and carers.

Over the last 3 months, we’ve been busy learning, innovating and testing a range of prototypes to address key challenges facing young people – including housing, employment and community connection.

Co-design Sprints are facilitated by Peer Academy and sponsored by the Outer Eastern Children and Youth Area Partnership.

Key statistics

If you take 100 children aged between 18 and 25 who have transitioned from out-of-home-care:

- One quarter will be homeless and 35 will have experienced homelessness in their first year out of care.
  - AHURI 2010

- Only 35 will have completed year 12.
  - CREATE 2009

- 29 will be unemployed (compared to the national average which is 9.7 percent).
  - CREATE 2009

- Over half will report a problem with substance abuse.
  - AHURI 2010
**The Journey so far**

**What is Co-design?**

Co-design is a deliberate approach to design that aims to strategically involve all relevant stakeholders in the design process to ensure that outcomes meet their needs and are useable.

**Why Co-design?**

The co-design approach embraces the belief that in order to effect meaningful, long-term, sustainable change, solutions must be collaboratively designed by the people who will be most impacted by their implementation.

Unlike more traditional forms of community engagement (such as consultation), co-design goes beyond interpreting what stakeholders ‘say’ in relation to a problem, or observing what people ‘do’ when engaging with a system or service. Co-design jointly explores and creates solutions to an existing problem ‘for, with and by’ the community, using a facilitated design process.

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**Journey so far**

A diverse range of stakeholders were invited to form teams to participate in a 3 month co-design process to improve outcomes for young people transitioning from out-of-home-care. Participants are representative of parties connected to the out-of-home care system, including state and local government, local service providers, community members, young people (with a lived experience of the out-of-home care system) and carers.

Over the course of seven, two and half hour, facilitated co-design workshops, teams were guided through the three phases of the co-design process, to clearly identify the problem area (Inquire), generate a range of innovative ideas for solutions (Ideate), and develop and test a series of prototypes for potential implementation (Implement).

The co-design teams were supported during the sprint period by a network of ‘critical friends’ and regular feedback and testing sessions with young people between the design phases.

The outcomes presented in this brochure are the result of this diverse collaboration.
Co-Design Sprint Timeline

Sprint 1
Sprint 2
Sprint 3
Sprint 4

>> 3 MONTH PROCESS >>

Test with young people and carers

Co-Design Sprint Structure

Co-Design Teams
(5-6 participants from a range of backgrounds)

Critical Friends

Improving outcomes for young people transitioning from out-of-home-care

Critical Friends

Young people from the out-of-home-care system: Testing + Feedback

Critical Friends
Allowing kids to be kids and carers to be carers: Changing practice to give kids and carers power over decision making

**Overview:**

Children and young people in out-of-home-care are not empowered to make developmentally appropriate decisions, such as whether or not to get their haircut, or ears pierced, or whether they would like to start to play sports or explore other interests.

A number of young people who have left care struggle to maintain secure housing, get a job, manage their finances and make simple decisions about their lives because they've had no practice doing so while in care.

“We had to grow up real fast and weren't ready to make the decisions we had to make”

**Solution:**

Two components:

**Carer Support Group by Carers for Carers:** An informal carers group, run by carers, not the service system. Carers can share their learned experiences, and bring in experts (e.g. trauma informed clinicians, alcohol and other drug experts) as required. This group will empower carers to make appropriate decisions for the kids in their care, as they know them best.

**Youth Advocates.** Youth advocates will help kids and carers to have a voice, make decisions where appropriate and shape practice. Youth Advocates will engage kids and carers through activities and existing structures (e.g. care teams), and empower kids to make developmentally appropriate decisions.

**Benefits:**

Our solution will equip kids to make appropriate life decisions from an earlier age, which will empower them and result in greater capacity to make decisions in future.

Our solution will provide carers with additional peer-to-peer support, leading to increased placement stability and carer longevity, and fewer breaks between carers caring for kids.

**Ask us about:**

1. What is the time frame for the initiative?
2. What are the estimated costs?
3. How will the youth advocates be engaged?

**Contact details:**

Rebecca Fitzsimons
Department of Health and Human Services

Rebecca.Fitzsimons@dhhs.vic.gov.au
03 9843 6172 or 0412 146 498
Overview:

Young people leaving care are telling us that the system is not working and that they feel disconnected from the community. Statistics support this and many of our young people are at risk of negative influences now and into their futures. Young people in care are struggling to make connections to the community that can guide them on their journey into adulthood.

Solution:

Young people are telling us that they need someone to journey alongside them - a ‘co-pilot’ to help them to identify where they want to go, how to get there, and most importantly introduce them to community conduits to board their bus and support them on their travels.

We propose that a ‘Community Connector’ will be employed to engage with young people in care to uncover their interests, passions and aspirations. The Community Connector will forge sustainable connections between young people and their local communities, so that they experience a genuine sense of belonging.

Benefits:

Our solution will build lasting relationships between the care system and existing community groups to ensure sustainability.

If young people feel connected, safe and supported, they’re more likely to overcome life's potholes and speed-bumps to successfully navigate life's journey.

Ask us about:

1. How will you identify the goals of the young people?
2. Who are the community connectors?
3. Tell me about the co-pilot?

Contact details:

Adam Cooper
City of Maroondah

Adam.Cooper@maroondah.vic.gov.au
03 9294 5702 or 0400 848 791
The GAP Project

Grow Aspire Prosper

Overview:
Young people can't see a positive future and need support to grow their life and enterprise skills so that they can aspire to getting and keeping a job that will enable them to live a prosperous life. Currently, 29% of young people leaving care are unemployed and this often leads to homelessness. Many report that they do not have the skills to get or hold down a job.

Solution:
The GAP Project is a social enterprise that provides young people leaving care with the opportunities and experiences they require to find the job they want; prepare for, apply for and obtain the job they want; and develop the skills required to maintain the job they want.

The opportunities offered to young people will depend on the individual young person's needs, but will include a supportive environment where life and enterprise skills are taught and applied alongside mentors who will cheer them on to success.

We have tested our solution with Youth Advisors who have a lived experience of out-of-home-care. Some of the elements essential to gaining and maintaining employment that they have identified include understanding their own strengths and finding their passions; having opportunities to “taste” a number of different work environments; having someone to journey alongside them as they enter the world of work; and having opportunities to support other young people and the ongoing improvement of the system.

Benefits:
The benefits of our solution are that the young people will be paid to be part of the social enterprise. This will provide young people with the security they need to meet their living expenses, and additional money that they will be supported to manage.

With the solution being tailored, young people will be empowered to choose their experiences so that their can ‘own’ the outcomes.

Ask us about:
1. What are the skill GAPs in young people transitioning from out-of-home-care?
2. How will life skills be taught?

Contact details:
Edwina Ricci
Croydon Chamber of Commerce
edwina@cooperativesportsdevelopment.com
0425 533 118
Overview:

15-year-old young people traditionally begin to seek part-time employment while still at school. Young people leaving care do not have the same opportunities to develop employability skills as other 15–18 year-olds, and leave care with less employment experience, thereby affecting their opportunities to obtain employment and their ability to support themselves after they leave care.

Young people aged 18 years old leaving care have lower long-term employment prospects, due to a lack of systems and/or frameworks to support them to build employment experience prior to leaving care. Young people living in out-of-home-care lack support, aspiration, skill and confidence to navigate a competitive youth job market.

Four to five years after leaving care:
• Only 25% of care leavers are in full-time employment and/or education,
• Compared with 70% of 20 – 24 year-olds in the general population

Solution:

A downloadable app for a smart phone designed with and by young people living in out-of-home care (15 years old +) to:
• Browse available part-time/casual jobs offered by employers who will prioritise employment opportunities and/or support for young people living in out-of-home care to gain valuable employment experience.
• Create/upload their profile and/or resume
• Access tips about interview skills, resume writing, and more...

Benefits:

Our solution gives young people living in out-of-home care support to get and keep their first job.

It will improve long-term employment prospects for young people living in out-of-home care, and make it easy for young people to link with employers who will support employment opportunities for young people living in out-of-home-care.

Ask us about:

1. How to engage employers to support this initiative and the jobs that will be offered?
2. Ask us how the app can be managed to target young people living in out-of-home-care?
3. Ask us about co-ordinating the service and how we can ensure that Dillon is sustainable?

Contact details:

Linda Kearley
Swinburne University
lkearley@swin.edu.au
03 9726 1705 or 0415 263 934
A Place to Truly Call Home

Creating real opportunities for young people leaving residential care

**Overview:**
Young people leaving care require additional supports to develop the complex skills and emotional capacity to create and maintain a ‘home’.

- 35% of young people experience homelessness in the first year after leaving care.
- 50% experience homelessness within 5 years of leaving care.

How might we support young people leaving care to develop the skills they require to be able to create and maintain a home?

**Solution:**
Our solution aims to equip young people with the skills, tools and capacity to own and maintain a place they can truly call home.

Inspired by the principles of Habitat for Humanity, our prototype will provide young people with an opportunity to build a range of skills required to build and maintain a home, and most importantly, will provide young people with the opportunity to own this home.

Young people who have the opportunity to be part of this program will be the primary decision maker from the outset, and will have the opportunity to be part of a solution that creates permanent housing. From the initial stages of budgeting, design and throughout construction – the young people will be mentored and supported to create a home.

**Benefits:**
Our solution will inspire and equip young people in residential care to own their own home, just like other young people do.

It will assist young people to develop a social conscience and strong work ethic, and provide an opportunity for young people to participate in a volunteering role which positively contributes to the lives of others.

**Ask us about:**
1. Your ideas about land acquisition in Eastern Melbourne
2. Your connections with building or construction companies that might be interested to partner on this project
3. Your interest in partnering with us on this project

**Contact details:**
Janene Evans
Wesley
janene.evans@wesley.org.au
03 8870 4007 or 0466 748 880
What’s Next?

Where to from here?

From today, the Outer Eastern Children and Youth Area Partnership commits to:

- Lead the implementation of low cost solutions. This may include the realignment of existing resources.
- Source funding to support one or more medium-high cost solution(s). Funding may be sourced in two ways, including:
  i) realignment of existing resources and/or
  ii) grant applications to additional funding sources (e.g. philanthropy).

For funding to be sourced, solutions must be:

- **Effective** (demonstrate the potential for significant impact on outcomes for young people transitioning from out-of-home-care)
- **Innovative** (demonstrate divergence from current practice)
- **Collaborative** (demonstrate partnerships between a diverse range of stakeholders from within and beyond the service system)
- **Sustainable** (demonstrate sustainability of impact beyond any funded period).

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our remarkable group of Youth Advisors with lived experience of the out-of-home-care system, for challenging our thinking and inspiring us to believe that change is possible.
## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our team of passionate and committed co-designers, who have given generously of their time and expertise over the past 3 months.

We would also like to thank our Co-design Facilitator, Christian Duell, for bringing enthusiasm and empathy to every session, and for leading, challenging and encouraging us to test, trial and innovate.

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## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our extensive network of critical friends, who have supported and provided feedback to our co-design teams over the past 3 months.

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The Starfish Story

A young girl was walking along a beach upon which thousands of starfish had been washed up during a terrible storm. When she came to each starfish, she would pick it up, and throw it back into the ocean. People watched her with amusement.

She had been doing this for some time when a man approached her and said, “Little girl, why are you doing this? Look at this beach! You can't save all these starfish. You can't begin to make a difference!”

The girl seemed crushed, suddenly deflated. But after a few moments, she bent down, picked up another starfish, and hurled it as far as she could into the ocean. Then she looked up at the man and replied, “Well, I made a difference to that one!”

The old man looked at the girl inquisitively and thought about what she had done and said. Inspired, he joined the little girl in throwing starfish back into the sea. Soon others joined and all the starfish were saved.

– Adapted from The Star Thrower by Loren C. Eiseley