



## From the President's Desk

To our many friends and supporters, welcome to our 106th issue of The Red Feather. In this issue, we feature articles about Raphael and Klibur Domin volunteers plus recent happenings at both homes, all celebrating the wonderful work our homes and volunteers do *'for the relief of suffering without discrimination.'*

I was particularly touched by the story of one of our early sponsored boys at Raphael, Dhanvir Sing, who went on to have a fulfilling career as a mechanic. It is delightful that his family have kept in touch with the original and only sponsor he had, Trish Frith. Dhanvir's family's gratitude is intergenerational. It makes me wonder how many of our long-standing supporters and volunteers might also pass on the baton of love and giving it to their children and grandchildren. I believe the modern term is 'paying it forward'.

Closer to home, I am pleased to say that RCA continues to make improvements to our organisational infrastructure and systems of governance. Having had a call a few weeks ago from the charities regulator, I was reminded that we not only owe a duty to the homes we support, but also the obligation we have to the Australian taxpayers who effectively subsidise our donations through the deductible gift receipt (DGR) status we have.

I am very pleased to see that for the nine months to September 2025, our donations have remained consistent with those of the same period last year. Sadly, we have lost many good supporters and donors, but we have continued to find new people who recognise the power of our mission delivered 100% by our volunteers. Every dollar that is donated reaches its intended beneficiary, and it is not diluted by administration fees or paid fundraisers. Our corpus, again so generously supported by many, including bequests, continues to grow. This is reflected in the increased level of income and dividends it generates, and therefore supplements the funds we can remit to the homes we support. Again, thank you for giving so generously.

You will soon be receiving a personal email from me informing you of our second 2025 RCA Appeal. The coming Festive Season is a time of giving and we hope that you will consider giving to continue *'the relief of suffering without discrimination'* at both our homes. Thank you in advance.

On a sad note, we lost a very special and much-loved supporter of Klibur Domin and RCA. Father Ted Burns passed away at the end of September. His powerful and inspirational sermons were matched by his own personal financial support and countless visits to Timor-Leste. He was one of the last links to our Founders, Leonard Cheshire and Sue Ryder, and I will not forget the interview Father Ted recorded two years ago. <https://youtu.be/Yfeqg-5-3z0?si=vo4ETqqQ4OwtXlbU>

Finally, I would like to thank Siobhan Reeves. She was elected to the board last year. Recently Siobhan has had to resign for work reasons. Siobhan chaired the International Committee and provided wise counsel and assistance on a number of important policies.

With best wishes to all our supporters, volunteers and donors.

*Paul Fearon* President



Paul Fearon

### In This Issue

From the President's Desk	1
Honouring Fr Ted Burns	2
Volunteering	3
A Special Visit	3
Happy Diwali	4
Visiting Raphael	4
Back to Klibur Domin	4
'Sharing with Love'	5
Unforgettable Experience.	6
An Experience forever.	6
Vale Dennis Sleight	7
Vale Ron Southall	7
CONTACTS	7

Ryder-Cheshire Australia gratefully acknowledges David and Neil Coath of **PROMPT DISTRIBUTION PTY LTD** Somerton Victoria who most generously arrange and pay for the distribution of this Newsletter. Thank you David and Neil. We so much appreciate your generosity.



## Honouring Fr Ted Burns



Fr Francis Edward (Ted) Burns sadly passed away on 29 September 2025 aged 87.

Fr Ted first met Leonard Cheshire in 1962 when Leonard visited the Corpus Christi College where he was studying for the priesthood. Fr Ted was highly impressed with the humanitarian work that Leonard and his wife Sue Ryder were doing, and he committed himself to help in whatever way he could once he was ordained. This led to a life of promoting the work of the Ryder-Cheshire Foundation that continued until his death, and which will continue to have a positive impact on the lives of thousands of sick and disabled people for many years to come.



Fr Ted approached this task with passion and enthusiasm. He was unrivalled in his ability to raise funds, using every opportunity to seek donations, sponsorships and bequests from far and wide. His message was clear, uncomplicated and from the heart, and most who heard it were moved to offer their support.

His passionate approach convinced many to become Ryder-Cheshire volunteers at Raphael in India and particularly at Klibur Domin in Timor-Leste.

Fr Ted visited Timor-Leste on eleven different occasions, travelling to remote mountain villages to seek out people who desperately needed help. On one such visit, the need for a

Respite Centre at Klibur Domin became clear to him, and he personally donated the funds needed to construct the twelve bed St Damien's Respite Centre to honour St Damien of Molokai, the Patron Saint of Lepers.

More recently, Fr Ted again personally donated the funds needed to construct a new Medical Centre which will soon be built at Klibur Domin, but sadly, he did not live to see it completed.

Fr Ted is mourned by his brother Ray, his sister Rose and her husband John, and his family and friends including many Ryder-Cheshire supporters who knew and respected him. He will be sadly missed by all, none more than the many people he worked with and supported at Klibur Domin.

May He Rest in Peace.

Peter Newton



# Volunteering

## Recently retired? Gap year? Time out?

Raphael welcomes volunteers. Here's how you might fit in. **What to expect:** Raphael is a community: residents, staff, teachers, volunteers, trainees, visitors. Its setting is peaceful: spacious, with trees, gardens and birdsong.

Raphael's main work is special needs education: for children and adults with autism, cerebral palsy, Downs, and various physical and mental disabilities. Additionally, its day clinic provides tuberculosis treatment, and general medical care. There is also a group of residents with treated leprosy, and most recently a simple facility for elder care has opened at Raphael.

**Do I need particular skills?** *Certain skills are a bonus, but generalists are very welcome too. Physios, Occupational Therapists, Special Needs educators, IT Media and Coms enthusiasts, Sports, Music and ESL teachers and crafts people, will all find a ready fit. But most volunteers at Raphael simply come with a readiness to help out and get 'stuck in'.*

**Free time:** Volunteers follow the same work hours as the staff. Weekends are free, and with Tuk Tuks and taxi apps

it's easy to get to the bazaars, cafes and temples. Haridwar and Rishikesh, popular pilgrim sites on the Ganges, are nearby and an easy weekend visit.

**Accommodation:** The volunteers' guesthouse is simple but comfortable and convenient. Meals are provided by the cooks for a small charge.

Many volunteers arrive wondering how it will work out.

All leave feeling fulfilled and satisfied: enhancing the quality of life of others while at the same time changing for the good in yourself. Give it a go!

For more detailed information go to

[ryder-cheshire.org](http://ryder-cheshire.org)

*In the next issue, number 107- 2026, The Red Feather we will be featuring volunteering at Klibur Domin in Timor-Leste.*

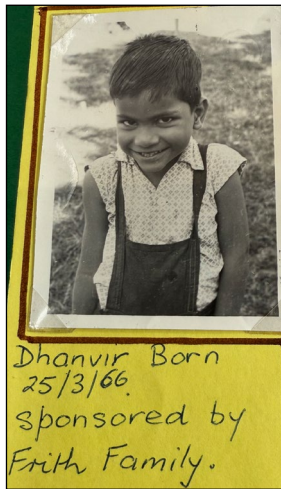
*Susie Mackerras, RCA Volunteers' Coordinator, with appreciation to Carolyn Tapley, Chair New Zealand Ryder-Cheshire Foundation, for content.*



## A Special Visit with a Special Story

Several weeks ago we were extended an invitation by Ryder-Cheshire member Trish Frith to visit her in Willunga, South Australia. Trish was so excited as Sunanda the daughter of Dhanvir Sing, who she sponsored some fifty years ago was to be staying with her and her family.

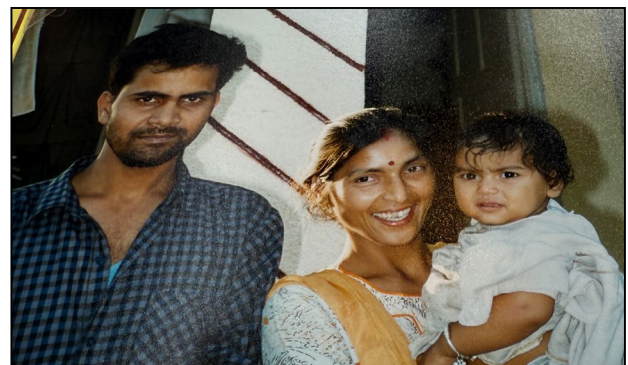
Dhanvir, Sunanda's father, began his life in Raphael at The Little White House which was originally white, now is red, but is still nostalgically called, The Little White House. His parents lived in Shiv Sadan. His mother, known as Grannie to her granddaughters, passed away in 2000. A dear friend took over her role and as Sunanda explained, 'We also call her Grannie and she brought us up with love and affection.'



Dhanvir is still working as a mechanic. He will turn 60 next year.

Dhanvir met his wife, Sushila, at Raphael. Their two daughters grew up in Raphael. The older, Sunanda, is a nurse and the younger, Sonali, is a physiotherapist.

We had such a lovely time meeting Sunanda with Trish and her family for coffee at Port Norlunga. Sunanda was one week in South Australia as that is the only time she had for a holiday.



Dhanvir studied well, being a happy mischievous little boy at Raphael. Upon completing his studies he met a man who was a highly accomplished mechanic and because Dhanvir had a great interest in anything mechanical he took him on as his apprentice.

Trish has made several trips to India to meet with Dhanvir and his family. They affectionately call her Grannie also.

Sunanda told us that Raphael means so much to her father, 'My father is so grateful to Trish for sponsoring him at Raphael. She was his only sponsor.' Sponsoring a person or a program 'for the relief of suffering without discrimination' certainly makes such a difference to the lives of those who need this support and Dhanvir is certainly one example of this.

*Dianne McGrath and Terry Warr written with permission from Sunanda and her father.*



## Happy Diwali

The Festival of Lights known as Diwali was celebrated at Raphael on 20th October.

The students worked very, very hard putting all their effort and dedication into crafting the beautiful Diyas which are oil lamps made from clay with a cotton wick dipped in oil.

The staff and volunteers were on hand to assist the students. The orders for the Diyas were huge. Each Diya represented the valuable skills and hard work undertaken by all of the students.

We hope you had a Happy Diwali.

Content provided by Surabhi Khanduri, Raphael Public Relations Officer



## Visiting Raphael

I was very interested to visit Raphael whilst passing through Uttarakhand Region on my way to trekking in the Himalayas. Having worked in an administrative capacity with a not-for-profit cerebral palsy organisation in Melbourne, several years ago, I was interested to see how children with cerebral palsy were taught and looked after in India.

I thoroughly enjoyed my day and night at Raphael. I was very impressed with not only the set-up there but also the genuine feeling of care and happiness that I felt in the place and from the students.

I also enjoyed talking to various staff members, who were just lovely.



The ratio of staff to students is very good and the teaching, therapeutic and workshop activities were all thoroughly thought through and managed well.

I have to give a huge thanks to Trish, another Australian volunteer, who welcomed me, showed me around, introduced me to everyone. She is a great ambassador for Raphael.

Raphael is in a beautiful forested setting, with easy access to all the necessities of a big city, Dehradun. I think it is a great place to volunteer at and all contributions are valued and appreciated.

Pam

## Back to Klibur Domin

I returned to volunteer at Klibur Domin this year. I again provided diversional therapy for the clients at Klibur Domin. I also fixed sewing machines at both KD and the school across the road from KD. I was then able to make new aprons for the KD kitchen staff. They were so happy.

Joy





### 'Sharing With Love'

I have visited and volunteered in Timor-Leste many times, mostly at the Ryder-Cheshire health facility Klibur Domin (KD) at Tibar which is a small village about 20kms west of the capital city, Dili. Klibur Domin means 'sharing with love' in the local language, Tetum. I have such a great love and respect for the Timorese. I gave an up to date and comprehensive presentation on the humanitarian work that is undertaken at KD to assist in 'the relief of suffering without discrimination', the mission of Ryder-Cheshire, to the Ballarat Ryder-Cheshire Support Group on my return to Ballarat.

Prior to my departure, the Ballarat Ryder-Cheshire Support Group collected boxes of Panadol/paracetamol for me to take to Klibur Domin. The Managing Director, Sr Joaquim



Soares, was most grateful for the gift. The medicine will be used at their Medical Clinic to assist pain management.

KD is the leading Timorese health facility in the detection and management of Tuberculosis (TB),

and the Multi Drug Resistant TB, which continue to exist in so many of the people. The residential facility also supports people with disabilities, women suffering mental health issues from domestic violence, dental health problems and other ailments. Physiotherapy and occupational therapy are provided.

Volunteers are always welcome to give their time to assist at KD. It is a life changing experience whilst doing good and 'sharing with love' for others.

Go to [ryder-cheshire.org](http://ryder-cheshire.org) for more information on how to embark on volunteering at KD, Tibar in Timor-Leste or at the other Ryder-Cheshire home Raphael in Dehradun, Northern

India.

Firstly, I attended a three day international research conference 'Understanding Timor-Leste' held at the Resistance Museum and at the National University in Dili (UNTL) organised by Swinburne University of Technology and UNTL. The conference covered many topics and was presented in four languages; Tetum, Portuguese, Indonesian and English. Topics included Peace Studies, Agriculture, Social inclusion, Gender research, ASEAN, Marine environment, economy, Development policy, Climate change, etc. The Australian Ambassador in Dili held a Welcome Event at the embassy for over 300 conference delegates on the night before the conference began on 16 July 2025.

I then spent time in the Municipality of Ainaro up in the mountains, 132 kms south of Dili, visiting friends and learning about the work that is currently being undertaken to build community including a meeting with local Police Command about the work of the Vulnerable Persons Unit (domestic violence unit). Also, Ainaro Municipality has had a Friendship Agreement with the City of Ballarat since 2005 and which has recently been re-signed.

Of all the many times I have been to Timor-Leste, I have never visited Oecusse-Ambeno, which is the 13th district of Timor-Leste, but is situated on the coast in West Timor/Indonesia. With my Timorese family, I flew to Oecusse-Ambeno, a 35 minute AeroDili flight from Dili. I was able to spend a week in Oekusse learning about this area such as the lack of water, the poverty of the people and how hospitable and friendly the people are with so little. I also visited two small villages, Bobocasse and Baqui, and spent time with some families there. This was an unforgettable experience.

At the Ballarat Ryder-Cheshire Support Group meeting on 23 September 2025, I was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation for Continuous Volunteer Service at Klibur Domin. This was such an honour for me to have my volunteering at KD recognized and highly regarded by Ryder-Cheshire.

Di Hadden, Ballarat Support Group.



## An Unforgettable Experience

Over the past six weeks, I had the incredible opportunity to volunteer at the Raphael Centre for disabled children in Dehradun, India. My time there was both eye-opening and deeply rewarding. Each day brought something new to learn and experience, both from the students and from the dedicated staff who support them.

One of my main roles was helping to teach the children basic sports skills. We spent our mornings practising how to bounce a basketball, throw balls into the hoop, and develop coordination through simple games. Seeing their excitement and pride as they improved was one of the most rewarding parts of my time at Raphael.

In the afternoons, I helped in the candle-making workshop. Together with the students, we worked through each stage of the process; pouring the wax, cleaning the candles, and preparing them for sale. It was amazing to see how these activities help the students develop valuable life skills and independence while contributing to the Centre's self-sustainability.

Beyond the daily activities, one of the highlights of my experience was forming close connections with many of the children and staff. Their warmth, humour, and resilience made every day feel meaningful and reminded me how much joy can be found in small, shared moments. I also found that this time deeply shaped me personally and spiritually. There were moments that challenged me, but they also taught me to slow down, trust, and rely on God's strength and presence through it all.

During weekends, I had the chance to explore Dehradun and the surrounding areas. The town itself is lively and full of character, with great food and friendly locals. I also took a few trips to nearby Rishikesh, which quickly became one of my favourite places. Its scenic views and peaceful atmosphere made it a perfect weekend escape. In the evenings, I often went to a local gym near the Centre, which was a nice way to

unwind and reflect on the day. Looking back, I often noticed how everything seemed to fall into place at the right time, in quiet ways that reminded me that God was present in every detail.



My time at Raphael was an unforgettable experience. It taught me patience, compassion, and the importance of community. It also helped strengthen my faith and reminded me to see God's hand in both the challenges and the joys. I'm grateful to have been part of such a meaningful project, and I would encourage anyone considering volunteering to look into the Raphael Centre.

Mark



## An Experience for Ever.

My time at Klibur Domin in Timor-Leste was an experience I'll carry with me for a long time. The warmth of both the staff and residents was immediate and humbling. Despite being in a small, quiet area outside Dili, in Tibar, there was a powerful sense of community and resilience. The peacefulness of the surroundings, paired with the steady rhythm of daily life, made me feel deeply connected to the place. Though I was there to help, I found that I gained just as much as I gave. The experience reminded me of the importance of human connection, of how even small acts can make a meaningful difference. It was a privilege to witness the resilience and hope that defines the heart of Timor-Leste.

During my time, I supported hygiene education in local schools, delivered nappies and sanitary pads to the community, and helped sew reusable products for children with disabilities—something I'd never done before. These tasks were simple, but they felt meaningful, and I was grateful to be able to contribute in small, practical ways.



I hope that others who read this consider volunteering at Klibur Domin. The opportunity to be part of these communities, even for a short time, is truly life-changing.

Tali



## Vale Dennis Sleigh

Dennis Sleigh was a loyal supporter of the ACT Foundation from the late 1980s including as President, until it wound up not long after Dennis was posted away to the position of Principal of the Catholic School in Temora, NSW. Dennis and his wife, Margaret, who was National Treasurer for 16 years then turned their allegiance to the NSW branch where they continued as supporters to this day.



In 1980, Dennis, Margaret and their three children moved to Canberra where, toward the end of the decade, they were introduced to the work of the

Ryder Cheshire Foundations. At about that time, Dennis met and was truly inspired by the late Leonard Cheshire. Dennis and Margaret became firm supporters of Ryder Cheshire with both taking executive positions as required and being involved in all the activities of the small Foundation.

Dennis is described by the University of Canberra as one of Australia's most distinguished educators. He was a prolific writer and teachers all over Australia have read and benefitted from his wisdom.

He died in Wagga Wagga Hospital on 23 July 2025 at 80 years of age. No doubt he is enjoying one of those deep and meaningful discussions that he so enjoyed with Leonard years ago.

May He Rest in Peace.

For the full version of the Vale go to [ryder-cheshire.org](http://ryder-cheshire.org)

Patricia McDonnell with content provided by Margaret Sleigh.



## Vale Ron Southall

One of our very faithful sponsors, Mr Ron Southall, passed away recently. He was 91 years of age.

Mr Southall had been a sponsor of residents at Raphael for more than 50 years!

He was a very private person, devoted to his family and special friends.

I never met Mr Southall personally, as he didn't attend our functions, but reliably, after receiving his annual sponsorship renewal reminder, a cheque would arrive in the mail from him.

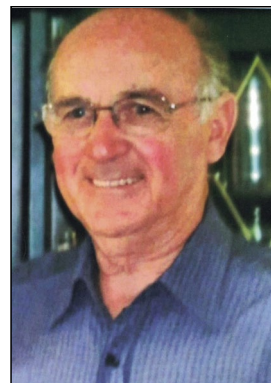
He had taken a special interest in Bharat, a long-term resident of Raphael.

Mr Southall was one of the partners in a very successful local business in Ballarat which ran until he became unwell, and his loyal business partner retired. He was very well respected by all the people who worked in the business over the years.

We thank Mr Southall most sincerely for his unwavering and long-standing support for 'the relief of suffering without discrimination', after the example of our founders, Leonard Cheshire and Sue Ryder.

May He Rest in Peace.

Dorothy Carpenter, Ballarat Support Group



### RYDER-CHESHIRE AUSTRALIA

Founders:  
Group Captain Lord Cheshire  
of Woodhall  
VC OM DSO\*\* DFC  
and  
Lady Ryder of Warsaw CMG OBE

## CONTACTS

### RCA Board Chair

Paul Fearon  
[president@ryder-cheshire.org](mailto:president@ryder-cheshire.org)

### National Treasurer & Public Officer

Peter Colliver 03 5944 4500  
[treasurer@ryder-cheshire.org](mailto:treasurer@ryder-cheshire.org)

### Ballarat Support Group

Dianne McGrath 0411 874 756  
[ballarat@ryder-cheshire.org](mailto:ballarat@ryder-cheshire.org)

### Bendigo Support Group

Hugh Elphinstone 03 5443 1163  
[bendigo@ryder-cheshire.org](mailto:bendigo@ryder-cheshire.org)

### Mount Gambier Homes

Matthew Dixon 08 8723 0648  
[mt\\_gambier\\_home@ryder-cheshire.org](mailto:mt_gambier_home@ryder-cheshire.org)

### New South Wales

Christine Hannan 02 9416 7569  
[nsw@ryder-cheshire.org](mailto:nsw@ryder-cheshire.org)

### South Australia

Rory McEwen 0417 803 627  
[rorymce@bigpond.com](mailto:rorymce@bigpond.com)

### Victoria

Michael Moignard 03 9459 8040  
[victoria@ryder-cheshire.org](mailto:victoria@ryder-cheshire.org)

### Victorian Homes Ivanhoe

Kathleen Oswin  
[office@rydercheshirehomes.com.au](mailto:office@rydercheshirehomes.com.au)  
Ivanhoe Home 03 9254 2400

### Overseas Volunteers' Co-ordinator

Susie Mackerras 02 9880 8094  
[volunteering@ryder-cheshire.org](mailto:volunteering@ryder-cheshire.org)

### Red Feather & Website Editors

Dianne McGrath  
Terry Warr  
[website@ryder-cheshire.org](mailto:website@ryder-cheshire.org)

### Website

[www.ryder-cheshire.org](http://www.ryder-cheshire.org)



## Help Transform Lives with Ryder-Cheshire

Bringing hope, health and dignity to people in need 'for relief of suffering without discrimination'.

Ryder-Cheshire supports two overseas Homes - Raphael in India and Klibur Domin in Timor-Leste where compassion and care change lives every day.

### How You Can Help

- Sponsor a program or resident at Raphael or Klibur Domin
- Make a donation at any time
- Leave a bequest in your will to create lasting impact
- Volunteer at one or both of the overseas Homes

### Why Your Support Matters

Your generosity keeps vital programs running - improving health, restoring dignity, and bringing hope to those who need it most.

Ryder-Cheshire Australia is managed entirely by volunteers where every dollar donated for our overseas Homes goes to our overseas Homes — 100% of donations and sponsorships reaches those in need.

The Ryder-Cheshire Overseas Aid Fund (OAF) is a tax-deductible gift recipient, so all donations and sponsorships of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

### Be Part of Something Truly Life-Changing

To donate, sponsor, volunteer, or leave a bequest, visit: [ryder-cheshire.org](http://ryder-cheshire.org) or you can post cheques to PO Box 51, Glen Iris., Vic., 3146.

Together, we can continue to bring hope, healing and dignity to those who need it most.

Ryder-Cheshire Australia's mission is 'for the relief of suffering without discrimination'.

For more information [ryder-cheshire.org](http://ryder-cheshire.org)



## Volunteers Needed

At our Homes; Raphael, India and Klibur Domin, Timor-Leste  
and also locally

Join one of the RCA Board Committees

To help provide 'for the relief of suffering without discrimination'

### Missing Newsletters

Thank you to those of you who have found and sent through some of the missing newsletters. As they are received the paper copies are scanned and uploaded. You can find them here [rydercheshire.org/media/newsletters/The Red Feather](http://rydercheshire.org/media/newsletters/The%20Red%20Feather)

We still need:

1993 to 1996 (three newsletters)

1991 (one newsletter)

1976 to 1989 (thirteen newsletters)

1973 (one newsletter)

Let the Editors know if you have any of the missing newsletters. They will be scanned and returned to you OR you may like to email your scanned copy to the Editors

### Wanted Sponsorships Urgently Needed

Raphael in India  
and

Klibur Domin in  
Timor-Leste  
each have a pressing need  
for sponsorships

Your sponsorship will help  
our mission

'for the relief of suffering  
without discrimination'.

### RCA Membership Renewals

Remember to renew your  
annual membership by  
January 1st 2026

\$20.00 per year as per  
RCA website

[ryder-cheshire.org/  
membership](http://ryder-cheshire.org/membership)

If you are not a member  
please consider becoming  
a financial member as per  
RCA website