

media release



Wednesday 19th August 2009

Making a difference in a child's world

Foster Carer's Week – 23rd to 29th August 2009

ac.care recruits foster carers in the South East, Riverland and Murraylands of South Australia to care for children and young people aged 0 to 18 who need a safe and stable home and are unable to be placed with relatives or friends.

During Foster Carer's Week ac.care acknowledges and thanks all Foster Carer's commitment, responsibility, unconditional care and support of children when they open their hearts and homes and make a difference in a child's world.

how ac.care works to support foster carers

ac.care works to provide a high standard of safe, nurturing and stable home environments for children under the guardianship of the Minister. ac.care's **care of Foster Carers is a high priority** providing ongoing emotional support, financial assistance, special training and advice on caring for foster children.

"A decision to become a Foster Carer to a child or children in need could be one of the most important decisions to change the course of a child's life in a positive way. Foster carers are everyday members of the community who make an extraordinary contribution through their commitment to care for and meet the needs of vulnerable children and young people" Rob Foggo, CEO, ac.care.

He continued "foster carers often need respite themselves and there is a great need for new respite carers who can take a child for a weekend or a few days, giving the foster carers a necessary break"

children can no longer live at home for diverse reasons

- Victims of emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse
- Neglect or Abandonment
- Family breakdown or a death in the family
- A lack of parenting skills
- Medical conditions
- Drug and Alcohol abuse
- Domestic violence

types of foster care

Respite Care is short stays to give foster families a short break. This may be negotiated to happen on a regular basis or a one-off stay. Respite care usually takes place over long weekends and school holidays.

Emergency Care may be needed at any time and on very short notice. It can be from an overnight stay or last up to two weeks.

Short Term Care is for a period of two weeks to two years. A child or young person may be placed in long term care once they have completed a period of temporary care.

Long Term Care for a child is needed when a child is unable to live with their family and needs a stable, safe environment in which to grow up or until they can return to their family. Long term care may be required until a child turns 18.

Local carers for local children is preferred to avoid placing a child in care away from their familiar surroundings such as school, friends, relatives and interests like junior sport.

who can be a foster carer

- Be over 25 years of age
- Have common sense, patience, understanding and flexibility
- Have the required skills to look after children
- Be willing to learn about some serious issues that lead to children coming into care
- Be able to let go when the times comes for families to be reunited
- Be willing to undertake screening checks, assessments and required training
- Male or female
- Single, married, couples or partners, with or without children
- Consideration is given to a potential carers' maturity, health and lifestyle

steps to become a foster carer

Step 1 Make your initial inquiry by contacting **ac.care** in your local area

Step 2 Meet with ac.care staff to learn more about fostering and discuss:

- What type of foster caring you may be interested in providing
- The significant responsibilities of foster caring
- The implications of undertaking the role of foster caring including the impact it may have upon your family and friends

Step 3 Pre-assessment screening

Step 4 Formal assessment and orientation training

Step 5 Recommendation to Families SA

statistics | ac.care 2008

South East	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 378 requests for placement• 42 Foster Care households
Riverland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 120 requests for placement• 16 Foster Care households
Murraylands	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 504 requests for placement• 66 Foster Care households

a local foster carer reflects

"I'm writing to you (ac.care) to share the **best experience in my life so far.**

It just happened I was sitting at home one day over a weekend, I recall watching TV and a commercial grabbed my attention, "They badly needed local Foster Carers for children." This made my mind turn.

I was 25 years old, I had gone as far as I could in my small business. I was paying of my own home and I had spare rooms. I had a great childhood with fantastic family support. I am close to my parents so we discussed the changes that Foster Caring would bring to our lives. I felt confident in the decision I was about to make.

I undertook the training required and found this knowledge to be a real eye opener into how some people really live. ac.care provided me with great knowledge on everything possible and the support was fantastic, they were always happy to help in any situation. I give credit to ac.care Foster Care support team and admire the staff at ac.care.

I have been a Foster Carer for over five years and have cared for some amazing children that have bought smiles to my face every morning. The children became a high priority for me, trying to make their lives seem joyful and trying to allow them to be kids. I could see potential in all the children when I looked into their eyes.

It brought so much warmth and delight to me as I watched these children have a so called 'normal' childhood. Playing, learning, giving and receiving the love and respect every child needs and deserves.

Yes, sure there were some problems but you learn to work through these and overcome any difficulties with the children, understanding that it's not their fault they have been put in this situation.

In my experience I have found that if you continually tell the child that you are always there for them with support they tend to open up a bit more on their feelings and they will succeed.

I am passionate about Foster Caring. The happiness and fulfillment you get from helping children is beyond any words.

I urge anyone that has a great caring heart to take up the opportunity to become a Foster Carer as the rewards are beyond belief and better than anything else you receive in life."

make a difference in a child's world | call ac.care

Call today to discuss your interest in foster caring in your local region, there is no obligation to proceed if you don't wish to or are just not ready.

- South East, Mount Gambier office – 8724 9211
- Riverland, Berri office – 8582 2344
- Murraylands, Murray Bridge office – 8532 6303

End

Information contained within this media release expires Saturday 29th September 2009

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About ac.care | ac.care was formed in 1985 in the South East of South Australia

With one full-time social worker and an administrator in response to a strong need in the local rural community for “at risk” teenagers to be accommodated in safe, stable and nurturing environments. Today ac.care employs nearly 200 professional, experienced and caring staff providing servicing for people in need across the Upper and Lower South East, Riverland and Murrayland regions of South Australia. More than 60,550 rural people were supported through over 70 different programs (FY08) that fall under one or more of ac.care's 7 goals:...

alleviating homelessness | building communities | promoting learning | reducing poverty | sharing cultures | strengthening families | supporting children.