



Helping to Build Belonging

“I was in hospital and rehab for eight months having to learn how to do everything again – walk, talk, speak, make a cup of tea.”

Andrea was born legally blind, but she never let it stand in the way of her dreams. Just a few years ago Andrea’s life was full. She surrounded herself with friends and thrived in the hospitality industry.

“I had great jobs,” Andrea says. “I was working all the time and I was loving life. And then suddenly, my life changed dramatically.”

Andrea was going to work one day when she knew something was seriously wrong.

“I couldn’t get myself up on the platform at the train station,” says Andrea. “And so I walked myself to the hospital.”

This was the start of a gruelling eight-month journey.

“I had so many MRIs, EKGs, CT scans, brain operations and all of that,” Andrea says. “I was having seizures where I was frothing at the mouth. I didn’t quite understand what was going on with myself. No one at all could give answers.”

CEO Message

I've been working with ADRA for over 20 years now and have witnessed many miracles of lives being changed.



As a human being and ADRA leader, sometimes I feel that I have not done enough towards my 'neighbour' and get impatient with myself. I'm then reminded of the story of the boy and the starfish. It goes like this:

An old man was doing his daily walk along the beach one morning, when he spotted a young boy crouched by the water, scooping something up from the sand and throwing it into the sea.

The beach was normally empty at this time of day, so the old man stopped to watch for a while.

He noticed that the boy kept on shuffling a little further down the beach, then repeating this same action again and again – stopping, scooping, throwing, moving.

"What are you doing there, boy?" the old man asked, walking closer.

"I'm saving these starfish that are stranded," replied the boy. "If they stay on the beach they will dry out and die, so I'm putting them back into the ocean so they can live."

The old man was silent for a few seconds.

"Young man," he said, "on this stretch of beach

alone, there must be more than one hundred stranded starfish. Around the next corner, there must be at least one thousand more. This goes on for miles and miles – I've done this walk every day for 10 years, and it's always the same. There must be millions of stranded starfish! I hate to say it, but you'll never make a difference."

The boy replied, "Well I just made a difference for that one," and continued with his work.

Sometimes, the vast inequalities in our world can feel overwhelming. As Christians, we are called to help those who are hungry and hurting, to help 'the least of these'. And yet, sometimes it can be disheartening to see how much there is still left to do. In times like these, I take comfort from the story of the boy and the starfish. The work we can achieve together through ADRA is making a difference for that one child, family, village, community. It is transforming their lives. And when we move to the next community, we are then able to make a difference to a different child, family and village. Truly, our work and our mission here is to bring hope, dignity, and create opportunities for people to thrive. I thank you for partnering with us in our purpose to serve others so all may live as God intended.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "DGrellmann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Denison Grellmann

CEO, ADRA Australia



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After months in hospital and multiple tests, Andrea finally got her diagnosis: alpha-methylacyl-coa racemase deficiency, a disorder that causes a variety of neurological problems.

“My illness is actually genetic,” she says. “So both my parents are carriers. But there’s ten in the world with this illness, and two out of that ten is me and my older brother.”

After eight months spent in hospitals and rehabilitation, Andrea was cleared to go. But due to her specific ongoing care requirements, Andrea had to move into an aged care facility where she stayed for the next two years. And though she bonded with the residents, Andrea wanted to forge her own path in life and she certainly felt too young for aged care.

“I eventually managed to get out of the aged care and I’ve been living independently on my own.”

But independent living was lonely. No longer able to work, Andrea was at risk of social isolation. And so, tapping into her love for hospitality, Andrea’s support worker introduced her to ADRA.

“The first time I walked in the door I knew I was going to be comfortable and happy.”

Andrea started with ADRA by helping to prepare and serve community meals at the program in Croydon. And when an ADRA Op Shop started in Boronia, Andrea was asked to help out there too.

Volunteering with ADRA pushed Andrea out of her comfort zone, but in doing so, she began to feel like herself again for the first time in a long time.

“The more I was there, the more I was helping myself,” she says. “I’ve loved every moment. Everybody’s so friendly and makes everybody feel welcome. So that’s what I love about ADRA.”

Volunteering with ADRA was the first step for Andrea to begin to put herself out there again.

“I’m doing social groups now as well,” she says.



“I get the nickname ‘Hostess with the Mostess’. So yeah, my life is starting to get better now.”

Now, Andrea is looking to move into her own apartment, and she celebrates each birthday like it’s a milestone.

“Every year is an important year when you have a birthday,” Andrea says.

Andrea is so grateful for the role that ADRA has played in kick-starting her life after her diagnosis.

“Everybody needs somebody to help them. I just want to say thank you. I think I’m very lucky.”

**Your gift by October 30
can provide people with
disabilities, just like Andrea,
with a support system and the
opportunities they need to
improve their wellbeing. Help
build belonging, today!**

**Visit adra.org.au/adraappeal
to donate today.**

Ukraine Update



A month-long deployment to help the victims of the war in Ukraine was a confronting experience for ADRA South Pacific director Greg Young.

Greg was in Ukraine in June-July as the emergency response coordinator based in the ADRA Ukraine office in Mukachevo. He led an emergency response team (ERT) comprising ADRA personnel from around the globe—all there to support the local ADRA workers.

“The ERTs work alongside and in collaboration with the ADRA country office,” he explained.

While Mukachevo is a long way from the war zone, Greg also visited areas that have been directly hit, including Kiev, Bucha and Irpin.

“It’s really confronting to see what’s happened,” he said. “In Bucha, for example, there was the smell of death, and it was just terrible. When the Russians



Apartment buildings have been extensively damaged by Russian rocket fire

came through, the civilians had to shelter where they could and if family members were killed all they could do was dig a hole nearby and bury them in makeshift graves. It wasn’t possible to safely get to a cemetery.”

Greg said the damage to buildings is extensive. “Even if the rockets didn’t hit, the Russians would come in and they’d use their machine guns and shoot up all the buildings, smashing all the windows and kicking down the doors. So they’ve just made a real mess.”

In the midst of the devastation, ADRA is working tirelessly to

support the victims. Most, if not all, of the local ADRA workers have suffered significant losses themselves—family members killed, homes destroyed—but they continue to do all they can to help others.

“One of the key initiatives we are working on is a ‘winterisation’ project,” Greg said.

“This program assists people to prepare their homes for winter by repairing the windows and the doors that have been destroyed. Winter is coming soon and the people will be too cold unless their homes can be repaired.

“ADRA is also supporting 32 shelters/hubs where hundreds of displaced people are living. People who have been left with

nothing. We have been transporting people to the shelters and providing them with food and support.

“In neighbouring countries ADRA teams have been assisting those fleeing Ukraine, providing transportation at the border along with shelter and food to the people who have become refugees.”

Greg is an experienced disaster response leader, but this was the first time he has dealt with a war situation and it was full of challenging and emotional experiences.

“When you are talking with people and you see tears in their eyes when they are telling you their story, it brings tears to your eyes too,” he said.

“During the day you are getting on with your job, but in the evenings when you are in your hotel room thinking about the day, it really hits you.”

ADRA has assisted people in Ukraine through the provision of shelter, food and water, cash assistance, evacuation and transport.



ADRA South Pacific director Greg Young (third from left) with Ana Albuquerque, ADRA South Pacific program technical advisor; Maria Sas, marketing and PR director for ADRA Ukraine, and Artem Dikhtiaruk, vice president for ADRA Ukraine, in Irpin.



Greg Young with ADRA workers in Mukachevo

To find out more about ADRA's Ukraine response, or to donate, visit adra.org.au/adras-ukraine-response



Disaster Updates

Ukraine



A boy in Ukraine receives an ADRA care pack



A family in Poland receives ADRA care packs

Hungary and Slovakia. ADRA tents have been established on the borders of these countries to help welcome and support refugees as they arrive, providing essential items and information.

Within these countries, ADRA has been providing accommodation through local church facilities and host families as well as developing transit centres to offer rest, nourishment and psychosocial support.

We are also providing food, warm clothes, bus services and washing facilities. Additionally, ADRA teams from surrounding countries are sending convoys back into Ukraine carrying essentials such as food, medicine, and clothing.



ADRA has been responding to the crisis in Ukraine since the conflict began on 24 February 2022.

Below is a summary of ADRA's response (as of June 30).

- Number of people assisted: **710,000**
- Number of projects: **60**
- Number of countries: **19**

ADRA's ongoing development projects have been suspended within Ukraine, allowing the team to focus on the emergency response. Within Ukraine, ADRA has been delivering essentials to a women and children's hospital, providing psychological support to those sheltering from bombs, coordinating transport to help the most vulnerable evacuate, and providing cash vouchers to allow people to purchase what they need.

In surrounding countries, ADRA is providing support for refugees in Romania, Poland, Moldova,

African Hunger Crisis



The Horn of Africa is facing a fourth consecutive below-average rainfall season.

The exceptionally long drought, amplified by warmer-than-normal temperatures, has devastated livelihoods, livestock herds, crops and vegetation, water availability, household incomes, and has increased displacement.

A UNOCHA report (July 2022) projects 19.4 million are affected by drought in the Horn of Africa and 3.32 million children are at risk of dropping out of school. The report further adds



A woman in Kenya waits for assistance to collect water

that 18.6 million people are facing acute food insecurity and malnutrition is rising across Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia.

ADRA is supporting children and their families through school feeding programs in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. Relief efforts extend to livelihood activities to combat the devastating effects of the drought.

Australian Floods



In February, floods battered the east coast of Australia, causing widespread damage to homes and businesses.

While the flood waters have subsided and the general rubble cleared, the recovery process is ongoing. Many people were not insured or underinsured. And even for those insured, many have been told it will take 18 months to two years to be able to have their homes restored to a liveable condition.

In the meantime, they live in temporary accommodation including caravans, trailer homes and sheds. The toll on mental and emotional health is high.

ADRA is coordinating with the Tweed Shire Council, who have identified eight caravan parks in Chinderah which were seriously impacted by



Thousands of homes in north NSW were damaged by the floods

the floods and are housing residents in need of additional personal support.

Ron Meyles, a private builder from Adelaide and ADRA volunteer, drove to Murwillumbah to offer support for home renovation work for those most disadvantaged by the floods, including the residents in caravan homes.

ADRA is collaborating with local churches in the area to identify ways to support not just house renovations, but personalised help and psychosocial support where required.

In May, Barbara and Barry Guy from Hervey Bay spent two weeks volunteering their time for ADRA to provide psychosocial support to residents of Woodburn impacted by the floods. They both have expertise in community social work, and their empathetic listening ears were deeply appreciated.

While there, they identified direct needs that individuals and families had and were able to purchase items to meet these needs, such as providing a new set of workshop tools for one man who had lost them in the floods.

To find out more about ADRA's disaster responses visit adra.org.au/disaster

National Program Conference



ADRA volunteers from across Australia gathered together in Cooranbong, NSW, for the National Program Conference from July 25–29.

Almost 70 ADRA volunteers and staff participated in workshops and group sessions to share and learn from each other.

Representatives from the Finance, Supporter Engagement, Emergency Management and People and Culture departments of ADRA Australia hosted workshops and presentations.

Key highlights included sessions on safeguarding, tips to avoid burn out, and how to engage churches with ADRA projects.

The conference was the first opportunity since the COVID-19 pandemic started for ADRA volunteers to meet face to face. It offered a level of fellowship and bonding that is difficult to replicate online. Of particular enjoyment was the daily time of prayer and sharing that encouraged the attendees.

On Tuesday, ADRA Australia CEO Denison Grellmann was pleased to present the ADRA Ambassador Award to Jason Wirenski for his 15 years of service with the ADRA Op Shop in Mitcham, VIC.

“The Conference was such a high point for us as a National Programs team because of how excited everyone was to be there,” National Program Director Charlene Luzuk shared.

“Watching the volunteers connect and hear about each other’s experiences and seeing how they were so supportive of one another was wonderful. Especially for the volunteers who came from small projects in rural communities;



ADRA volunteers hear from the Supporter Engagement team



Denison Grellmann presents the ADRA Ambassador Award to Jason Wirenski

they shared that they were reminded again that they are a part of a bigger ADRA family, and really felt it.”

Rose's Story



Rose* is in year one at school. She lives with her parents, who teach at an Adventist primary school in the Solomon Islands.

But Rose and her family didn't have access to clean water. Without a river or stream nearby, they lived on coconut water.

Together with ADRA's help, Rose's school installed two 500-litre water tanks. The installation of these tanks – and the clean water they provide Rose and her fellow students – was made possible thanks to the generosity of a gift in a Will.

Many of our supporters at ADRA draw comfort from knowing that vital projects, which care for those who need it most, will continue on well after they themselves have passed. It is because of this that they choose to leave a gift to ADRA in their Will. Thanks to the long-term sustainability of ADRA projects, once implemented, the benefits flow from generation to generation.

This is certainly the case for the water tanks that were installed at Rose's school. The tanks provide the only source of water for 100 students and 70 community households.

"We never say no to people who come around to get water to drink," says Lina, Rose's mother. "People see the differences and support from us."

The students and teachers also participated in



health and sanitation training. Since then, Rose and her classmates have been practicing handwashing before meals and after going to the toilet. Their health has improved and they are sharing their learnings with their families.

"I love school, and I love demonstrating handwashing before having our lunch," says Rose. "I dream of becoming a teacher when I grow up, so, like my mother, I can educate other children to practice good hygiene."

Now, Rose is a WASH champion at her school, meaning she is helping to set a good example by demonstrating good hygiene practices, such as handwashing, for her peers.

*Name changed to protect identity.

You can leave a gift in your Will to ADRA as a life-changing legacy for people in need. Find out more at adra.org.au/wills or call us on 1800 242 372 to get more information or request a brochure. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Lidia's Story



Lidia lives in rural Zimbabwe with her husband and five children.

As a child, Lidia yearned to go to school to receive an education, but poverty prevented her from doing so. Now, as a mother, she wants a better future for her children.

“One of my children is living with a disability on his hands, and my husband is hard of hearing and struggles to talk,” said Lidia. “Neither me or my husband are employed. Our only means of survival is selling produce from our garden to raise money to send the children to school, as well as feed ourselves.”

Lidia and her husband did what they could to earn money for the family. Her husband would assist their neighbours with small jobs when he could, but he was limited in the tasks he could take on because of his disability. So the family relied on their home garden as their sole food and income source. But with limited funds, buying seeds to expand their garden and their prospects was a challenge.



With ADRA's help, Lidia received seeds and training on how to grow healthy traditional foods. The ADRA project is also continuing to help Lidia find buyers for her produce and providing her with access to a saving and loans system to help her earn a steady income.

“My wish and dream is to earn money so that I will be able to afford an education for the children,” says Lidia. “I think if people embrace these teachings, it can really change our lives as a community.”

Isoa's Story



At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in Fiji, many people lost their jobs and were unable to travel to access food markets.

During this time, Isoa* struggled to provide for his family of six. Due to lockdown restrictions, Isoa could not access his local food market and he was unable to sell or purchase any food for his family.

ADRA was doing COVID-19 relief work in Isoa's village. Isoa received a food kit and vegetable seeds from ADRA to help his family access food during this time.

"The food kits helped put food on the table as everyone was home, and it was quite hard trying to provide for every meal," he says. The food kit helped the family's immediate needs, while the vegetable seeds helped them plan for their future. "We also utilised the seeds provided and planted them during the



lockdown as a family. What a help they became! We were able to have the much-needed food supplies from our harvest a few months after."

Isoa shared with ADRA staff that he grew a bounty of cabbages, cucumbers, eggplant and other fast-growing crops which continued to help feed his family after the food kit was finished.

"After the restrictions, there were still limitations around that prevented us from earning a living but thanks to the harvest from our garden, we were able to at least minimize our daily struggle for food, eating fresh from our

garden supplies."

Five months after the distributions, Isoa is still enjoying his harvest. His family is enjoying the eggplant and cabbages and have had such an abundance that they are now gifting a portion of their harvest to other struggling families in their village.

Through receiving help during a difficult time, Isoa has been able to provide for his family, and now his community! Your generous support during times of disaster makes a lasting impact in the lives of others.

*Name changed to protect identity.

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