



JOHN PIERCE CENTRE

*Spirit of the Deaf Community*

# 2020 Annual Report



# John Pierce Centre HISTORY

## **Spirit Of The Deaf Community**



## **Father John Pierce** **The first chaplain to the Deaf Catholic Community**

The origins of the John Pierce Centre (JPC) date back to 1935 when Father John Pierce was appointed as the first Chaplain to the Catholic Deaf Community in Victoria by Archbishop Mannix. In those times, all the major denominations conducted missions of various sorts to the needy people of Melbourne; included in these were the deaf and blind.

Prior to 1979, Deaf Catholics were regular visitors at various churches in Melbourne including Armadale and St Francis, Melbourne. From 1973 to 1979, a monthly Mass was held at Jolimont at the Victorian Deaf Society.

In 1979, Fr Peter Robinson, Dr Pierre Gorman and Mr. Bryan A'Hearn were the driving force behind the setting up of John Pierce Centre at Ripponlea. A board of directors was set up as a Company limited by guarantee on 29th December 1979. The Centre was officially opened and blessed on Ephpheta Sunday, August 1980.

In 1995, The Catholic Deaf Community moved to the parish of Prahran and relocated to a refurbished church, St Francis Xavier, which had a multipurpose chapel and offices.

**JPC has over 40 years of experience of supporting Deaf people who frequently are isolated within their local communities and even within their own families. We provide opportunities for people to learn more about the challenges of parenting through education programs and playgroup. These services complement our visits to older, frail, sick and isolated Deaf people. Our pastoral care supports the well-being of our community and our community centre, all Deaf people and their families; sharing strength, friendship and the spirit of the Deaf Catholic Community.**

## **Mission Statement:**

Inspired by Jesus Christ and the traditions of the Catholic Church, the John Pierce Centre seeks to empower all Deaf people and their families within Victoria to live their lives to the full

## **Our Vision:**

To Promote Community through Education, Spiritual, and Family Support

## **Values:**

- To be inclusive of Deaf and hard of hearing people and their families
- To be fair and ethical in all of our dealings
- To have a team of staff and volunteers filled with passion and compassion
- To be open to working with other organisations, individuals and corporations
- To manage our resources with efficiency and effectiveness
- To create a safe environment
- To be accountable and transparent in our governance and business practices

## Board of Directors 2020



Ms Theresa Mills  
(nee Counsel)  
Chairperson



Mr Brian Tooth  
Treasurer



Br Shane Wood  
Board Minute  
Secretary



Mr Damien Backholer



Ms Sonya Tissera-  
Isaacs



Ms Evelyne Albrecht



Mr Trevor Hughes



Ms Lucille Bennetto



Mr Dean Sinclair



Ms Kathleen Carroll  
(Resigned August 2020)

## Subcommittees:

### Finance Subcommittee

Mr Brian Tooth

Ms Theresa Mills (nee Counsel)

Mr Dean Sinclair

Ms Margaret Urquhart  
(minute taker)

### Management Subcommittee

Ms Sonya Tissera-Isaacs

Ms Lucille Bennetto

Ms Kathleen Carroll

Ms Margaret Urquhart

### Strategic Planning Subcommittee

Mr Trevor Hughes

Ms Deb Wadsworth

Mr Damien Backholer

Ms Evelyn Albrecht

## JPC Staff 2020



**Mrs Carmel Phillips**  
Executive Manager



**Mrs Christine Elder**  
Office Manager



**Ms Gail Finn**  
Operations Assistant and  
Liturgy Co-ordinator



**Fr Wayne Edwards**  
Chaplain



**Ms Katrina Mynard**  
Pastoral Team  
Coordinator



**Ms Deb Wadsworth**  
Strategic Manager



**Mrs Melissa  
Thompson**  
Community Worker  
- Family Support



**Mrs Diane  
Backholer**  
Community  
Activities  
Co-ordinator



**Ms Teresa Paulet**  
Communications  
Co-ordinator/  
Interpreter



**Mrs Mariana  
Voggenreiter**  
Community Worker—  
Pastoral Care Support  
*(Resigned October 2019)*



**Mrs Melissa Smith**  
Communications  
Coordinator  
*(Resigned December 2019)*

# Directors' Annual Report

## Community Connectedness

On behalf of the John Pierce Centre (JPC) Board of Directors I am pleased to present our annual report for the 2020 year.

At the time of preparing the report the JPC accounts for the 2020 year have been subjected to the usual practice of a full independent audit review. No issues were identified and the JPC continues to be in a financial position wherein the organisation is able to pay its accounts as and when they fall due.

### In 2020,

During this reporting period the JPC met the significant challenges that COVID-19 presented. Ever present in each decision made and at the core of the operation was and remains the community we serve. This would not have been possible without the dedication of the JPC Staff, Board and volunteers, innovating, evaluating and delivering services so our community remained connected. I would like to personally express my thanks and appreciation for the privilege to work alongside my fellow Board Directors, JPC Staff and our volunteers.

- We gratefully acknowledge the significant contribution that Deb Wadsworth, who moved from the Executive Manager role to Strategic Co-ordinator, has made to the JPC. Deb is leaving the JPC to pursue her next adventure and we are all the richer for Deb's dedication and impact on the JPC and its operations.
- Our Executive Manager Carmel Philips has kept the Board apprised, led the JPC Staff and community in her first year under some very challenging conditions and is to be commended for her resilience and dedication.
- Father Wayne, our JPC Chaplain, continues to strengthen our faith, provide deep insights, and we feel God's loving embrace through his important work.
- We said goodbye to Kathleen Carroll after 9 years of outstanding service to the JPC Board.
- Sadly we also said goodbye to one of our founders Father Peter Robinson (Robbo) who passed away in 2020, as well as ex-JPC Board Director and significant contributor to the community of the JPC, Bruno Broglio, who passed away in December 2020.
- We are delighted to welcome our incoming Chair Trevor Hughes and fellow Board Directors Lucille Bennetto and Dean Sinclair, who come to us with a wealth of experience.
- Financially we continue to remain focused on a prudent approach to our every day management of the JPC.
- We were pleased to participate in the AMPLIFY project, relating to Deafness and hard of hearing innovations.
- Management and Finance sub committees continued to meet the JPC requirements.
- We have been unable to solidify the strategic direction for the JPC, the Board and the sub committee are committed to recasting and implementing an updated plan.

As this is my final report as Chair I would like to thank all of you who have partnered or supported me in some form, over my time with the JPC. I would especially like to thank my fellow Directors who have been steadfast and professional in their stewardship of the JPC. Our new Chair Trevor Hughes will now capably lead the JPC and I am personally grateful for Trevor's diligence, ease and professional approach to our transition.

As many of you are aware my dedication to the JPC and the broader Deaf community stems from my lived experience as a CODA (child of deaf adults) and the privilege of being the daughter of D'Arcy Julian and Patricia Kathleen Counsel, who also gave their own many years of service. We live in changing times, much has been advanced in terms of Deaf awareness, solution provision and innovation is continuing. I would encourage us all, hearing and Deaf to continue to work as a team with understanding and compassion of each other in the Spirit of our Founders.

In closing, I would like to thank and acknowledge the Melbourne Catholic Archdiocese, committed financial supporters, stakeholders, advocates and benefactors, interpreters and minute secretaries; without whom we could not meet our pastoral and community needs.

The JPC remains a unique center with compassion and inclusion at its core, positively impacting all those with whom it comes into contact - a demonstration of faith in action.

I commend the John Pierce Centre Board of Directors report for 2020.

**Theresa P Mills (nee Counsel)**

Chairperson  
John Pierce Centre



# Treasurer's Annual Report

## Continued Service Provision

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present this Report on the financial operations of the John Pierce Centre Ltd (JPC) for the 2020 year.

And what a year it was! We are all aware of the impact of COVID-19 on the wider community generally; and JPC wasn't immune from this, as restrictions meant that, for the majority of the year, we were not able to welcome our Deaf community members to the Centre. In addition, attendance of our staff at the Centre was severely restricted.

Financially, we were negatively affected through the inability to secure new sources of revenue; however, we were fortunate to receive an increase in philanthropic grants from a regular generous supporter; and, even more notable, we were fortunate to qualify for and receive significant State and Federal Government funding, in particular through the JobKeeper scheme.

JPC recorded a surplus for the year of \$169,035, compared with a surplus of \$29,295 for the previous year. However, the COVID-19 related government support contributed a net impact of \$193,093 to this result. Otherwise, a small deficit would have resulted due to ever-increasing costs of running the organisation.

It is most pleasing that our net retained surplus is now \$500,207, surely a record for JPC. However, one-off revenue items cannot be relied on to continue, which highlights the importance of maintaining or finding sustainable income sources to match ongoing operating costs.

Excluding the abovementioned COVID-related government support, our income for the year totalled \$357,560, a \$38,143 decrease on the previous year (which included a \$50,000 one-off donation). 55% of this income was from grants received, 16% was from Melbourne Archdiocese and 20% was from the Ephpheta Collection and other donations and fundraising.

The Ephpheta Collection continues to provide significant funding for JPC, for which the Board is extremely grateful, and we wish to sincerely thank all those that contribute throughout the parishes and on-line. We also remain particularly grateful to our major benefactors, such as:-

- The Ephpheta Foundation
- The Gorman Foundation
- The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

The generosity of all involved is greatly appreciated by the Board and assists JPC in providing and maintaining a solid level of support to the Victorian deaf community.

Excluding the effect of JobKeeper top-up to the wages of some employees, expenses for the year totalled \$381,618, compared with the previous year amount of \$366,408 (a 4.2% increase). The major cause was a marked increase in interpreting fees, brought about principally by JPC assisting at masses at St Patrick's Cathedral.

The Board is most appreciative of the efforts of our Executive Manager, Carmel Phillips, and her team for maintaining a very prudent approach to spending, always being mindful of the approved budget.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the support of the Finance Committee and also the work of Carmel, Christine Elder and Greta Tapps in putting together a quality set of annual financial accounts on a very timely basis. Also, thank you to our auditor, Ryk Eksteen of Collins & Co, for his assistance in preparing and reviewing the formal financial report and statements of JPC.

**Brian Tooth**  
Treasurer &  
Chair of the Finance Committee



# Executive Manager's Report

## Unprecedented Times

What a challenge 2020 turned out to be; beginning with devastating bush fires across the country and then with the devastating Coronavirus pandemic. It was a very different year for everyone, and meant a lot of changes to how we worked and lived.

I was so pleased to come on board as the Executive Manager for the JPC, replacing Deb Wadsworth who moved into the Strategic Manager role. I commenced last January 2020 but soon after, COVID-19 meant a lot of changes to the operations of the centre.

The closure of the John Pierce Centre had a severe affect on the Deaf community. Many were anxious and uncertain about what was happening. There was a lack of information early on in Auslan and hence, Deaf people were isolated even more so than their hearing counterparts. Many reported that they were lonely and there was a loss of loved ones.

It was a time to be more considerate and compassionate to our neighbours, to support each other and reach out in new and creative ways as we were unable to meet face to face. Technology has been the main lifeline for many so that they could stay in touch with each other and it was a huge part of the change in our operations at JPC. I am incredibly thankful to the wonderful JPC staff who maintained their contacts within the Deaf community, offering support through video calls, texts, emails as well as providing connection to faith and activities via videos, emails, Facebook, website and much more. It is truly a credit to the entire team for their adaptability and dedication under circumstances that were affecting not only their work, but their family and home lives as well.

I also give thanks to Deb Wadsworth, who has supported and mentored me through my first year at the JPC in such an unprecedented and unexpected time. Thanks also to Christine Elder, Gail Finn, Katrina Mynard, Melissa Thompson and Fr Wayne Edwards for their generous efforts and seamless transitions.

We also had two new staff members join us at the beginning of 2020. Teresa Paulet as Communications Co-ordinator / In-house Interpreter and Diane Backholer as Community Activities Co-ordinator (Co-ordinating Ladies' Get Together and Deaf Art & Craft).

I also wish to acknowledge the support and dedication from the JPC Board of Directors. The Executive Manager role does a lot of different tasks throughout the year, so it was nice to have the support of the Board in my very first year, it was a massive learning curve for me and there have been endless meetings via virtual technology.

Thank you – Theresa Mills (nee Counsel), Brian Tooth, Sonya Tissera-Isaacs, Kathleen Carroll, Damien Backholer, Evelyne Albrecht, and Shane Wood (minute-taker)

Three new Board members joined us during 2020. Lucille Bennetto, Trevor Hughes and Dean Sinclair. A warm welcome to them and I look forward to working together in the coming years.

Lastly in closure, I give thanks to our Community Members, Volunteers and Stakeholders, their families and friends for continued support in what was an extremely difficult year.

**Carmel Phillips**  
Executive Manager  
John Pierce Centre



## 2020 — The Year Like No Other

JPC dedicates a team to work on the strategic planning and strategic objectives of the Organisation.

The team is JPC's Strategic Subcommittee which consists of Board Directors (voluntary), the JPC Strategic Manager and the acceptance of external stakeholder's time, advice and participation as a welcomed contribution to the ongoing success of JPC. JPC is grateful for the expertise and guidance from the Strategic Subcommittee Board Directors throughout 2020, being, Damien Backholer, Evelyne Albrecht and Trevor Hughes.

Every year, Not-For-Profits like JPC must think about, plan and implement their ideas to attract much needed funds from considerate donors from all types of business, private and community sectors. This is never easy, but an area of focus for the JPC, so that we may always grow in a financially responsible way and be able to continue the valuable work of JPC for many years and generations to come.

**Through our efforts in 2020, we wish to formally thank the following Organisations for their direct support to our Fundraising and Grants application work.**

**This recognition of your generosity and kindness is on behalf of the entire JPC Community,**

**Thank you!**

As with all Organisations and individuals throughout 2020, JPC's year was not like any year before it. Many initiatives were put on hold due to COVID-19, but likewise, many new initiatives were created, so it wasn't all bad. As well as this, we made sure we adapted and focused on what we could achieve, whilst handling any difficulties as best we could.

So with the help of our Grant Makers, Donors/Supporters (listed below) and the support schemes offered by State and Federal Governments throughout COVID-19, JPC was able to sustain itself and prosper into 2021. You will see the good work of the JPC Team supporting our Community throughout this Annual Report.

We now look forward to a safer, more traditional 2021 with our Community with the JPC Strategic Team continuing to implement our 5-Year strategies and new ideas to suit our changing times.

### Grants

#### **Deafness Foundation Grant – Interpreting Fees (Mass For You at Home)**



## Continued... Grants

Community Bank—Windsor Grant – Deaf Community Connectedness in the time of Covid-19 Project



Deafness Foundation Grant – Assistance with JPC 40-Year Short Book production



Ephpheta Foundation Grant

Gorman Foundation Grant—Interpreting Fees

Victorian State Government and Federal Government of Australia

### Supporters/Donors

Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne  
Community Bank—Windsor  
Deafness Foundation  
Ephpheta Foundation  
The Gorman Foundation  
Guild Financial Services  
Rowland Productions  
Toorak Uniting Church, Ecumenical Group and Op Shop  
St Dominic's, East Camberwell—Justice & Peace Group  
St Paul's Apostle Catholic Community, Endeavour Hills

### Supporters

Able Australia  
Auslan Services  
Catholic Social Services, Melbourne  
Deaf Children Australia  
Echo Interpreting  
Ephpheta Centre (Sydney)  
Expression Australia  
Grill'd Balaclava  
Melbourne Polytechnic  
St Francis Church Melbourne  
Vicky Li  
Victorian College of the Deaf—Tradeblock Café

Auslan (Australian Sign Language) and Deaf culture is at the forefront of John Pierce Centre faith development, ensuring that Auslan access is available at every liturgical celebration and culture is weaved through each of our events and celebrations.



## Sacraments

Mass was held onsite at JPC on the third Sunday of January, February and March, and Ash Wednesday in February 2020. JPC provides an Auslan-English Interpreter, to support the priest, for Sunday Mass so it is accessible to all Deaf, hard of hearing and hearing members of our community. All other third Sunday Masses and special services in the religious calendar, including Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Memorial Service (November), and Christmas were all provided via video, either remotely recorded or livestreamed. All recorded services were Auslan and English accessible (including English captions). Providing these Masses online was an important connection to our parishioners to ensure they were able to continue in their faith and have

Auslan access. Especially given the extreme isolation of many individuals.

Ephpheta Sunday is a significant celebration held in August each year by Deaf Catholics in Victoria. Ephpheta is celebrated in recognition of our faith, our history and our language. The bible story of Jesus meeting a deaf mute man is shared. In this story, Jesus held his hands on the man saying "Ephpheta" meaning "Be Open". For some Deaf people, 'be open' simply means to embrace God's love and celebrate our faith through our Deaf Catholic Culture and Community. 2020 was also the 40 Year Anniversary of the establishment of The John Pierce Centre. And whilst we couldn't come together in 2020 to celebrate Ephpheta Sunday and 40 Years of Service, we provided an online Mass and will hold a celebration event in 2021.

## Emmaus (Liturgy preparations)

'Emmaus' is the name of a dedicated group of Deaf people who meet to develop their faith through discussions relating to Spirituality. Whilst we could not hold the monthly meetings in 2020, the Liturgical Coordinator Gail Finn, provided regular Auslan videos (with English text) of the Gospel readings from Mass as well as prayers developed to support the religious and faith development of the community whilst isolated at home. Videos were put up online (JPC website and Facebook) and were watched by many of the community. We also received feedback that Deaf people were watching these videos from other states around Australia.



Discussions in Auslan are crucial to the faith development of members and we thank the supportive team that worked with Gail to prepare and produce the videos, including Fr Wayne Edwards (Chaplain to JPC), Fr John Hill (previous Chaplain to JPC) and Sr Janette Murphy.

## Memorial Service

Our 2020 Memorial Mass, was held in November via video recording. It is an important Mass which provides the opportunity for people to pay their respects to members of the Deaf community who have passed in the twelve months prior. It was especially important in 2020, as many people were unable to attend funerals of friends and family that had passed, due to the Covid restrictions in Victoria. It is important for our community to have a safe space to share love and comfort in their time of grieving.

Fr Wayne Edwards led the service, remotely, in prayer and reflection, to grieve and to give thanks. We were unable to add any plaques to the memorial stone in the garden at JPC in 2020, but will do so when possible.



## Support for Funerals

Often, JPC has been the first point of contact for people who have lost a loved one. Staff guide community members through the grieving process. Our Pastoral workers assist where possible in breaking the communication barriers with family members or funeral directors to ensure Deaf individuals can fully participate spiritually in the farewell. We have assisted people in requests for Auslan interpreters. Deaf Community members can use their NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme) funding to book interpreters, or over 65s can receive interpreters via Expressions Australia's Government funding. The year brought a need for creative ways in supporting the community. Using video calls and Zoom meetings with families to discuss funeral arrangements, phone calls to funeral directors and families, livestreaming of funeral services with appropriate filming to ensure interpreter visibility. All of the staff pull together for these events so as to ensure a smooth service to the community member in need.

**JPC continues to provide pastoral care to the Deaf community, individuals, families and extended family members. Our mission is to strive to empower all Deaf people and their families to live their lives to the full.**

## Pastoral Care for the Aged and Unwell



JPC Pastoral Team continues to have a large demand for assistance to the growing population of elderly Deaf people, Deaf families, those who are isolated, and those on a disability support pension. Misinformation, communication barriers and cultural barriers have been identified as major causes of frustration, sadness and loneliness amongst the sick and elderly. The extra isolation and distress caused by the Coronavirus meant the team worked harder to contact individuals to provide pastoral support, and offer comfort, compassion and guidance. Providing opportunities to connect with community often give relief to many and is integral in our work.

The JPC Pastoral Team continues to support those who are sick or in hospital, and to those in aged care. This support also extends to the families of these residents and includes the sacraments of communion and anointing of the sick as well as assisting in communication with those around them.

JPC was unable to provide outreach sacraments at Regis Lake Park (Blackburn) from late March 2020, where there are a number of Deaf residents. Volunteers from the Emmaus group attended with Fr Wayne Edwards on the first Friday of February and March, but then were required to cease attendance due to strict Covid regulations for nursing homes around Victoria, for the safety of residents. JPC is acutely aware of the risks to mental health due to physical and language isolation and made regular contact with residents as much as possible.

## Christmas Mail Out

Christmas is a time of happiness, however there are some in our community who, through isolation and financial burden, may find it a difficult and sad time. The impact of Covid meant that the burden extended to much more of the community.

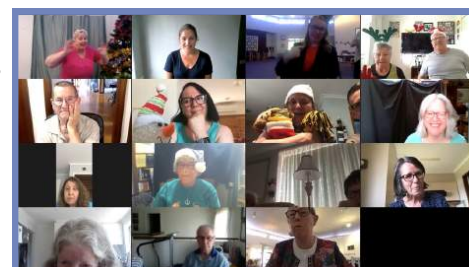
In recognition of the negative impacts of the pandemic, the JPC team created a Christmas Mail Out to over 100 community members. The Mail included an encouraging letter from the team, with photos and Christmas cheer. A Christmas decoration with an inspiring quote, and a \$20 Woolworths voucher to aid them in purchasing a few basic necessities of their choice.

Special thanks to all those that contributed to this Mail Out, which was greatly appreciated by the community recipients.



## Christmas Rally—ONLINE

The Second Sunday of December marked our annual Christmas rally, albeit a rather different event to host! Even though Greater Melbourne was beginning to open its doors, JPC decided to host an online Christmas Rally event due to the limitations on numbers allowed in the centre and wanting to avoid unnecessary risk knowing that many of our older community use public transport to travel in. It was still a highlight of the year for the community with young and old joining together to celebrate the festive season. Community members were able to watch the recorded mass, and then enjoyed a Christmas online Zoom gathering where the staff provided fun activities, Christmas songs, raffle and game prizes.



The success of this popular event is due to the commitment from staff who brought joy and creative fun to the different 2020 event.

## Mass for You at Home



Produced in conjunction with Rowland Media Productions, JPC provided interpreters for the prerecorded church services - Mass for You at Home (MFYAH). We are proud of our association with this project, bringing mass in Auslan into the homes of the Australian Deaf community each week. The Masses are made accessible with a hearing priest saying the service, and an Auslan interpreter (shown in box on bottom of screen) interpreting simultaneously.

In 2020, over a 2-week period, 41 mass services were filmed and scheduled to air throughout the year (starting in March/ April). We thank the continued support of John Rowlands Media Productions.

# Community Activities

These community activities were created to respond to a need of those who were experiencing isolation. A centre that welcomes Deaf and hard of hearing people in a way that makes them feel secure and confident. It provides opportunities to develop community bonds and strengthen spirit whilst engaging participants to develop new skills.

JPC is able to provide a Deaf Space that is suitability matched to meet a Deaf person's way of seeing and being in an environment and allows for easy communication. JPC acknowledges the hard work and dedication of the pastoral care team and group coordinators in delivering a variety of engaging activities and support for vulnerable community members.

2020 brought with it many challenges for the Group Coordinators as the JPC was forced to close the centre during the Covid pandemic lockdown in Victoria. Coordinators worked hard to adjust the group plans to connect remotely as best they could with individuals and families. Their flexibility is a credit to the JPC and the community appreciated the remote support and engagement in activities during an extremely isolating time.

## Pankina

Pankina is an Aboriginal word meaning 'be happy' and it is the perfect word to describe the happy, friendly cheeky group of Deaf seniors! It has been running for over 25 years and it has become a second home for many of our Deaf seniors.

In 1992, three people Bruno Broglio, Isabel Gooding and Margaret Riley-Williams expressed a concern of a lack for seniors to meet somewhere and the idea for the Pankina group began.

Activities were held on Mondays fortnightly from January to March, and offered a range of activities including Bingo, card games and outings. Seniors appreciate coming to Pankina to spend time with their friends and catch up on the news and they also use this opportunity to seek help from our Pastoral Team. Assistance is provided for any number of queries. Some enquiries are usually solved within a few minutes; perhaps with a simple translation of an English text into signed Auslan for example. Or, to assist with understanding a bill or a medical document. As most of the members do not have access to computers, and may have limited support from extended family, JPC can also assist in completing forms online or conducting some online research.

Other meetings can be more serious and require a deeper level of pastoral care in private conversations. The issues faced may relate to personal struggles and family breakdowns, grief over losing a loved one or financial stress and concern.

Above all, our community members use this fortnightly gathering to see friends and JPC staff – face to face. Sharing news, asking questions and gaining information comes from this face to face contact. Many senior Deaf people lack the knowledge and skill needed to navigate technology and they simply do not have quick and easy access to information assistance like hearing people.

The group has evolved to be a self governed committee of ten members which demonstrates the empowerment that JPC has nurtured in this fantastic community group.

When the centre closed in March due to Government restrictions, JPC staff were acutely aware of the risk of extreme isolation for Pankina members. To ensure the wellbeing of the community, the Pastoral Officer, Katrina Mynard, made contact with individuals via text, video calls and emails to provide support and essential information about the pandemic. Also, encouraging community members to reach out to each other to check in.

Group Coordinator Melissa Thompson set up "Text Bingo" to engage the community in fun and providing an opportunity to check in on individuals.



## Deaf Art

This is a regular community art activity held on Fridays each term. It is designed to support participants to develop not only their creative skills but also the confidence and general wellbeing. Classes are taught by Deaf and hearing teachers and are Auslan accessible. The project was founded with funding from Cabrini and has been continued since then. In 2020, the group activities were adjusted to be done remotely from home. Each week there was a new art/craft focus and the participants sent in photos of their creations to share with the group. These photos were also shared on the JPC Facebook page and website to share with the wider community and strengthen connections.



## Deaf Men's Group

Opportunities for Deaf men to come together is also a priority of the JPC where there is time for men to sit in a friendly space and chat, catch up with mates and discuss a range of topics and provide support for each other. The Deaf Men's group met each fortnight from January until March.

The group of up to 20 men are supported to self govern to run a number of activities including card games and quizzes, as well as outing opportunities.

During the Government required Covid lockdown, the men were invited to participate in "text bingo" and were contacted intermittently by the pastoral team to ensure wellbeing and connectedness.



connections and just be in a space where they can communicate freely in Auslan.



## Ladies Day Out

The Ladies' Day Out group are always looking for exciting opportunities around Melbourne to get out and about and enjoy the local cuisine and sites.

It is an opportunity for Deaf women to support one another, take time to catch up and grow



In 2020 the ladies were unable to gather for many outings but instead were supported by Group Coordinator Diane Backholer to participate in fun remote activities. Diane set regular themes for the ladies to talk about and take photos of, including High Tea at Home, Garden Growings, Perfect Pets, and many other ideas to create connection through photos and fun.

## Signee Tots Playgroup and Family Activities

*Staying Connected while Staying Safe and Staying Home*

*Melissa Thompson*

*Families and Children Support Coordinator (Signee Tots Facilitator)*



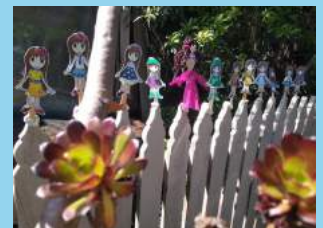
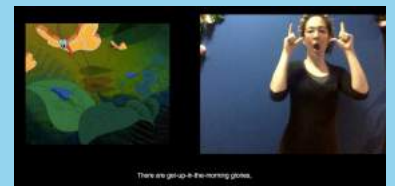
In 2019, Signee Tots celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Twenty years of a playgroup, where toys and activities are set up every fortnight at the JPC centre, for families to come together to learn, play and socialise. Who would have guessed that in its 21<sup>st</sup> year, Signee Tots, like most programs around the world, would be turned upside-down? A year ago, no-one would have thought it possible, or even desirable, to run an online program for infants and pre-school aged children. The activities I 'normally' set up deliberately engage children's different senses, through tactile and motor play, craft, cooking, dance, and yoga. The advice to parents of young children is to keep their children away from screens and off devices.



How quickly things change! One year ago, for the first time in my tenure, I cancelled Signee Tots 'due to concern about spreading coronavirus, Covid-19'. In the months that followed, I tried everything I could think of to maintain a meaningful connection with families, and to fill the gap left by the various Covid restrictions. I made videos with activities for children to do at home. I ran Zoom sessions, with puppets, drawing, stories, bingo and magic tricks for the children to watch and engage with through the screen. I posted out craft packs with equipment to make spoon people and other projects. I drew attention to community initiatives, like teddy-bears in windows, and chalk-drawn rainbows on footpaths. The focus of my role broadened to supporting families in whatever way I could from my own home.



Via a screen, I watched parents trying to support older children remote learning away from school, with various degrees of language access provided. They juggled this with working from home, and looking after young children not able to attend childcare, kindergarten or their local playgrounds. Concerned for both parent and child mental health, during a time of isolation, uncertainty and stress, my role became to help families stay connected while they stayed home and tried to stay safe. In so many ways, 2020 was a challenging and confronting year. It was also a year where I was privileged to see parents and children alike learn to adapt and pull together, despite having to stay apart.



# JPC Pastoral Statistics

## Pastoral Statistics 2020 (this is the year of COVID-19, venue & face-to-face closed from March to December 2020)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Pastoral Contact / Walk In / Duty Man-						1	1						2
Information - General					1								1
Information - NDIS or CHSP				2	2	1	1	1	1				8
Hospitals / GP / Aged / Nursing Home												5	5
Home Visits			3	1	1	9	6	6	2			24	52
Activities / Groups (detail below)													0
New Referrals				1	1	1							3
Counselling Requests / Appointments													0
Court Case Support													0
Funeral / Memorial Service Attendance							1	2	1			1	5
Weddings / Baptisms / Holy Commun-			3	1	1								5
St. Francis (JPC) & St. Mary's													0
Technology Contact (emails, SMS,	35		154	587	509	336	326	310	210			132	2599
Online Audience reached (new)				331				1	1				333
Food Vouchers / Food Hampers		1										5	6
Shopping													0

### **Activities / Groups: (on hold for COVID-19, replaced with Technology Contact where possible)**

Pankina Senior Group  
 Deaf Men's Group  
 Deaf Art & Craft Group  
 Ladies' Get Together  
 Signee Tots

## JPC Church / Liturgical / Mass 2020 - Number of Attendees (this is the year of COVID-19, venue & face-to-face closed from March to December 2020)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
JPC Mass (Auslan)	21											1	22
JPC Special Mass (Auslan) - see notes							1	5	4			1	11
Emmaus Group Meeting													0
MFYAH Services recorded	41											4	45
Regis Lake Park Communion Visits													0
Filming Religious Signs (vocabs) or Face-book						3	4						7
Home (or hospital) Communion visits													0
<b>St Patrick's Cathedral - CAM (new) (JPC Auslan Interpreters)</b>				3	5	4	3					5	20
<b>Total:</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>105</b>

### Notes:

June-December: All JPC Masses recorded and put up online  
 December: JPC Christmas Rally Mass—Recorded then Zoom video event for fun activities  
 December: Christmas Eve Mass—Recorded and live streamed through Facebook and website at 3pm  
 December: St Patrick's Mass (CAM) each Sunday and Christmas Eve Midnight Mass

## JPC Pastoral Statistics

### JPC Church / Liturgical / Mass—Number of Attendees

#### 5-year view

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2016	16	33	101	34	30	46	108	50	32	30	127	120	727
2017	15	36	55	67	20	29	24	111	30	20	90	95	592
2018	15	35	80	30	60	49	38	78	37	28	83	108	641
2019	15	34	31	137	151	54	60	62	42	14	72	108	780
2020 (COVID)	62	0	0	3	5	7	8	5	4	0	0	11	105

### JPC Community Activities 2020—Number of Attendees (this is the year of COVID-19, venue & face to face closed from March to December 2020)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Pankina (Monday fortnightly)	47	94	79										220
Pankina - special events													0
Deaf Mens Group (Monday fortnightly)	14	20	9										43
Deaf Mens Group - special events		6											6
Signee Tots (Tuesday fortnightly, not school hols)													0
Signee Tots - special events													0
Deaf Art (Friday weekly, not school hols)			50	15								1	66
Deaf Art - special events				7								12	19
Ladies Get Together (Wednesday fortnightly)			15	7									22
Ladies Get Together - special events			21										21
<b>SUB-TOTAL:</b>	61	120	174	29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	<b>397</b>
Additional Education / Workshops													0
Special One-Off Activities												12	12
<b>TOTAL:</b>	61	120	174	29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	<b>409</b>

#### Notes:

April: JPC AGM postponed to July  
 December: After Bruno's funeral 12 of  
 met at the RSL for lunch/chat

#### School Holiday Dates:

Autumn: 25 March-14 June 2020  
 Winter: 27 June-12 July 2020  
 Spring: 19 Sept-4 Oct 2020  
 Summer: 19 Dec 2020-27 Jan 2021

### JPC Community Activities—Number of Attendees

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Total
2016	507	632	641	669	2449
2017	539	703	677	817	2736
2018	506	679	685	662	2532
2019	410	603	621	645	2279
2020 (COVID)	355	29	0	25	409

# Communications

## Newsletters

JPC produced and distributed (by postage and direct email) three editions of the newsletter. (April, August and December 2020). The newsletter contains community news, spiritual reflections and event announcements. Some community members still appreciate hard copy of the newsletter in the post, others receive an email notification and the public can access the latest versions via the JPC website. A “text” only version is also published for members of our community with limited vision.

## Social Media (Facebook, Vimeo and Website)

JPC uses multi platform media to communicate with our network of community and stakeholders. Our website, Facebook and newsletters are key points of contact and utilised regularly to distribute information. Where possible, information shared has also been produced in Auslan video format and distributed in these channels. The social media posts include reminders about regular community activities upcoming events, special religious celebrations, and reflections, messages about faith, happiness and well-being. JPC also uses this space as a method to share any community news from other Deaf related organisations in Victoria and Australia. For example, organisations sharing Auslan videos about VIC emergency situations such as the Covid pandemic. Our messages are posted in text, with images or in Auslan with supporting text or subtitles.

## E-news


Six e-Newsletters were tailored for the stakeholders of our JPC community. We communicated information about community activities, special events and progress on innovative projects that have been put into place with the help of funding from JPC supporters. In 2020 we shared information about how we were staying connected with the Deaf community during isolation due to the pandemic.

## Religious Signs Website Resource

Upgrades were made to the online platform to allow for the addition of Irish-Australian Religious Signs which had been filmed in 2020. The influence of Irish signs is of historical importance to the Deaf community and the early years of Deaf education in Australia.

The website is regularly accessed by Auslan Interpreters to increase their knowledge of sign variety in order to provide suitable interpretations for deaf people. It is also used by teachers, clergy and community to support learning and faith development.

This project was made possible through a grant from the Deafness Foundation.



**EXPLANATION**

In a religious context, peace is more than the mere absence of conflict or war. It is a gift that comes from God, a real harmony between individuals, within a community, or among nations. In the letter to the Galatians, Paul writes of peace that it is one of signs of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

**DISTRIBUTION**

Let us know if your Deaf community or church use this sign. Please tell us where in Australia you are, and the name or denomination of your church.

**FEEDBACK**

[Click here to give feedback](#)

The comment box is on the right of your screen.

## Promotion—'Who We Are' Video

In 2018, The JPC team created a promotional video – “Who We Are”. In 2020 JPC continued to distribute the video via networks to increase awareness of the centre and the important work that we do. As the only Deaf Catholic Centre in Victoria we take pride in the support that we are able to offer, which helps to ensure our members continue to receive unique services targeted towards their needs.

Through spreading awareness of the specific needs of Deaf and hard of hearing people we are able to engage fundraising opportunities to improve services and run new initiatives.



The video can be accessed at: <https://vimeo.com/294994776>

# Highlights

## Video Series to Support Connection to Faith

During this time of isolation when the community could not attend Mass or spend time sharing faith, JPC developed a weekly video series to provide opportunity for mindfulness and reflection. For several months, each week we posted three videos: Reflections in Faith, the weekly Gospel and Reflections of the Gospel. Then later in the year we began a weekly prayer video. The videos were signed in Auslan by the Deaf staff members with an English script for holistic access for the community.

Our amazing team had to learn many new skills in technology to be able to produce these videos. Many thanks to Fr Wayne Edwards, Gail Finn, Fr John Hill, Katrina Mynard, Sr Janette Murphy and Teresa Paulet for their work and commitment. The videos brought comfort and reflection to the community during such a challenging time and we received a lot of positive feedback.

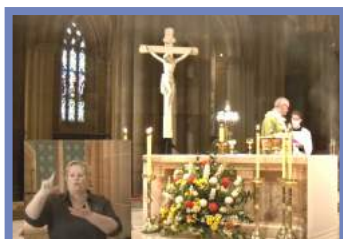
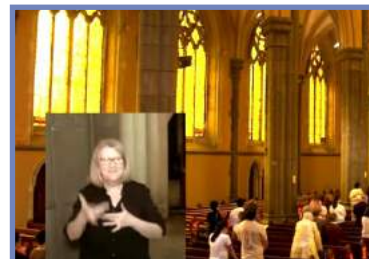


## JPC Third Sunday Mass

Connection to faith was definitely altered in 2020. What a year of learning and building with technology to connect with the community. Our usual Third Sunday Mass each month was remotely recorded by Fr Wayne, Gail and Teresa and edited together before being posted on Facebook and our website.

## Partnership with The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne and the Deaf Interpreting Team

Even though 2020 was a year of challenges and isolation, many positive opportunities were brought about and one such opportunity was a connection to the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne (CAM). The partnership led to the provision of Auslan Interpreters at Sunday Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral each Sunday at 11am which is aired on television—Channel 31 as well as online. We also saw the continuation of Mass For You At Home which was expected not to go ahead in 2021. The JPC staff have worked to improve the delivery of Auslan to the Deaf Community and over the past few months have employed Deaf Interpreters to work on camera at St Patrick's and for Mass For You At Home. This progress has been well received by the Deaf Community and is a significant step forward in Deaf lead faith. JPC are thankful to The Catholic Archdiocese for their commitment to ensuring the Deaf Community have access to their faith and being part of the initiative to have Deaf Interpreters for Sunday Mass. At JPC we have also evolved the interpreting team to have Deaf interpreters providing the Auslan. The interpreting team is continuing to grow and develop skills. It has been a terrific experience for all of the interpreters.



# Members of John Pierce Centre

As at 31st December 2019

Lorraine A'Hearn	Br Frank Hennessy	Jo Rogers
Evelyne Albrecht Nobs	Fr John Hill	John Ryan
Damien Backholer	Dee Houlihan	Peter Thorn
Kathleen Baldwin (deceased)	Joan Kenny	Raylee Thornton
Thomas Beddoe	Theresa Mills (nee Counsel)	Sonya Tissera-Isaacs
Fr Gregory Bourke	Dorothy Moore	Brian Tooth
Bruno Broglio (deceased)	Peter Myers	Margaret Urquhart
Megan Broome	Barry O'Callaghan	Catherine Vidler
Kathleen Carroll	Carmel Phillips	Fran Webber
John Davies	Nathan Rayner	Shane Wood
Sr Karon Donnellon	Greg Reynolds	Kevin Zeibell
Patrick Gallagher	Tannia Robertson	Dean Sinclair
Moreen Griffiths	Fr Peter Robinson (deceased)	Lucille Bennetto

## Victorian Parishes

### Helping to share the news of our centre

John Pierce Centre makes its annual Ephpheta Appeal to the Catholic Community of Melbourne in November of each year. Volunteers from our centre, visit parishes and speak to the community about the work of JPC and the value that community contributions have in supporting our activities.

The John Pierce Centre continues to support Annual Deaf Appeal in partnership with Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, however, in consideration of the difficulties faced throughout the Parish as a result of Covid-19 JPC staff and volunteers were unable to visit any parishes in 2020.

## Acknowledgements

Special mention to all the Auslan interpreters and Deaf interpreters who have worked with JPC throughout 2020.

At JPC we are proud to share our community language of Auslan and to build connections with the wider community. Much of this is achieved through utilising interpreters. They assist JPC to improve awareness of the needs of Deaf people and provide the opportunity for Deaf people to be empowered to represent themselves to the broader community.

## Volunteers

### Supporting JPC

We sincerely acknowledge and thank those people who volunteered their time and services, to help JPC in 2020. Volunteers play a vital role at JPC to ensure our services can run smoothly and have a positive impact on the lives of Deaf people in our community. Whilst it was a challenging year for the entire Victorian Community, the spirit of supporting and connecting was strong and JPC continued to support the community in creative ways.

The dedicated Board members commit regular times to support the governance and management of JPC. Our staff contribute many volunteer hours above their usual work time to support community activities and opportunities to connect.

Volunteers assist with our varied activities including Signee Tots, Deaf Art, Ladies Get Together, Emmaus Liturgy Group, Deaf Men's Group and Pankina. Volunteer pastoral support is provided so that we can connect with more of the community. On top of these regular activities, our volunteers also support special events like the Ephpheta Appeal, fundraisers as well as the annual Christmas Rally.

JPC could not run so successfully without the generous support of volunteers and we sincerely thank each and every person that contributes.

Evelyne Albrecht	Lucy Gransbury	Greg Reynolds
Damien Backholer	Moreen Griffiths	Dean Sinclair
Diane Backholer	Chris Haigh	Malcolm Stevenson
Mark Backholer	Nola Harrison	Melissa Thompson
Lucille Bennetto	Fr John Hill	Sonya Tissera-Issacs
Maureen Brown	Josephine Hynes	Brian Tooth
Sr Frances Caine	Anne Jordan	Geoff Treloggen
Kathleen Carroll	Pam Mayes	Kathleen Tribler
Ron Chapman	Theresa Mills (nee Counsel)	Margaret Urquhart
John Davies	Joy Moloney	Sr Bernadette Wallis
Christine Elder	Lizzie Moloney	Deb Wadsworth
Gordon Elder	Sr Janette Murphy	Mike Wilson
Gail Finn	Katrina Mynard	Br Shane Wood
Annette Fogarty	Geoff Nixon	David Wise
Mandy Gay	Elizabeth Peters	
Maree Gilbert	Jeanette Ralph	

*Thank you*

# 2020, the year that was....





....and what  
a year it was!



JOHN PIERCE CENTRE  
*Spirit of the Deaf Community*

*You can support the work  
of JPC...*

## MAKE A DONATION

By supporting John Pierce Centre, you are creating a positive change.

Financial donations are welcomed and can be made by visiting [www.jpc.org.au](http://www.jpc.org.au) or calling our Office on (03) 9525 1158.

Cheque, money order or telephone donations can be made to John Pierce Centre.

You may also like to donate online at [www.givenow.com.au/jpcdonations](http://www.givenow.com.au/jpcdonations)  
All donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible.



## VOLUNTEER

We welcome volunteers' involvement at JPC.

Volunteers can contribute their skills to JPC whether it's by being a JPC Board member, assisting on special events in our calendar or participating in a local community activity.

## LEAVE A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift to John Pierce Centre in your Will, you will have a lasting impact, supporting John Pierce Centre Deaf Community for years to come.

For more information, please contact our Administration Office on 03 9525 1158.

## KEEP UP TO DATE

Receive updates by subscribing to John Pierce Centre eNewsletter at::

[www.jpc.org.au/community/newsletters/](http://www.jpc.org.au/community/newsletters/)

And follow us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/JohnPierceCentre/>

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[www.jpc.org.au](http://www.jpc.org.au)



[admin@jpc.org.au](mailto:admin@jpc.org.au)



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