



Our Lady of Mercy College
Parramatta

MEDIA RELEASE

October 2019

Parramatta Women's Community Shelter named Mercy Tree Beneficiary for 2nd year

For the first time in the history of the OLMC Parramatta Mercy Tree, the decision has been made to support the same beneficiary for two years in a row. **Women's Community Shelters (WCS)**, the 2018/2019 Mercy Tree beneficiary, will be opening a women's shelter in Parramatta in the coming months and funds raised from Mercy Tree donations from this year's annual appeal will go to this shelter.

Principal Stephen Walsh says this cause has really struck a chord with our community and our hearts are committed to seeing this important initiative become a success: "We know our community will get behind the 2019/2020 campaign to ensure the shelter launches and operates at its full potential to help as many families as possible."

"By supporting this cause, we are carrying on the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy and Catherine McAuley, following in the footsteps of the 'walking nuns' who went out to the disadvantaged in Parramatta to bring practical support and hope. We have the chance help change the lives of the Parramatta's most vulnerable women and children," says College Principal Stephen Walsh.

Annabelle Daniels, CEO Women's Community Shelters, says her team is incredibly excited to be on the countdown to the opening our new Parramatta Shelter, with recruitment of shelter staff underway: "Very soon we'll open our doors to more women and children who need crisis accommodation."

WCS works with local communities to provide more safe havens for women and their children. WCS offers vulnerable women at risk of homelessness or domestic violence shelter, active case management, support, dignity, self-esteem and a chance to start anew, through the establishment, operation and/or supervision and support of Women's Community Shelters and transitional housing.

The **Mercy Tree** is a social justice initiative of the College which symbolises the growth of commitment to Mercy Values in the students at OLMC and our broader community. Standing as a burst of green in the College's Brigid Shelly courtyard, at approximately 4 metres tall, the Chinese Elm tree has blossomed since it was first blessed and planted in 2012. Part of the donations to the Mercy Tree Gift Fund are given to charitable causes nominated by the fund's Trustee. The remainder is invested to provide a secure and ongoing revenue stream to support social justice programs.

Established in 1889, OLMC Parramatta is a leading independent Catholic girls' school which provides contemporary and innovative learning in the rich Mercy tradition. As one of the oldest Catholic Girls' schools in NSW, our rich history of excellence inspires our young Mercy women to expand beyond what they know they can be and to lead with courage and act justly, making a difference in an ever-changing world.

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