



At the end of a crayon rainbow

As I start to write, this month's blog isn't really inspired by anything in particular.

Usually, there's a moment that sparks an idea.

A conversation in reception, a volunteer contribution, a client interaction. The world's best lasagne, or a pair of Crocs.

This month, I found myself staring at a blank page. Inspirationless!

Perhaps that's because, if I'm honest, I'm feeling a little tired. Annual leave is on the horizon and, like many people, I'm looking forward to the opportunity to pause, recharge and catch my breath. When that happens, I sometimes find myself looking harder for inspiration than I need to. The more I look for inspiration, the less I see.

Then I went into the kitchen (I was actually going to make toast), and there it was. Sitting there was a collection of 60 cups neatly stacked with hot chocolate powder, marshmallows and kindness.

Late last week, we received a donation from the Early Learning Centre at St Stephen's School. Different classes had contributed different items. There were pre-cooked meals, like meatballs and rice and there were treats in the form of Mars Bar slice.

Being able to offer someone a nutritious, delicious meal is a real blessing and adding in a luxury sweet treat is a super bonus.

But there was something else with the St Stephen's donation that will put joy in the heart of everyone who sees it and that is the kindergarten decorated cups of hot chocolate.

Each one had been decorated by a child.

Some featured rainbows, some had colourful drawings of flowers, and each had a message. None were perfect, and that is precisely what made them perfect.

I find myself wondering about the person who will eventually receive one.

The recipient may be someone experiencing homelessness or a parent who has spent the week worrying about how they are going to pay the next bill. It might be a mum with a couple of small children coming to us for a food hamper to put dinner on the table. Perhaps it will be someone who feels exhausted, overwhelmed or simply alone.

Whoever they are, they won't know the child who decorated their cup and the child who decorated it won't know them but there is a connection between them.

A child sat at a table, picked up some pencils or crayons and spent time creating something for a stranger. Even at their young age, they understood that they were creating something for someone who might be having a hard time.

The Kindy children didn't expect anything in return but they understood someone needed a little kindness.

We spend a lot of time talking about complex issues at The Spiers Centre. Homelessness, family and domestic violence, financial hardship, mental health, cost-of-living pressures. Rightly so. These are the big issues facing our community every day that require thoughtful responses.

Sometimes I wonder whether we overlook something just as important, the small things.

The things that don't solve a problem but still matter enormously. That might come in the form of warm meal, a smile, a hot chocolate or a hand-drawn crayon picture wrapped around a paper cup.

The people who come through our doors often carry burdens that aren't immediately visible. Many have spent days, months or even years feeling judged, ignored or unseen. What strikes me about these cups is that the children who decorated them didn't know any of that.

They simply knew that someone else mattered.

There is a big lesson in that for all of us.

At The Spiers Centre, we often talk about Community Supporting Community.

But It's a phrase that appears in our publications, our conversations and our planning documents.

Every now and then, something comes along and reminds you what it actually looks like.

This time, it looked like a group of young children sitting around a table with coloured pencils and crayons.

So, thank you to the students, families and staff of St Stephen's School.

Thank you for the meals, the treats, the hot chocolate and the marshmallows.

But most of all, thank you for the reminder, a reminder that kindness doesn't need to be complicated.

It can be found in a paper cup and sometimes, when you're struggling to find inspiration, that's exactly where you find the magic.

At the end of crayon rainbow.

If you would like to help us find more magic at the end of a crayon rainbow, please consider donating at - www.thespierscentre.com/donate or scan the QR Code.

