



Through Mercy Tree, OLMC to Stand with Refugees & People Seeking Asylum

Making Mercy a verb

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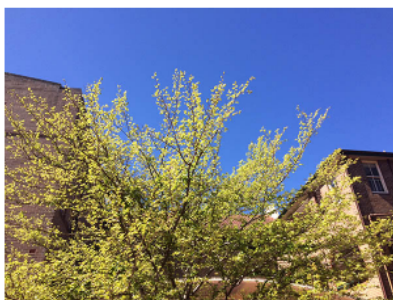
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House of Welcome

As part of Mercy Day celebrations in September at [Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta](#), it was announced that the 2017/2018 beneficiary of Mercy Tree donations would be the [House of Welcome](#), a Sydney-based organisation run by St Francis Social Services which provides assistance to refugees and people seeking asylum.

The Mercy Tree is a social justice initiative of OLMC Parramatta. Standing as a burst of green in the College's Brigid Shelly Courtyard, the Chinese Elm tree has grown to approximately 3.5 metres tall 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, while the remainder is invested to provide a secure and ongoing revenue stream to support social justice programs. PIC



The House of Welcome was founded in 2001 and provides holistic support to refugees and asylum seekers who are living in the community with minimal support options. Their services include housing, community living and family support, a drop-in centre, a weekly foodbank, skills development courses and a host of community connection programs such as a catering social enterprise, social activities, a weekly community kitchen, school holiday programs, a women's craft hub and a

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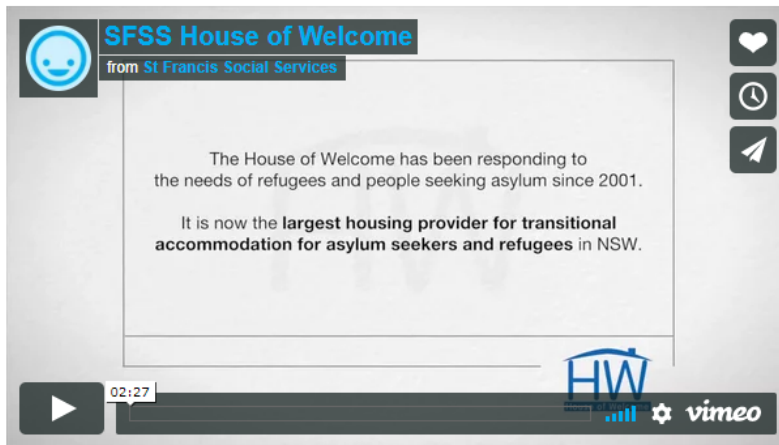
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SFSS House of Welcome from St Francis Social Services on Vimeo.

OLMC Parramatta Principal Stephen Walsh says that founder of the Sisters of Mercy, Catherine McAuley, was motivated by responding to the needs of those at the margins of society: "This is a real, practical way that we can respond to the challenges facing refugees and people seeking asylum right here and now, especially in light of current policy changes. By donating to the Mercy Tree, we are making Mercy a verb!"

Ina Mullin from St Francis Social Services says the House receives no government funding: "This means we can speak out against injustice and assist people who are denied the care they need to survive. But it also means we are wholly reliant on the community for support. At times like now, the ability to speak up and provide practical assistance is more important than ever. The OLMC Mercy Tree Appeal is especially welcomed at this time as we struggle to respond to the latest government Visa changes affecting people seeking asylum".