

INVITATION TO NURTURE THE HEART OF BALLARAT

PLANTING SEEDS OF COMPASSION PROJECT



PROJECT BACKGROUND

Ballarat has recently experienced several traumas that have affected the whole community. In response Ballarat City Council has requested Compassionate Ballarat to work on a community-wide project to support Ballarat citizens who have been affected in dealing with the suffering associated with these distressing events.

One of the key foundation stories of Ballarat is that it's a garden city, whose founders cared for the environment and beautified the city.

Therefore, this project is about planting seeds of compassion to promote Ballarat as a caring city supported by the compassionate wishes of its future leaders.

ABOUT COMPASSIONATE BALLARAT

Compassionate Ballarat is a member of the global Charter for Compassion. The Charter for Compassion is a document and worldwide movement designed to restore not only compassionate thinking but, more importantly, compassionate action, to the centre of our lives.

Compassionate Ballarat Steering Group provides compassionate resources, including educational and community forums, and our work with other compassionate cities

across the world assist all those in Ballarat wanting to create a more flourishing and compassionate city.

The Ballarat City Council formally signed the Charter for Compassion in 2019, with Compassionate Ballarat members Superintendent Jenny Wilson (VicPol) and Dr Lynne Reeder (FedUni) presenting to Council members.

ABOUT COMPASSION

Compassion explores what motivates humans to care for one another. One accepted definition of compassion *is the willingness and sensitivity to see suffering with a resourced capacity to take action to alleviate that suffering.*

Dr Emiliana Simon-Thomas notes that *...in our journey as a human species we have survived by being sensitive to one another.*

Better understanding compassion is important because that can provide us with deeper insights into how human motivations guide our thoughts and behaviours, and to better understand how the motivation and courage of compassion can improve our capacity to 'see' and respond to suffering.

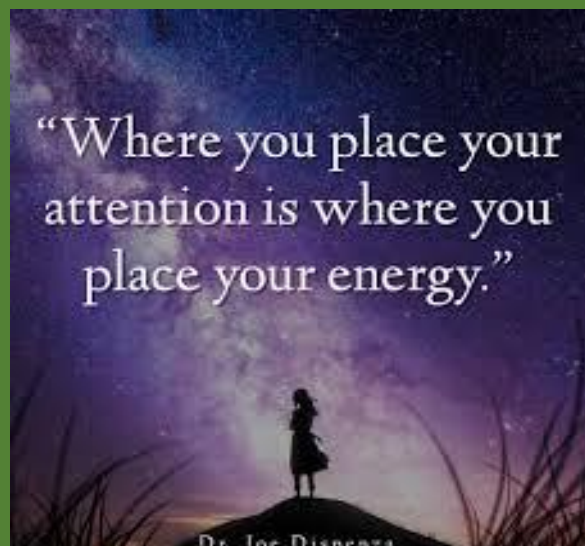
A more detailed report on the science of compassion can be accessed here: <https://www.charterforcompassion.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Future-Directions-Report-2024.pdf>

THE POTENCY OF WISHES

Wishes are powerful – just ask Karen Aren Armstrong. After the winning the best TED talk for 2006, TEDX asked Karen what she wished for and Karen said a more compassionate world. TEDX gave her \$100,000 to bring this wish to fruition and this funding laid the foundation for a global movement led by the Charter for Compassion to be established - the Charter now operates in nearly 600 communities across the world, reaching nearly 6 million people.

Wishes work by clarifying what we would like to see in the world around us. Positive psychology has sought to understand how - where we put our attention stimulates our brain to see new opportunities.

The saying goes - *where focus goes, energy flows. And where energy flows, whatever we're focusing on grows. In other words, our lives are guided by what we focus on. That's why we need to focus on where we want to go, not on what we fear.*



STRUCTURE OF THE SESSION

INFORM - let the students know that they are being invited to participate in a project being organised by Compassionate Ballarat and supported by the City Council.

PROVIDE - some background to the project (as outlined above) and on compassion i.e. that it's about seeing suffering including their own and others and wanting to take action to alleviate it.

ASK - the students where they think suffering shows up in Ballarat – it's likely that you have spoken about some of this already.

CALM - having identified some of those issues - do a short meditation to bring the children into their soothing selves – whatever breathing exercises you do in your wellness session or specific compassion meditation (as below)

SEARCH OUT - ask the children what wishes they have for Ballarat to alleviate some of that suffering. For example these could include a wish that that all children in Ballarat can read; that all our teachers, nurses, and paramedics are treated with respect; that every person living in Ballarat has a home; that Ballarat has more adventure playgrounds for children; that people are kinder to each other on social media; that we look after our environment better, etc

CAPTURE - these wishes and send 4-5 back to us via this email l.reeder@federation.edu.au

PLANT - the other wishes in a garden or a planter box on your school grounds to formally recognise your school's participation in this project. Take photos and send the images of the individual school plantings to us. They will then be captured and shared through local, national, and global Charter for Compassion social media as part of this project.

INFORM - let the students know that their wishes will be captured in a book which will be distributed to your school, across our city and to other compassionate cities across the world.

PLEASE CONTACT US WITH ANY QUESTIONS:

Dr Lynne Reeder – Adjunct Research Fellow, FedUni – Ph) 03 5327 6943

Mary Darcy – Registered Psychologist – M) 0407 041998

Lynne and Mary are both members of Compassionate Ballarat and further information on the work of the Charter can be found here:

Compassionate Ballarat: www.compassionateballarat.com.au

Charter for Compassion, Australia: www.charterforcompassion.com.au

Global Charter for Compassion: www.charterforcompassion.org





Loving-kindness Meditation

LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATION

Take a long slow deep breath in and a longer slow deep breath out do that 3 times. Ground your feet, relax your jaw and gently and at your own pace, bring to mind yourself in this moment and saying silently:

- May I be safe and protected.
- May I be happy and contented.
- May I be loving, kind, and compassionate.
- May my inner wisdom guide my every interaction.

Then bring to mind all those you know in your school and local community silently saying:

- May they be safe and protected.
- May they be happy and contented.
- May they be loving, kind, and compassionate.
- May their inner wisdom guide their very interaction.

Now invite into the field of your heart those around the world, particularly in areas of conflict, saying silently to yourself:

- May they be safe and protected.
- May they be happy and contented.
- May they be loving, kind, and compassionate.
- May their inner wisdom guide their very interaction.