EMPOWERED FAITH COMMUNITIES

Shen's Story

Empowered Faith Communities are formed when people experiencing hardship are provided with opportunities to thrive.

The EFC culture empowers individuals to recognise that, even amid difficult circumstances, they possess gifts and resources that enable them to care for others and share a Christian witness within their neighborhood. People facing disadvantage can discover they have value as contributing members of a community with a meaningful purpose. They can also become part of a family - a family on mission, equipped and encouraged to both "be" and "bring" the good news to those within their everyday relationships and local community.

One story to exemplify this, revolves around Shen, who lives on the Gold Coast.

Not long ago, Shen was homeless, battling depression, suicidal thoughts, and a fading sense of hope. While volunteering in the Cross Life Baptist Church Op Shop, he shared how much he had loved photography as a child. Days earlier, God had prompted a church member to keep an old camera during a house move. The camera was gifted to Shen, trusting God had a purpose.

Since then, Shen's passion for taking photos has rekindled. He has launched into photography starting as a hobby and transitioning into receiving paid opportunities and building his own business. Today he also blesses his own EFC community by creating personalized birthday cards featuring his photos and Scripture. Shen's story is a reminder that, in Christ, people can rediscover how to participate in community and find purpose, hope, and a place to flourish.

The first half of this year has seen significant growth opportunities for EFC across the nation. We have seen over 320 people, representing 72 organisations engage in our workshops across Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide and Tasmania.

Our hope is that those that engage with us will find in their local community the transformative stories such as Shen as a result of engaging in the EFC journey with us.

Mark Matthews

Empowered Faith Communities Co-founder
& National Manager

Carol's Story

Finding Purpose in Life

EMPOWERED FAITH COMMUNITIES

All people have strengths.....

All people have srmiliar with the Empowered Faith Community (EFC) culture will recollect that we are strong in mining for the strengths inherent within individuals in our local communities.

To paraphrase Charles Ringma, all people have strengths even those who are doing life tough.

In our training materials, we speak of acknowledging that we can view people who may have significant life challenges through a "deficit lens" or through a "strength based lens".

We also talk about empowering individuals and communities through the perspective of Asset Based Community Development. This is where we see people use their strengths for their own benefit and for the benefit of others in their local community.

As a new born baby, Carol experienced a significantly traumatic childhood birth. This led to Carol sustaining a traumatic brain injury which presents lifelong daily health challenges.

Carol has had some frustrations in finding sustainable long term meaning and purpose in her life.

Within her local EFC, Carol spoke about her passion for a form of craft called Cross Stitch.

Through an initiative called Art Peace - a spin off from her EFC community meal, Carol decided she could use her passion for Cross Stitch for the benefit of others?

Carol is now making and selling Cross Stitch bookmarks in your favourite AFL or NRL team colours.

Carol's Spiritual Parent, Keryn is supporting her as she sells her book marks. Keryn takes orders and accounts for the payments.

This is obviously a benefit for Carol in that she has found purpose, meaning and structure in her life. But how does this benefit other.

Well, Carol is using the funds raised to support a local charity! The money is being contributed toward food parcels for local families who are struggling to make ends meet.

Through her Cross Stitch, Carol is rising above her own challenges and is becoming a part of the solution to other people's challenges.

Mark Matthews

Empowered Faith Communities Co-founder & National Manager