

MEDIA RELEASE

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FROM HOMELESS TO HELPING THE HOMELESS IN A YEAR

Homeless a year ago, 26 year-old Ashleigh Teraki has flipped life to the upside thanks to a new home, generous community spirit and a job at an inspiring burger bar that helps homeless youth.

Ashleigh had nowhere to live after a relationship break-up forced her into the stressful predicament of 'couch-surfing' and then into a city boarding house with 12 other women.

But her life changed when leading not-for-profit housing provider BHC offered a secure tenancy in her own modern studio apartment at Spring Hill.

For Ashleigh, the move in June last year was a pivotal moment in her life.

"It's improved my quality of life tenfold," Ashleigh said.

"It's quiet... nice... cool. Having stable accommodation takes a lot of weight off my shoulders. It's the first ever place I've lived in by myself.

"I've been homeless twice. I've been in some pretty dark places, but I've had such a great support network."

That support network included Brisbane Youth Service (BYS) which helped Ashleigh identify and reach her goals, including assisting her to be job ready and find work at New Farm eatery DA'Burger.

The gourmet burger restaurant is the perfect fit for Ashleigh, as it not only provides jobs to struggling young people, but also encourages customers to buy vouchers that fund the monthly delivery of nutritious meals to homeless youth.

"I love working at DA' Burger Restaurant and I love the fact that the restaurant goes out of its way to help young people who are in the same situation I was in," Ashleigh said.

"I know what these kids have to deal with on a daily basis because I've lived in homeless shelters and refuges and I've worried about where my next meal was coming from.

“But your life can turn around overnight. Within three weeks I had a house and a job. It was all really good timing.”

BHC CEO David Cant said Ashleigh’s story demonstrates the power of the community working together to help make a difference in other people’s lives.

“To think that Ashleigh has made so many positive changes in her life within such a short time frame is just inspiring,” Mr Cant said.

“At BHC, it’s always our goal to go one step further than merely providing a roof. In this case, we’ve had a number of vital community services all contributing to help give a young person a fresh start.

“We know that when people have a secure place to live, it helps them to maintain meaningful employment, a sense of health and well-being, and they are able to give back to the community in so many positive ways.”

Ashleigh has also received a further boost thanks to BHC’s partnership with Brisbane charity Second Chance, which helps women at-risk of homelessness move towards independence.

For almost a year, Ashleigh received \$240 monthly rental assistance from Second Chance – a much needed helping hand after turbulent financial and emotional times.

With her work life humming and home life secure, Ashleigh is looking forward to a bright future.

“It’s been a really positive twelve months. First the house, then my first job after seven years of unemployment,” Ashleigh said.

“I feel like I’m going from one positive to another lately and I’m just continually happy.”

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