

## **Faith on the footpath**

A homeless man sat on the step outside a Vinnies op shop packing his meagre possessions into a second-hand wheelie case he had just received. He dreaded the long walk back to the kiosk under which he slept last night.

Would it be safe? He was often hassled as he slept. But, where else could he go? Nowhere is safe when you are on the streets.

A young woman inside the shop (let's call her Kylie) was intrigued by the way he continually unfolded, read and then refolded a piece of paper.

After a while, she dragged out a milk crate and sat next to Jack (my name for him).

“Are you alright?”

“Yea, I'm OK.”

Silence. She was not convinced.

“Are you sure you're alright?” she persisted.

More silence.

## **A shared lunch and a conversation**

Kylie took him inside, poured a mug of coffee and offered him her lunchtime sandwich. He quickly devoured it without looking at her.

She could sense him slowly relaxing as he tentatively responded to her gentle, unobtrusive drawing him out of himself.

He had worked as carpenter for 30 years. Through a series of unforeseen disasters, he was now homeless. Everything he had was in the wheelie case.

## **A child's kindness**

The paper in his hands, Jack told her, was a note left at his “camp” one day.

“I hope this helps. Here's \$3. Charlie. Aged 7.”

He broke down as he recounted how he put the \$3 with a dollar he had and was able to buy a loaf of bread.

## **A new beginning**

With a little hug for Jack, Kylie called colleagues at a homeless shelter and secured a bed for Jack that night.

To make a long story short, Jack stayed at the shelter for a month. He was then offered a one-bed apartment. With secure housing, he got himself a job and is now living independently.

This is not a made-up story. It happened in Adelaide last year.

## **Faith in action**

Faith comes alive and shows itself in events like this.

Kylie had faith – faith in the people she turned to, faith in Jack and his ability to benefit from her offer, and faith in herself so that she could reach out to him in the first place.

This is not the kind of faith we usually associate with church and religion. It is much deeper and more personal.

And Jack? Even in the depths of misery and depression, he held on to Charlie's note, responded to Kylie's nudging and eventually found his way back to self-respect and independence.

That takes faith of a kind more intimate than words.

It is said that faith is the eye of being in love with Life and seeing what is not yet but could be.

If so, both Kylie and Jack were smitten.