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Our Vision
Babymum is a vibrant, creative community for young mums and their babies to belong, find support, celebrate the present and be equipped for the future.

Our Mission
To provide a safe supportive environment for young mums and their babies, through:
• Holistic emotional, physical, and social support
• Education support
• Mentoring and life coaching
• Parenting and social skill development and
• An online community

Our Values
Faith          Education
Hope           Community
Love           Friendship
meet our board

Ro Blaney
President and Programs Coordinator

Maryann Midson
Treasurer

Jennifer Howell
Secretary

Alice Cordwell
General Board Member

Elizabeth (libby) Verhay
General Board Member
We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.

George Bernard Shaw
Thank you to our faithful volunteers

Ro Blaney
Carmen Bowkett
George and Jan Greig
Stephanie Goelst
Dot Greenberg
Shelly Elmer
Naomi Matthews
abymum has resided in 'The Cottage' for another year. Our Myday Friday program has remained the constant throughout this year, providing a base for our vision of supporting young mums and their children and an always welcoming place for everyone to gather and share our life journeys.

We continue to be wonderfully supported by Bruce and Hugh and the Launceston Girls' Home so that we have a beautiful space to 'work' in and an ongoing reassurance that we are doing a good thing in our community. Earlier this year we approached Bruce to assess the need for repairs and upgrade on the building and the meeting that followed was attended by a group involved in town planning and construction, including the architect Lionel Morrell. The exciting news included consideration of a sun safe and child friendly outdoor area along with painting and general building repairs, but an assurance that 'our building' was structurally sound and historically amazing! Any plan of God must have firm foundations!

Over the past year we have had meetings with people who have inspired us, given us advice and suggestions and genuinely believed we were a worthwhile organisation. These people included the Pregnancy Counselling Line Australia, House of Hope, Playgroup Tas, Storybook Communications, EL Conveyancing, Babes and Picnics, CHAT, Teen Challenge and the LGH midwife team. We have also shared our information at a second review of services for young people held at Newstead College. Our contact with the LGH has continued with our midwife volunteer continuing to give out our little gift bags to new young mums.

However, I feel that, despite all our efforts our core business has not grown. In the past year, we have not had one new 'oops I fell pregnant mum' or even an 'I chose to be pregnant teen' attend our support group. We still have support from Naomi for belly casting and baby massage but have only had a couple of girls seek a belly cast. The older babymums still love coming along and the relationships between team members, the young mums and their children are warm, friendly, comfortable and genuine. We share stories and dreams. We assist with life difficulties wherever we can. We offer support, advocacy, friendship and vicarious learning. We have much to offer but have not seen connections growing.

I believe we are missing some important elements in our organisation, not love, nor dedication or passion, but rather the overarching visionary that started this mission and perhaps the connections that we once had within social welfare and child protection. We are a group of volunteers who have family and work commitments as first priorities and, although Babymum is important to all of us, we cannot devote the time and energy it takes to see this wonderful mission move forward in its current form.

Whilst we are still financially viable, thanks to donations from supporters and the dedicated Bunnings BBQ team and God; we still have a wonderful working space, thanks to the support from the Launceston Girl's Home and God; we still have wonderful team members and board members and we still recognise there is a need for emotional, physical and educational support for young mums and their children - we seem to be a little 'stuck' and continuing to circle. So as the leaders of this organisation, both Jen and I feel it is time for 'The Age of Re', that is a need to recess, review, reassess, release and renew!

And so, I thank everyone who has been involved with Babymum, past and present, I thank our board members, our team members and volunteers, our financial sponsors and our babymums and their families and I hope that, as we move forward in this time of change - perhaps a time for revival - you will keep our Babymum journey in your hearts and minds.
Our main ‘business’ has always been to invite young mums and their babies to come to us for nurturing, community support, friendship, guidance with future planning, educational or employment or life goals support. And our main contact is still through our Myday Friday contact group which we have continued to run for the past year at ‘The Cottage’.
Myday Friday: BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Our Myday Friday team has remained positive and strong over the past year with plenty of fun in the play room led by Steph, lovely cakes from The Cheesecake Shop and plenty of in depth chat on the couches, fun craft ideas as well as good mentoring led by Carmen, some wonderful photography from Jan, general upkeep and a fatherly mentor led by George and some wonderful lunches led by Dot. In all areas, our team support each other and the feeling on Fridays is always warm, friendly and fun. We did feel the need to close for a few weeks over the Winter as numbers were low but our first day back was well attended! Although we lost both Heidi and then Dot to careers and thought to abandon lunches, our Fridays still seem to involve food from either a team member contributing or a young mum wanting to cook! Sharing coffee, talking, craft, playing, laughing and eating are the things we do very well at Babymum! We have had our regular Babymums joining us on Fridays, as well as visits from young mums who are now working or in full or part time education. We share the lives and interests of everyone who joins us. We also offer other times of contact and support if it is requested, such as supporting a mum and child when starting school or helped with family visits to specialists or with continuing education.
outreach

We only had a few belly casts this year. Thanks to Naomi, these girls received a forever memory of their pregnancy. While belly casts don't seem to be as popular as they once were, we always get positive feedback from our new mums. They value the time and love that goes into each belly cast.

In July 2016, we sent letters to all high school and college principals, received one reply from Ashley, and in July this year we sent emails to principals, social workers and chaplains, receiving only one lovely response from Newstead College. Our volunteers, board members and young mums have all assisted to ‘spread the word’ by taking posters and information to their doctors’ surgeries, to community centres, child care centres and churches and delivered information to other community support groups such as Family Planning, the bus depot, Walker House and The Playgroup Association. We have also stayed active on both our Facebook Babymum Chat page and our Babymum site.

support

We have been blessed, this past year, with the support of a sponsor for our Myday Friday program - Erin Simms and EL Conveyancing. This offer came at a time when we were struggling with ideas for moving forward and growing our mission. Our Babymum Team felt inspired by the encouragement of this lovely group of business women and we endeavoured to find ways to reach out into the community and increase the attendance at our social support group. We were inspired by this encouragement and worked hard to ensure the attendance on Fridays was good and that there was always lovely food to share, an interesting craft activity or play idea happening in the mornings.
This year has continued to run smoothly in the administration and finance areas. Treasurer Maryann and I have continued to develop our Xero accounting system, generously made possible by MDH Accounting. This ensures that we are collecting all the required information for auditing purposes should we decide to do this in the future. Going paperless is also great for our filing systems and the environment!

We have had several ongoing private donors who have remained faithful over this last year (and previous years, of course). These contributions make it possible to predict some of our budget items such as fixed costs like phone, Internet and power. The sponsorship by EL Conveyancing has also contributed to these ongoing costs as well as making our Myday Friday program generous and varied. Happily, we finish this year only a few hundred dollars down on last year.

Our policies and procedures bank continues to grow as we adjust old ones and write new ones. This is vital to ensure we are operating with best practice principles and keeping everyone safe. While our numbers have been lower this year, this still means we must have the correct procedures in place for either two or twenty.

Fundraising has been fairly quiet this year. We have had two Bunnings BBQs in June and July. Sadly, due to low volunteer numbers, we were unable to do a further two. It is a big commitment to man the ‘snag stall’ all day and we are so appreciative of Jan, George, Ro, Stan, Libby, Nao and Marty. Thank you also to Stan, Marty and George for all your hard working keeping our Cottage gardens in order. Come and check out our beautiful roses this time of the year!

Jen Howell
I once read, “we don’t meet people by accident, they are meant to cross our path for a reason”. This sums up my experience with Babymum perfectly. I was randomly invited to a Myday Friday after bumping into Ro in the mall one day. That was over 2 years ago, and I have been a part of Babymum ever since. In a way, I didn’t choose to become a part of Babymum, Babymum chose me!

To be honest, working with young mums is something that I never considered doing. But, I have loved every minute! It has been a privilege to be let into the lives of some amazing young women whose diverse stories have just blown me away. I have laughed with them, listened to them, held their hand and cried with them, but most of all, I have learnt from them. I have watched shy, young girls turn into confident, strong women, and I couldn’t be more proud to have been a part of their journey.

Every Friday at the Cottage, when a little smiling face yells out “Carmen!” it makes me realise that I am an important part of this child’s life, but, they are also an important part of mine. I have watched little babies grow and their personalities develop into gorgeous, independent, kind and sometimes stubborn little souls. Watching us all play together, teach each other new things and laugh together, has made me realise that we are all one big family. If I had a dollar for every time I shared a laugh with a child at Myday Friday, I would be rich! But in a way, I already am, because I am the one who gets to laugh at their funny stories and receive their love through great big hugs, and I wouldn’t change that for the world.

Being a part of Babymum has also taught me so much about myself. I have developed into a bubbly, outgoing, confident woman because I have finally found a place where I belong.

I want to thank Ro, Jen and Noeline for inviting me be a part of the Babymum team; you inspire me every day. I also want to thank Jan, George, Steph, Dot and Heidi for your friendship and for the amazing times we have shared. But most of all, I want to thank the mums for allowing me to be a part of their and their child’s lives; you will always hold a special place in my heart and I strongly believe that we will be lifelong friends.

Carmen
Libby’s story

“As one of the newer board members, I would like to share why and what I get out of being part of Babymum. It has been a great pleasure working alongside a board that is dedicated to the young mothers and babies of Launceston. The Myday Friday group stories we receive each meeting warm my heart and only wish we had more attending for the time and passion given by Ro and her team. The reason I became a board member was after many discussions with Ro. Her passion sold me and I wanted to do something that had purpose and could see something of worth, even the small celebrations. Although I am one of the newer board members, I consider the time well spent and we seek guidance from God to continue. Although we are small, we are strong in passion and hope for the future.” Libby

Closing comments

Babymum is only able to operate due to the time and effort our volunteers put in loving our babymums and their little ones. It’s a job that we love and we are always looking for more volunteers to help out. We would love to invite people with a heart to see lives changed, particularly if you have skills or professional experience in social work, child protection, counseling, advocacy, administration or legal and accounting skills. Whatever your area of passion, Babymum would benefit from your help.

New directions

We are also looking for individuals or groups who would like to work with Babymum to craft a new vision and direction. Our heart remains for young mums and their babies, but we would like to hear from people who may have ideas on how to grow the organisation. We are open to any new ideas. Please contact us below.

Contact us
info@babymum.org.au 0488 99 66 33
PO Box 7558 Launceston Join us on Facebook