

# Keeping prisoners' families connected during Christmas

Chris Bowman

It's early December 2018 and the joy of Christmas is in the air. The sound of carols fills a large grassy space. Families sprawl across wooden benches and table settings. Children run around, enthusiastically showing their latest toys and presents to their parents and to one another.

Welcome to Cadell Training Centre, a low security prison, just a couple of hours northeast of Adelaide. This is the only 'normal' family day they'll share all year.

Second Chances SA, a South Australian not-for-profit organisation, attends Family Fun Day here every year as part of their *Christmas Angels* program.

Earlier that morning, one of their volunteers pulled up to the prison gates with a trailer packed full of wrapped Christmas presents, specially chosen in advance for dads who are currently being held at Cadell, to personally deliver to their children.

Last year, *Christmas Angels* provided 632 children and young people across South Australia with Christmas presents from their imprisoned parent. This provided a much-needed opportunity for children and parents to stay connected in the midst of extremely difficult circumstances.

"My three daughters love the presents they received. It means a lot to them knowing their father (me) gives them birthday and Christmas presents," responded one grateful father.

For this dad and his children, *Christmas Angels* is not just about presents. It's about keeping families connected, reminding children they are loved and not forgotten while empowering imprisoned parents with the opportunity to build good connections with their children.

"With a one-income family, Christmas time can be quite hard with one parent in prison. But my husband is now on home visits so we are having 'Christmas' today with him at home. He was able to bring the gifts and give them to the kids himself," commented a mother of two young children, adding that the family now takes each day as it comes, grateful for precious moments like these.

Uniting Church members and congregations from across South Australia play a key role in making *Christmas Angels* a reality through their generosity and advocacy every year.



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To find out how your congregation, faith community, Home Group or Community Club can get involved and bring much-needed joy and connection to families doing it tough this Christmas, contact Second Chances SA at 8272 0323.

To find out more, check out their website at [secondchances.org.au/programs/christmas-angels/](http://secondchances.org.au/programs/christmas-angels/) or invite them to speak at your upcoming fundraising events or church services.

### Who are Second Chances SA?

Second Chances SA is a non-profit volunteer organisation committed to restoring hope in the lives of prisoners, their families and their communities across South Australia. They offer five programs that help to achieve this goal: Christmas Angels, Bringing Hope, PK Mentoring Camps, PK Family Care, and PK Birthdays.

Their programs are custom designed to help individuals and their families to create better futures for themselves.

### How does Christmas Angels work?

Each donation of \$40 provides a child with two brand-new, specially chosen presents. Christmas Angels presents are delivered to six State prisons for imprisoned dads and mums to give their children in person during Christmas visiting times.



**Christmas ANGELS**  
Second Chances SA

**Bringing joy to children of prisoners**

Your donation of \$40 buys a child two brand-new presents

Each year, **Christmas Angels** provides over 550 PKs (prisoners' kids) with presents from their imprisoned parent during Christmas visiting times.

**(08) 8272 0323**  
[secondchances.org.au](http://secondchances.org.au)

Photo (left): Helen Glanville, CEO of Second Chances SA, and husband Geoff with a festive trailer full of presents, ready for delivery at Cadell Training Centre's Family Fun Day.

Photo (top right): A young girl shows her two presents at the Cadell Training Centre's Family Fun Day. Throughout Australia it is estimated there are over 43,000 children and young people with a parent in prison. Organisations like Second Chances SA exist to give support and a voice to those doing it tough because of a family member's imprisonment.

