The Cardoner Network

Newsletter



MIHI VIVERE CHRISTUS EST
IHS
THE CARDONER NETWORK

Prayers for Nepal

TCN FAMILY



Cardoner has sent volunteers to Nepal for over 10 years, so we are heartbroken to see such devastation and loss due to the recent flooding and landslides.

We haven't been directly impacted as we don't send volunteers between July and October, but we know that relatives of the school principal in Tipling were working in the impacted areas and remain missing.

Our prayers for all those impacted.

Donate via Jesuit Mission:
https://jesuitmission.org.au/donate-emergency-action-fund/





CEO

STUART SALIER



Creating opportunities through bursaries

Our mission at Cardoner is to accompany young adults as they discover the love of service to those who are less fortunate. It particularly delights me, therefore, when we are able to offer the opportunity for service to young adults who might otherwise have thought an immersion was beyond their reach.

Thanks to the generosity of our wonderful community of supporters, we now have funds available to provide bursaries to applicants for our immersion programs. A bursary can significantly reduce the cost of an immersion, helping to ensure that financial circumstances are not a barrier to a young adult taking up what can be a truly life-changing opportunity.

Can I encourage you to think of a young adult you know—someone between the ages of 18 and 24—who might benefit from a Cardoner immersion but for whom the cost could be a significant obstacle? If someone comes to mind, please encourage them to get in touch with us. We would love to hear from them.

Gathering with 'Friends of Cardoner'

Among the highlights of recent months have been the opportunities to gather with Friends of Cardoner in both Sydney and Adelaide.

Our Sydney gathering, now in its third year, raised around $35,000. Around 200 supporters enjoyed an evening of live music, delicious canapés, wonderful gelato and, most importantly, heartfelt reflections from three inspiring young adults—thank you, Tom, Charlotte and Raphael. All of this was accompanied by stunning rooftop views, courtesy of our wonderful supporters at St Aloysius' College.

It was also a particular privilege to welcome and toast, in person, our beloved friend and partner from Nepal, Chandra Rai. For more than a decade, Chandra has safely guided and trekked with hundreds of Cardoner volunteers, helping them to navigate both the mountains of Nepal and the many challenges and joys of an immersion experience. We remain deeply grateful for his friendship and partnership.

In June, I was delighted to meet with around 60 Friends of Cardoner at a gathering generously hosted by Saint Ignatius' College in Adelaide. What a joy it was to hear the heart-warming reflections of Ella, a current Year 12 student, and Jess, a former student of the College and Cardoner alumna, who shared her experience in Wadeye, Northern Territory, from 2024.

These young women are truly inspiring examples of how the heart can be moved when we give of ourselves in humble service. Their stories remind us why we do what we do at Cardoner—and why the generosity and encouragement of our supporters make such a difference in enabling young adults to have these experiences.



Rector

FR RAMESH RICHARDS SJ



Walking with young people

I was encouraged to read Fr General Arturo Sosa SJ's recent letter on young adult ministry. He identifies three hallmarks of authentic Ignatian ministry: helping young people recognise the Risen Jesus at work in their lives; cultivating a sensitivity to the poor and a desire for a more just world through immersion and exchange; and creating communities where young people can belong and walk together.

What struck me most was how recognisable these hallmarks are in the life of The Cardoner Network. They are not new aspirations for us, but something we are already seeking to live.

This was particularly evident in our first silent retreat for young adults in Gerroa, which brought together participants from across Australia in July. Based on the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, the retreat gave young people the rare gift of silence: an opportunity to slow down, listen to the movements of their hearts and become more attentive to where God might be leading them. There was a real depth to the experience, and a reminder that sometimes the most important thing we can offer young adults is simply the space to encounter God.

A few weeks ago, I saw another dimension of this mission, this time in East Timor. Our volunteers are thriving, forming genuine relationships, learning from the communities in which they live and discovering that service is as much about receiving as it is about giving. My visit also allowed me to meet with local Jesuits and explore possibilities for new volunteering sites.

Cardoner House, previously known as Bellarmine House, continues to flourish this semester. The strength of the community has been particularly encouraging, with a diverse group of young adults sharing life together, supporting one another and growing in faith. Through regular local volunteering, residents are also discovering the joy of service. In this way, the House is more than simply a place to live; it is a community where young people grow in faith, friendship and service.

These experiences give me great confidence in Cardoner's mission. We are accompanying young people not simply through programs, but through experiences that invite faith, community and service.

As Fr General reminded us Jesuits in the letter so beautifully: "We believe in young people."





Nepal - Tipling

JEREMY JUBB

Faith and community

“Keep one foot raised.” This Ignatian concept became one of the most helpful ideas during my time in Tipling, Nepal. I would often sit outside with a book, surrounded by the mountains, only to be invited for tea and roti, called over to play volleyball or to explore the surrounding terrain. What I initially saw as interruptions to a routine I had tried to create, became the most exciting and meaningful moments of my experience. I learnt that growth does not simply come from changing our surroundings, but from choosing to step outside ourselves and remain open to what is unexpected.



I arrived thinking that the greatest impact would come from what I could give to the community, especially in the classroom, but I quickly realised how much I had to learn from it.

I was particularly surprised by the strength and closeness of the Tipling community. There was a strong emphasis on family and caring for one another. Every morning, people would ask how I was and whether I had eaten: “Ken tsoji wa?”— a simple expression of love and concern. I was continually invited to participate in village life, whether spending time at the church, helping on farms, or collecting wood.

Teaching was incredibly rewarding, especially being able to watch the children’s curiosity and confidence grow as they explored, questioned and experienced the world around them. I also learned to appreciate the resourcefulness and playfulness of village life. With limited income and access to shops or equipment, something as simple as a plastic bottle could become a source of entertainment.

My faith was also strengthened through these experiences which grew as a result of being part of such a strong catholic community. I saw God in the faces and actions of the people around me, particularly in the generosity of the community and the agape they shared. Joining in with the church choir was a highlight, showing me the joy that can come from praising God together. I also learnt that while faith is not always certain or easy, being surrounded by love makes the journey easier.

While I was only a small part of the great contribution that Cardoner has made on the community and will continue to have, I am deeply grateful for the ways we all grew closer to each other, to God and the way the experience has impacted me.

To quote my journal: “Life in Tipling was slow enough to appreciate, broken enough to wake me from routine and allow my inner child to flourish — to pray, sing, dance, explore and, most importantly, to laugh.”

East Timor

MICHAEL KWAN

Within everyone's heart

The limitations of physical circumstances in Railaco, high in the mountains of Timor-Leste, were very different from my urban upbringing. Frequent blackouts, rough roads, unstable data, a scarce water supply, insects, rats, unreliable communication, and dengue fever in my first week all demanded great patience. Surprisingly, I wasn't too disturbed by these challenges, thanks to the overwhelming joy and peace among the Timorese people. This spirit persists despite real hardships, such as long commutes and struggles to afford tuition and lunch, within a nation that has so recently endured colonisation and war.

The simplicity of life here explains what might otherwise seem an improbable optimism: it forces me to see what we do have, which is that we are all here as one. I felt this deeply during my homestay in Matata, a close-knit mountain village where the people welcomed me generously. It wasn't just hospitality towards a visitor; they genuinely enjoy one another's company and are always happy to share. Sitting among them and listening to them discuss plans for their new chapel, despite not comprehending every word, I could feel a strong hope amidst worries over the budget, far beyond verbal expression.



East Timor - Continued

I am extremely grateful to the Jesuits and everyone in Railaco for accepting me as part of the family and allowing me to share in their daily life. They truly embody the response to "The peace of the Lord be with you always" in the Tetun missal: "Kristu nia domin halo ita hamutuk ona" (The love of Christ has already made us all together).

Spiritual life is the highlight of their community, and through our universal faith I became part of it by singing in the choir during the Lord's Supper, praying the Rosary with my homeroom class during the visitation of Our Lady in May, and gathering for daily Mass. Communion is not limited to the Eucharist, but permeates all of Timorese life. As a teaching assistant at NOSSEF high school, and living in the boys' dormitory while teaching twice a week in the girls' dormitory, I have been able to immerse myself in their lives and practise Tetun. Being able to communicate in their native language, even at a basic level, has turned out to be the most helpful bridge for teaching and understanding their culture.

My passion for photography has also drawn me closer to the community. Most students lack access to quality phones or cameras, so they get incredibly excited for photos. Capturing their smiles when they play sports or perform in their school festival has become one of my most satisfying moments.

A major reason my experience here has been so meaningful is working alongside my fellow Cardoner volunteers, Joe and Sabina. Sometimes I feel disappointed, but my purpose here remains clear in our shared joys: to simply be with the local people and enjoy our time together. While I often feel that I as an individual can do very little and that impact is hard to measure, over time I have come to appreciate the simple value of offering my presence, listening, and waiting with patience.

Living with the community of Railaco, I have been able to experience the living presence of Christ, the incarnate Word. I have found it in a community built not just as a grand church, but within everyone's heart.



Micronesia - Chuuk

TED PERRIGNON



Reflections from Chuuk

I'll never forget marking Year 8's final writing exams in my office and reading my students' responses to the prompt: 'What would you like to be when you're older and why?'. Many wrote about giving back to their families and communities, often through nursing or medicine, driven by a desire to help combat illness affecting many in their families. One answer that stood out to me was from one of my students, Liney, who wrote: "I will go to Australia and teach, just like you came to Chuuk and you teach in Sapuk School, thank you." Her words capture what I will always cherish most, my students and the generous community that welcomed me into Sapuk.

Sapuk is a small village on Weno Island, the capital of Chuuk State in the Federated States of Micronesia. Chuuk is the most populous state in Micronesia, with around 50,000 residents. In January 2026, I left Australia through the Two Wolves Abroad program and arrived at Xavier High School in Chuuk, commonly referred to as the 'Harvard of Micronesia'. I was to stay for 6 months, joining my friends and fellow volunteers, Lucas and Remy. After a month as a casual teacher at Xavier, I moved to Sapuk Elementary, where I taught Language Arts (English), Science, and Math to grades 5, 6, and 8.

My placement in Chuuk strengthened my sense of resilience. I'd be lying if I said I didn't encounter some really tough times. Whether it was the island's unfamiliarity, the language barrier, or the isolation, there were many times when I questioned why I was there and longed to be home. One example was the loneliness of the quiet hours, when teaching was finished and students were home. I remember how the ocean around me sometimes lost its beauty and felt more like a reminder of how far away everyone I loved was. Yet in that same silence, I found God, and rather than fearing it, I tried to lean into it.

Teaching Year 8 Language Arts was the highlight of my time in Chuuk, though I started with some hesitation after fellow teachers warned me I'd been given "the naughty class". It wasn't easy at first. Students would occasionally wander in with machetes in hand, and I quickly learned that it's hard to argue with someone wielding a machete. I later realized the machete is just a common everyday tool on the island. It would be my Year 8 student, King, who was the reason things changed for me. After hiking up Witipwen Mountain in Sapuk to watch the sunset from the famous Japanese Lighthouse (built during WWII), Lucas, Remy and I found ourselves hiking down the mountain through villages in the dark, beginning to feel uneasy. We realized we were lost, and after being questioned by a couple of locals about what we were doing, we were genuinely concerned for our safety. That was until we heard a boy shouting out from a distance, "Mr Ted!" It was King, who proceeded to grab a flashlight and guide us down the mountain. This deed stuck with me, and whilst probably insignificant to King, I saw God in that moment as he walked alongside us, a testament to the Sapuk communities' Jesuit-like instinct to accompany one another.

If you asked me before Chuuk what I wanted from a career, I would have talked about money or status as the markers of success. I don't think I'd give that answer anymore. When I think back on my time there, the good days and the bad, my students, and the people who welcomed me in, what stays with me most is how fulfilling it felt to be useful to others. I know now that whatever I end up doing, I want it to give something to the world, not just to me.
I'm forever grateful for the opportunity to teach in Chuuk, and especially to my parents, who made it possible. I'll always cherish my time there and the relationships I formed. I know I will return one day, and I can't wait.

Thailand – Ban Kad

Rachel Rodda and Michael McGuire (parents' reflection)

From a different lens

When you wrap your arms around your child for a final hug at the international departure gate ahead of a year volunteering in Thailand, it's hard not to worry.

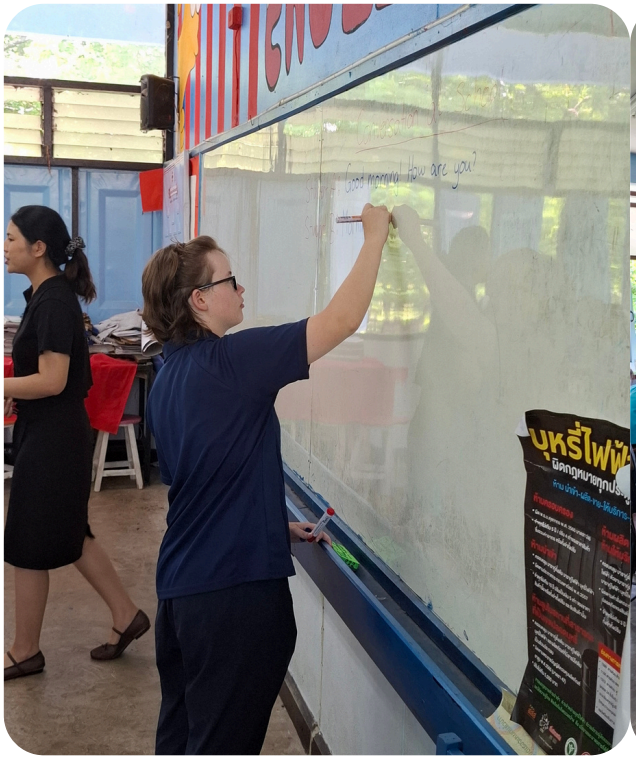
Sure, there had been plenty of preparation. Ruby, our daughter and current volunteer at Ban Kad in Thailand, had long made clear a desire to spend the year after Year 12 doing something useful in the wider world. The idea of volunteering as an English teacher meant research, introductions, training, visa and medical checks.

After an initial commitment to a rural Cambodia community, which changed after an international border skirmish, the assignment switched to a small town called Ban Kad. The Thai high school and nearby boarding house is an hour from the northern town of Chiang Mai.

Driving home from the airport opens up questions: are the people friendly? Is the accommodation okay? Is it safe? What about food? Just how difficult is the language barrier? And a million more.

In the subsequent months, there would be regular phone calls and photos sent home of other game Australian volunteers living and teaching at schools along the mountainous region. All would show happy teenagers and their new Thai student friends having the time of their lives.

Our intent was always to pop over to have a look. At a happy family reunion at Chiang Mai airport (it had been four months by this stage) we met a grown-up child eager to show us around. Navigating streets and markets with ease, to find local delicacies, and an impressive working knowledge of Thai.





Parents' reflection continued

Then it was on to Ban Kad.

We experienced a bit of culture shock on seeing accommodation for Thai students who board during the week from mountain farms. The dorm features a tiled homework room, kitchen and eating space, separate sleeping quarters for boys and girls, a jungle soccer pitch and that was about it. The volunteer bedrooms have mosquito nets, plus a unit for storing personal items.

Ruby was quick to swat aside any doubts. It took only a few days to adjust, we were reassured.

What was comforting to see was how Ruby had become a popular figure among the students. We were invited to dinner that night. We witnessed a warm connection with the dorm mother Muga. The conversation with students was sweet and friendly affair, in broken English and Thai.

The next day we toured the school, with more rounds of generous, happy introductions. It was delightful to see the transformation of our child to a confident teacher. Staff were complimentary about Ruby's contribution from the deputy principal down, teachers even competing to have classroom support across the timetable.

We watched Ruby lead classes and joined in to test student language skills with attentive and bright Thai students, sitting a hot humid classroom with only open windows and fans to move the air around.

A few days later we were back at Chiang Mai airport for farewells. This time the parents were the ones heading for the departure gate. This time, fewer tears and worries, but growing pride.



Thailand - XLC

SAMAARA NAKRA

A home away from home

It is inevitable to find friendship and a sense of family within an environment as nurturing and comforting as Xavier Learning Community. Being able to share an unforgettable experience with the other volunteers and the community of XLC, having them be by your side as you grow, embark on new experiences and find a home away from home, is something that bonded us all as not only peers, but also family.

Something that surprised me most about my students was their genuine enthusiasm and passion for learning. Throughout my six months of service, I saw their faces light up whenever they learned a new word and saw how fully engaged they were in every game and activity. Their excitement and eagerness to learn English was something I never expected, but I am glad I got to experience it.





I went into this experience thinking that I was going to be the teacher, but now, reflecting on my time, I realised that I was learning so much more. Besides teaching me how to fish, cook traditional foods and dance, XLC taught me what true kindness and community are all about. It's not just about having people live in the same area, but rather how everyone cares about one another, how everyone has a role and keeps to it, and how everyone supports each other, no matter what.

During a trip to a small Karen village with a few of the XLC students, a host mother welcomed us into her home when we visited a friend who turned out to be napping when we arrived. Although she only spoke the Plong language, and we could not communicate directly, she cooked for us, taught us how to cook an omelette over the fire, cut fruit for us, and gave us blankets to keep us warm. What stayed with me was how she cared for us despite not knowing who we were or speaking our language. When our friend later translated, she told us that she saw us as her children. What made this moment meaningful was the warmth and kindness shown without words, a feeling that will stay with me forever.

Shaping restless hearts



RAPHAEL GILES, FORMATIONS COORDINATOR

O Lord, our heart is restless until it rests in You

In a world that so often prioritises, praises, and glorifies busyness, last month 15 young adults gathered in Gerroa for a semi-silent retreat, resting our hearts in Christ, our Lord.

One of the great privileges I have in my role at The Cardoner Network is the opportunity to facilitate retreats. While these retreats are ideally enriching experiences for participants, they are also an opportunity for me to step outside my own weekly routine and experience the true privilege of praising, revering, and serving God through my work. After leading retreats over the past two years, I have seen how deeply my own heart has been moved, making the prospect of participating in a semi-silent retreat particularly exciting.

For university-aged students, the idea of silence can be challenging. We live in a world that is constantly loud, filled with notifications, conversations, and distractions. Yet this discomfort was part of the invitation. Through the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, we were challenged to quiet the noise and open our hearts and minds to become present to the voice of Christ and His everlasting love.

The retreat centred on the Spiritual Exercises, with Fr Ramesh Richards SJ and Fr Nico Lariosa SJ offering reflections, followed by an hour of silence and small-group discussion. Through prayer and Scripture, we were invited to reflect on our relationship with Jesus Christ and how we will respond to His invitation to follow Him.



It was evident in the small-group sharing that the Holy Spirit was moving within the hearts and minds of all retreatants. In the stillness of Gerroa, we were reminded that following Christ does not always mean doing more. Sometimes, it means stopping, listening, and allowing Him to speak. As the waves of Gerroa's beach continuously roll onto the shore, we are reminded of God's continuous desire to live with us and draw us into His presence.

Building our young adult community

The Young Adults Advisory Committee has been established, to be a voice for young adults across the Cardoner community. The committee consists of eight members from across Australia: Keira Williams from Adelaide; Hugh Lachal and Luca Baggio from Melbourne; and Sabina Lozina, Jeremy Jubb, Ryan Gomez, Ethan Godinho and myself as the chair from Sydney.

Together, we hope to listen to the wants, needs and experiences of young adults and ensure that young adult voices are at the heart of how we respond as a ministry. Our vision is to help create a faithful and welcoming community where young people can grow in friendship, faith and their relationship with the Lord. Faith formation has been at the top of our agenda, as we continue to explore how we can support young adults seeking God in all that they do.

Starting in two weeks, we will begin offering regular fortnightly reflections, bringing young adults together for prayer, reflection, sharing, Scripture, and formation. These evenings will be followed by Mass and dinner, providing a valuable opportunity to connect with others, share experiences and grow together as Catholics. The reflections will also be available online, allowing young adults from interstate to participate and helping us strengthen collaboration between communities across Australia.

We have also seen the importance of simply coming together and having fun. Our recent Trivia Night was a huge success, with around 45 people attending. It was wonderful to welcome many new faces, enjoy plenty of fun and games, and continue building friendships within the community.

Looking ahead, the committee is excited to explore new ways of engaging young adults through social media, outreach, events, and interstate collaboration.
We hope this is only the beginning of a growing national community where young adults can encounter Christ, build meaningful friendships and actively shape the future of young adult ministry.

Please pray for our ministry, our committee, and all the young people we are blessed to accompany, that we may continue to place Christ at the heart of our work and faithfully respond to His call.





Adelaide



JANE MCCAFFREY

Adelaide update

I don't think I'm the only one feeling like 2026 jumped out of the starting gate in January and has gathered speed as the year has advanced. How can it be that we are now hurtling down the home straight towards end of year exams, Christmas and our 2027 Cardoner placements?

It has been a big year so far, with the Adelaide office of the Cardoner Network building on the momentum of 2025, with some encouraging successes in the first half of 2026.

Wolves in Action, our young adult ministry, has been the standout. Eleven young people spent a weekend in Goolwa in May. Raphael Giles and Fr Ramesh ran the sessions. Around them we fitted in beach swims, a pickle-ball tournament, a 1000-piece puzzle and long chats into the wee small hours. They came back with momentum. Since then Wolves have fed 100 people through the Mary Mags kitchen, turned up to Theology in the Pub, organised three youth masses and met for a study session or two in the Den. Norwood parish keeps backing us, and Fr Nico Lariosa has arrived in time to help with more regular social activities, retreats, and a possible World Youth Day delegation to South Korea in 2027.





Our first Friendraiser filled the Andrea Pozzo building at St Ignatius' College, Athelstone. Around 60 people came, including SIC staff, returned and future volunteers, parents, donors and Jesuits. They braved the weather and the football traffic to hear Jess O'Grady (Wadeye 2024) and Ella Pacor (Timor-Leste 2027) talk about what a Cardoner placement does to you. Sam Hooper, Chair of the Old Ignatian Association, launched the Old Ignatian-Cardoner bursary. It starts in 2027 and will help deserving SIC graduates onto a placement.

Nine SIC volunteers are now in Nepal, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Wadeye. They send updates back. In June I joined the pre-departure briefing at Sevenhill. Clare was cold and wet. We had Mass in the church and the chapel, and a stop at the cellar door. Thanks to Karen Oxley, a Cardoner parent and teacher, for the teaching pointers and the life lessons, and to Fr Kieran for two loud dinners.

2027 has five SIC applications confirmed so far. I had hoped presentations at other schools would bear fruit this year. They haven't yet. With Fr Peter Hosking and the Catholic Women's League SA we have secured bursary funds so cost does not stop a good candidate, and a growing relationship with the Catholic Office of Youth and Young Adults may finally open up the wider Catholic school network. Watch this space.

Melbourne



LUCA BAGGIO

2026 going well

The Cardoner Network has continued to thrive in Melbourne over the past few months, with a strong sense of community, reflection, and shared purpose continuing to grow among our young adults.

We have had a fruitful month in Melbourne for The Cardoner Network, branching out and forming new connections in our network, with newly ordained Jesuit Fr Matthew Pinson SJ joining our monthly young adult gathering, as well as a key connection established at Hawthorn Parish.

Fr Matthew Pinson SJ has represented Australia at the International Physics Olympiad, studied at ANU, then completed a physics PhD at MIT. Toward the end of his doctorate, questions of meaning and purpose led him to deepen his faith and eventually join the Jesuits over a diocesan path, drawn by their community of scientifically minded believers.

Graced with his presence at our August Cardoner community gathering in Melbourne, the young people in the room were clearly blessed to meet Fr Matthew and hear his quite extraordinary story. We are fortunate to have Fr Matthew as our Jesuit leader at our upcoming community Gatherings.

Looking ahead, we are excited to be extending our gatherings to include the young adult community at Hawthorn parish, with an upcoming joint gathering hosted by Luca and one of Hawthorn's parishioners, Georgina, to occur in October. Georgina and Luca have been planning ways to bring their communities together - this gathering promises to be powerful to bring more likeminded young people together to share and connect.



Cardoner House

XAVIER FONSECA

My time at Cardoner House

I arrived in Australia from Portugal on 21 July to begin my PhD in Structural Engineering at the University of Sydney. Moving to the other side of the world at 24 was a big change, but from my first day at Cardoner House, I was welcomed with a warmth that made the transition much easier.

Back in Portugal, I was part of a Jesuit university centre in Coimbra called CUMN. Some of my happiest memories are from there: university Masses, dinners, music, conversations and partilhas. What has surprised me most about Cardoner is how familiar that spirit feels. Although I moved across the world, that same Jesuit sense of community moved with me.

That feeling comes mainly from the people. In just one month, I have met people who have been incredibly generous with their time and their lives. Ethan took me to play football and introduced me to his friends. Tim invited me to lunch at his research institute and showed me around.

There is something deeply meaningful about being welcomed into these parts of another person's life and being trusted with their story. I have also shared dinners, poker nights, padel, pickleball, crosswords, movies and many conversations with the other residents, including Fr Ramesh and Fr Robin.

Another important part of my time here has been volunteering with Cardoner's Burritos and Brownies. On Sunday mornings, we prepare and distribute food alongside students from Riverview to people in need at Ward Park. It is a simple experience, but a powerful one. The bread is prepared, shared and eaten, and the park becomes our table. For me, there is something deeply Christian in that simplicity.

Cardoner House has quickly become much more than somewhere to live. It has reminded me that home can be created through community, generosity and the willingness to share our lives.







Please support
The Cardoner Network

We are extremely grateful for your support of our Mission: to nurture and accompany young adults as they love and serve those in need domestically and overseas.

Your fully tax-deductible donation will ensure that our ongoing works and mission will make a significant impact in growing our programmes and supporting our partner communities.

We are a team of 9 staff (in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney), most of whom are part-time casuals. We are vigilant about keeping our costs low, and we desperately want to keep what we charge our volunteers for immersions as low as possible, to make those experiences accessible to as many people as possible.

Our sincere thanks in advance for your generosity. Your donation is fully tax-deductible and we will be pleased to send you a tax-deductible receipt.



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The Cardoner Network



September 2026