

New rules but same old love for mums

FAMILIES

PAIGE TAYLOR
MACKENZIE SCOTT

Brisbane nanna Betty Van Duikeren tears up at the prospect of being allowed to hug her grandkids at her home again.

The family tradition of a Mother's Day dinner at the local tavern is off the cards this year. But Mrs Van Duikeren and husband Case are excited that on Sunday they will be surrounded by family at their own home for the first time since February. The day will begin with a visit from their youngest son Glenn, his partner Sarah and their kids Charlie, 12, Will, 10, and Sam, 1, thanks to Queensland's newly relaxed rules on gatherings.

On the other side of the nation in a quiet, crescent-shaped street in the southern Perth suburb of Bull Creek, neighbours are learning about each other's lives in tributes to absent mums and the Mother's Day portraits only little hands can make.



COLIN MURTY

Bull Creek's Nita Walshe, Ritu and Monisha Gupta and Sabrina Zhang and Roselyn Li bond over a street project

The Street Teams project began as a way for people to look out for the most vulnerable during the pandemic but it is evolving into a lasting way to live side by side.

The fledgling civic movement is inviting residents of 66 streets in Bull Creek to help transform their suburb into a walking gallery on

Sunday. In letterdrops, Street Team volunteers are asking their neighbours to share a picture of their mum, or a tribute to her, in their front window or on the fence.

Roselyn Li, 5, already knows what her contribution will be. It is her proudest work from art class, an oil painting of her mum, Sabri-

na Zhang. In careful brushstrokes, Roselyn emphasised the dark lashes above and below Ms Zhang's eyes.

"She has drawn a lot of pictures of me but that one is quite special," Mrs Zhang said.

Roselyn is learning English fast since starting pre-primary in Perth this year, though she still writes "I love you" in Chinese to her mum.

"She gets so excited to show these things to me. She says 'Mum, I have a gift for you'," Mrs Zhang said.

Across the road from the house where Roselyn lives with her mum, dad and little brother, Nita Walshe is embracing the philosophy of neighbourly care and connection. A primary school teacher, she has lived with her husband for 22 years in Maquire Way between the Canning River and a heavy haulage highway.

Mrs Walshe grew up on a Riverina farm an hour's drive from a small town "where everyone knows your business, good and bad". "I said yes to Street Teams because it seemed like a continu-

ation of what I have always done — street parties, keeping in touch with the neighbours, that sort of thing," she said.

On Sunday she will put out a tribute to her 95-year-old mother, Nancy, in Temora, NSW. Mrs Walshe calls her Wonder Woman.

A few doors down, 12-year-old Monisha likes to make samosas and curries with her mother, Ritu Gupta, using the cookbook owned for decades by Mrs Gupta's late mother, Krishna. Monisha's note to her mum, which she will put in the family's front window on Sunday, ends with the words: "Twelve years of love and fun, this is the recipe of me and mum."

Chorus, a West Australian community service provider, began Street Teams in the belief that there is enormous potential between neighbours in a crisis.

For Mrs Van Duikeren, the coronavirus crisis has made her think a lot about the joy of a grandchild's hug. "It helps to know it won't be long until that once again just becomes part of our everyday visits," she said.