

# Cathy's Story

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On the morning of 23 June 2011 my 37-year-old daughter Emma died in a collision with a tram on St Kilda Road.

She had been crossing the road to walk from her apartment to her workplace and failed to see a tram coming on her right. She was struck and killed instantly. In the dark days after the accident the investigating police officer gave our family a card from the RTSSV, explaining that they offered counselling services to those impacted by road trauma. Two weeks after Emma's death we had a family meeting at RTSSV in Blackburn. This meeting marked the start of our journey of coming to terms with the tragic loss of our daughter. We were invited to have one-on-one counselling which my other two daughters, Julie and Clare, took up. I am forever grateful to the expert and loving counsellors who assisted them during this terrible time.

My personal involvement with RTSSV came about in 2012 when I joined the art therapy group. The vision for the art therapy group is to bring together people affected by road trauma and allow for creative-self expression. From small

beginnings the art group has developed into something extremely special for everyone involved. The highlight for me has been my involvement with The Forever Tree project in 2013 under the guidance of art therapist Barbara Joyce. The result of the project was a beautiful tree made from simple felting techniques that embodied feelings of loss, recovery, love and healing. The process of creating the tree, which is now displayed in the Blackburn office, provided enormous comfort to us and we feel it is a symbol of hope for everyone who walks into the office.

Unfortunately one has no control over the event that took Emma's life but I believe we do have some control over how we cope with loss. As a family we believe in being as positive as possible and the rehabilitating effects of working on projects that assist others on the journey after trauma. My family has raised over \$20,000 for RTSSV in honour of Emma through fun runs (although I am not sure if running 23km along the Great Ocean Road counts as fun!), stalls and the selling of handmade tutus and aprons. Emma and I thank Clare, Kent, baby

Grace, Julie, Josh and baby George, Emma's husband Alan and my loving husband Peter.

My family has also participated in events put on by RTSSV, namely the Recharge Day and the new event, Shine a Light on Road Safety. I believe these events are extremely important as they raise community awareness of road safety, but also enable families and friends to come together to remember and celebrate their loved ones. Whether you have just started your journey of healing or feel that recovery is close by, we can all stand together at these events and know that we have the constant support of RTSSV, and together can help those affected by road trauma.