

The butcher, the baker and the marshmallow maker

By Kylee Ellis

We all know every good village has a butcher, a baker and a candlestick maker but my experience of Wyong has been a little bit different. Let me share my story with you...

A long time ago a little girl fell in love with Australia's Royal Easter Show. She went every year and spent hours walking up and down the isles, studying what had won the title of the best of the best in each field.

On her first visit to Wyong she saw the ribbons she has become so accustomed to, hanging in a local butchers window. She rushed over to order (what she later cooked and devoured only to discover they were) the best sausages she had ever tasted. The sausage man had truly earned his title.

Some years after this she stumbled across a little store, in a little lane, with a big difference. A metre long difference to be exact! You could start at one end and eat and eat, and no matter how many people were seated at the table, it was like a never ending pizza that never ran out.

On her children's first visit they were given some dough to play with (like all good pizza parlours do) but her children were thrilled when their creations were later baked for them to take home. Her daughter had many health issues which included being intolerant to gluten but also being intolerant to gluten free products (meaning she had to eat a small quantity of both each day to avoid becoming celiac or worse not being able to eat anything if she did) and yet due to the special flour they baked with, even she had found a pizza she could digest as much as she wanted, without having any symptoms at all. So naturally they told everyone they knew and took everyone they had ever met to the pizza highlight of Wyong, some even traveling all the way up from Sydney just to have a bite.

A few years after that her son decided (very last minute) that he did not want a birthday cake for his birthday but what he wanted more than anything else in the world, was his favourite marshmallows, in his favourite flavour, from his favourite shop. Being the busy family that they were, they had only ever ordered online before, as the shop was never open on the days/times they went past. With less than 24 hours till his birthday his mother went out of her way to make a pit stop in opening hours and emerged behind the ever beckoning doors, only to see the equivalent of a Willy Wonkers Wonderland inside of marshmallow goodness, all covered in an infinite number of signs clearly stating 'NOT FOR SALE'.

When his mother enquired about purchasing some mint marshmallows, a roar of laughter broke out at the audacity of someone who thought they could walk in and take off a shelf any product

that had a 6 week back order demand. The mother petitioned that it was her sons favourite flavour and it was his birthday tomorrow and she would do anything she could in order to get him the cake of his dreams. The lady's heart softened (just like her beautifully moist marshmallows) as she handed the mother one packet off the forbidden pile, saying in a smile under her breath, 'I'll have to work overtime to replace this you know'.

I guess these 3 stories show Wyong isn't just about having award winning, the biggest or the highest in demand products but it is about the heart that goes into making and delivering these products to the community that really counts. So on the heart note that same family visited Wyong's Love Lanes festival last year for the very first time, an annual event held the weekend before valentines day each year.

The mother had told her children that romantic love was not the only love, nor was it the only kind that should be celebrated on Feb 14th and that in 2023 she would like both her children to be her valentine, if they both would have her as theirs. And so the trifector, 3 way, non orthodox Valentine's Day themed celebration was underway just 12 short months ago. While there they passed a stall that was giving out heart shaped chocolates in the spirit of love with a bible verse attached which read, 'No one has greater love than this, that someone would lay down their life for their friends. John 15:13.' At the time the children thought nothing of it as they gobbled up the chocolates but during the 12 months between Love Lanes 23 and Love Lanes 24 another triune relationship of the father, son and Holy Spirit began working in those children's hearts.

There was a church in Wyong that had an aging population (as kids had been raised, grown up and moved on) that had been praying for children to come for some time. To cut a long story short when the children were asked to visit Wyong Anglican by their mother (who had at this stage only attended one service but had instantly seen the heart of the Wyong community described above in the hearts of each member of the congregation there) they instantly feel in love with the heart of Wyong and never wanted to leave.

The Love Lanes festival focuses on 4 lanes and as such I would love you to focus on 4 loves the valentines season. The love the sausage man puts into his sausages, the love Sirone's puts into their pizzas, the love the Marahmellow Co. puts into their marshmallows and the love God puts into our hearts. Thank you Wyong Anglican for everything you have done for me and my family over the last 7 months and thank you for orchestrating this wonderful competition so I can share our story with others.