



BIOGRAPHY - A CARER'S STORY

MULU MIHRETEAB NAMED AS FAMILY CARER WINNER IN NATIONAL FINALS

Ascot Vale resident Mulu Mihreteab was selected as the National winner in the Family Carer category at the National Carer Awards.

Mulu provides continuous care and support to her six children ranging in age from 24 to 14, including her youngest daughter Heaven who lives with profound disability.

Originally from Eritrea in Africa, Mulu lived in Sudan and then relocated to New Zealand as a refugee. She later became a New Zealand citizen. She became a single Mum and after the birth of Heaven, faced her biggest challenge, in supporting and caring for a severely disabled child requiring 24 hour care. In 2005 she moved to Melbourne with her children so Heaven could receive appropriate medical care at Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne.

With limited resources and despite the challenges of having English as a second language, Mulu has continued to provide her family with the care and support they need. While some are now living away from home, she continues to have close bonds with them all.

As the baby of the family, Heaven requires constant supervision and twenty-four hour care, has needed many major medical interventions and is often hospitalised.

Mulu has had limited access to any funding to support Heaven's ongoing physical and emotional care needs. The demands of her full-time caring role are constant and have impacted Mulu's own health.

Although Mulu does not have any extended family in Australia, she receives emotional support from her immediate family, from her neighbours and the Eritrean community in Melbourne. She is unable to return back to New Zealand to receive medical support as Heaven's fragile lung function prevents her from travelling.

Mulu has learnt the skills to be able to provide high level nursing care for Heaven at home. She works continuously with professionals to ensure she has the knowledge to provide this exceptional level of care. She has amazing humility and strength.

Mulu has had to endure many challenges as a parent and carer. She always does the best she can with what she has and continues to address her family's needs while they are in her care.

As a mother, Mulu demonstrates amazing dedication and commitment to her whole family despite the emotional, social and financial challenges she has experienced.

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