

Care & Connect

WESLEY'S AGED CARE SERVICES NEWSLETTER
SUMMER 2016

We're proud of you, Vishnu!

We're proud to announce that Do Care volunteer Vishnu Prasad has won the 2016 Victorian Senior of the Year Award in the category 'Promotion of Multiculturalism'.

For the past two decades, 77-year-old Vishnu has been providing companionship for clients in Wesley's Aged Care Services.

Vishnu and his wife Margaret never miss a visit to the 90-year-old Do Care client who they visit fortnightly, sharing conversations on a wide range of subjects, including their passion for patchwork and needlework.

The Hindu Chaplain also provides meals to people at risk of homelessness and those sleeping rough, and serves much-needed school breakfasts to disadvantaged children in Dandenong.

Sharing and bringing happiness to other people is what keeps Vishnu going.

"Their faces light up, and their happiness is our happiness," said Vishnu.

It's reasonable to assume that Vishnu wouldn't have much time left to do more, but somehow, the softly spoken Fijian man still manages to help others.

Through his retirement hobby – quilt making – he provides quilts for Quilts of Valour, a not-for-profit organisation supporting Australian Defence Force personnel, veterans and their families.

He's also a regular speaker on a Hindi radio program where he takes a multi-faith approach, telling children's moral stories inspired by the teachings of Sai Baba, the Ramayana and the Bible.

Receiving this award means so much to Vishnu and the Fijian community.

"I'm really honoured to receive this award. I receive a lot of support from my wife who's always behind me in everything I do."

"Receiving this award is not just a win for me but it recognises the Fijian community...they're rapt," said Vishnu.

Vishnu, we are so proud of you, congratulations!

Werribee lunch group growing strong

Since it began in 2008, our Werribee lunch group has grown from a group of four clients and three volunteers to a friendly group of 13 members.

Originally started by three volunteers facilitating a monthly social outing for clients on the 1-1 volunteer wait list, the group soon became a hit, at one point expanding to 18 people. Many lovely and lasting friendships have grown out of this group with several informal mini-client groups staying in regular contact between lunches.

Several members of the group now take responsibility for organising special lunch events, hiring a community bus and making lunchtime excursions to places of interest, such as the Geelong foreshore, the Macedon Ranges, morning melodies sessions and Yan Yean.

Group members say the monthly outing is a real highlight, a chance to be among friends and share a laugh.

Only two of the 13 group members are drivers so the Werribee lunch group is always on the lookout for more volunteers with access to a car!



The Werribee lunch group celebrating a special birthday, with cake of course!



Food for Families celebrates 25 years

The weather is getting warmer and Christmas is just around the corner, which means it's time for our Food for Families appeal!

The familiar red collection boxes and shopping bags are on their way to schools, businesses and community groups all over Melbourne, ready to be filled with generous donations.

Now in its 25th year, Food for Families is Wesley's annual flagship appeal, where we ask the local community to donate non-perishable food and toiletries to stock the pantries at our Crisis and Homelessness Services.

If you'd like to donate to the appeal, many of our Aged Care Services locations are official drop-off spots, so Planned Activity Group members can easily bring in shopping bag of donations. You can also talk to your Do Care volunteer about getting your donation to Wesley.

The most popular items among families in need include:

- › Vegemite, peanut butter and jam
- › Herbs and spices
- › Ready meals i.e. tuna and beans
- › Lunchbox snacks for kids i.e. muesli bars, bikkies and cheese
- › Pasta and pasta sauces.

To register for a red shopping bag, visit wesley.org.au or call **9666 1262**.

**Food for Families**

Pasta perfection at Linlithgow

Linlithgow's Planned Activity Group has held its famous pasta making session during Senior's Week. More than 40 participants, including 13 visitors from the general public and Assisi Aged Care Centre, took part in this fun-filled activity and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive!

Linlithgow Team Leader Penel Anderson said nobody was afraid to get their hands doughy.

"Though it was organised chaos to begin with, our experienced pasta making nonnas got down to business pretty quickly, generously sharing their knowledge, showing people how to get the right mix and encouraging everyone to get their hands into the dough. Within 45 minutes the first batches were being ferried to the kitchen for cooking. We knew it must be good when the dining room fell silent as the pasta was served," she said.

Between mouthfuls, here's what some of the participants had to say:

"I loved the pasta! Please tell whoever made the sauce that it was beautiful!"



Bellissimal Wesley client John and Linlithgow visitors making pasta.

"It was great to meet new people and make pasta together. Everybody was happy."

"We loved the pasta making. At our usual club, the cooks do all the cooking, so it was nice to be a part of the making."

"It was so nice that people were willing to share their knowledge and experience about cooking pasta. It was really lovely to be included in that."

"I enjoyed the congeniality. Everyone was so friendly."



Stress less!

Whoever we are, at whatever age, it's important to understand how to manage stress to ensure it doesn't impact our health and lead to more complex health problems.

Everyone reacts differently to stress, so if you are feeling anxious or overwhelmed, some of these techniques can help reduce your stress levels.

- > Do something that keeps your mind active every day, such as crossword puzzles or brain training exercises
- > Take the time to enjoy reading a newspaper or book
- > Practice meditation or mindfulness
- > Try out that new hobby you've always wanted to try
- > Keep moving with exercise every day, even if it's as simple as a stroll in the garden or some simple stretches at home
- > Connect with new friends through our Do Care program.

There are some great resources available on managing stress. Take a look at the following websites, or chat to your team leader about other avenues to try.

beyondblue.org.au
betterhealth.vic.gov.au
smilingmind.com.au

New match reignites zest for life

For Do Care volunteer John Bunker, a self-confessed extrovert who loves to perform and laugh, organising social meetings for Wesley clients was an appealing opportunity.

"I applied to be a volunteer with Wesley and accepted the position of a small group facilitator for three people - Joan, June and Graham - who attend a monthly lunch group through Wesley, but who wanted additional social opportunities," said John.

John went ahead and coordinated a monthly catch-up for clients Joan, June and Graham. When the trio got the phone call from John to facilitate extra social outings, they were thrilled.

"I said hooray," recalls Joan.

Good friends, Joan and June, had lived within less than a block of each other until June moved to another part of town.

"I rarely got to see her and missed her terribly as my family lives in the country and I have few friends," said Joan.

"It's funny, June and I are very different in that I'm much quieter and I like to spend time writing stories and poetry on the computer while she is a totally different kettle of fish. She loves to dance, sing and tell jokes. Nevertheless, we get on extremely well.

"Graham also attends the monthly lunch group with us.



Volunteer John Bunker and social buddies Joan Parkhill, Graham Stanyer and June Adamson having a laugh.

He finds it hard to communicate due to his health condition but he is a lovely, warm person who can't help smile at June and my antics."

Joan enjoys volunteer John's energy and jokes and shared love of poetry and storytelling. She says the addition of John to the social group has evened out the gender imbalance too.

"I think it's lovely that Graham has a man to talk to. He is very patient and kind with Graham, making sure he is heard and any special requirements are met. You wouldn't believe it - we are all from England, which makes sharing our histories so easy!"

Getting out of town for a bite to eat has been a highlight for Joan.

"Eating on my own is very boring so this group has given me a new zest for life!"

"June, John and I love to have sing-alongs, much to Graham's amusement. Our goal is to find a morning melodies session where we can let our hair down.

"I'm so grateful to John and Wesley for making it happen for us!" said Joan.

Volunteer in the North West?

Volunteers with our Do Care program in the North West now have the opportunity to connect and discuss experiences, knowledge, challenges and successes of volunteering over bi-monthly coffee catch ups, organised and led by Team Leaders Gail Conlon and Susanne Walker.

Gail and Susanne saw the opportunity to bring volunteers together in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere to share their extensive volunteer experience not only with Do Care, but other organisations.

If you volunteer in the North West and wish to know more about these sessions, please contact Gail or Susanne at Wesley's Coburg office on **8538 7300**.

Joy for Owen and Jannis

For the past year, Wesley St Mark's has been supporting Jannis and her husband Owen, who is living with dementia, to get back to the things they love.

Jannis met Owen more than 55 years ago and says his charm, confidence and commitment to protect Australia as a Flight Lieutenant instantly appealed to her.

But a few years ago, Jannis, a retired nurse, started noticing Owen's memory wasn't as sharp as it used to be and after some tests, 86-year-old Owen was diagnosed with dementia.

"I wanted to make sure that Owen received the social support he needed because I didn't want to see him go downhill. It was important for me that he went to a social support service group where people understood his needs and wishes," said Jannis.

"I wasn't interested in a place that just looked good. It had to be a place where he would thrive. That's why I picked Wesley. He gets to talk and social with others and he loves telling jokes."

Every week for the past year, Wesley has been supporting Owen to get back to doing the things he loves including gentle exercise, men's group and regular entertainment sessions.

"While Owen is at St Mark's doing the things he enjoys, I get the chance to have lunch with friends and relax, which gives me a rest and means I'm a better carer for Owen," said Jannis.



Thanks for your feedback!

Thank you so much to everyone who took the time to respond to our recent Aged Care Services Survey.

It was an excellent response with 219 clients, 197 volunteers and 11 carers giving their valuable feedback about the programs and services Wesley provides.

We are delighted to report that so many volunteers feel greatly valued for the work they contribute to Wesley and that many of you enjoy sitting down to read this very newsletter, Care & Connect.

A lot of you also strongly agree that participating in our services increases all aspects of wellbeing.

It was also really valuable to hear your suggestions for improvements in the support you receive, including more regular updates on My Aged Care and the Carer Gateway, and increased contact with team leaders and coordinators.

We'll be working hard on improving these aspects. Thank you again to everyone who completed the survey.

St Mark's client, Owen, and his wife Jannis.

Helping you achieve your goals

As our clients, it's really important to us that you're supported to set, track and achieve your goals for living life to the fullest, including making sure that you have what you need to continue being active and enjoy your independence.



To support this commitment, we have developed a new Client Outcome Framework, giving structure to the work we do across all our services.

Your feedback on this framework is valued. If you would like to know more, you can talk to your team leader, email outcomes@wesley.org.au or head to wesley.org.au. The consultation period closes at 5pm on Monday 19 December.

To make sure we have chosen a suitable way to help you track your progress toward achieving your goals, and to make sure the Client Outcome Framework is effective, Wesley is trialling a model called 'Outcomes Star'.

The six-month trial will help us understand the ultimate outcomes you experience from the services you receive, and how we can continue to improve our work into the future. Staff involved in the trial have been trained in Outcomes Star, and in November we started testing the project across a selection of our services.

What does this mean for you?

Soon you will start hearing us talking about outcomes, along with our trial model, Outcomes Star, and how it could benefit you in your life goals. Our staff will speak to you and your family about whether you'd like to be involved in the trial.

The resources can assist staff in planning with you around things like:

- › Seeing how things are going in various parts of your life
- › Looking at the supports you might need to enjoy life to the fullest
- › Highlighting areas to focus on to help you make any changes you'd like
- › Supporting you in making choices around the types of programs and services that you need.

The process also helps us to understand the impact our service has on outcomes for our client groups and the wider community in which you live.

If you have any questions about the project, please talk to your team leader or send an email to outcomes@wesley.org.au

Uniting together

Over the past few months, you will have heard about the important changes happening at Wesley as we move to join 21 other Uniting Church agencies to form a new, single organisation.

In early October, the new agency, called Uniting, was officially established. While we will continue as Wesley Mission Victoria until the middle of 2017, this first step in the transition means that Wesley and our 21 sister agencies now all share one single Board of Directors.

The most important thing for you to know is that our commitment to you remains the same.

We'll continue to work with our clients and families to provide the programs, services and support you need. And we'll continue to support our volunteers in the essential roles you play in delivering our services.

We'll keep you informed as more changes happen. You can also speak to your team leader with any questions, and find information and updates on our website: wesley.org.au