

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

From: Kasey McCulloch, Media Officer, Mercy Health

Date: Thursday 3 March 2016

China Tea Program another way to show we care

According to modern literature, humans use five 'love languages' to show people they care - words of affection, acts of service, gifts, quality time and physical touch.

At Mercy Care Centre Young, Pastoral Care Associate Denise Norwood and a dedicated group of volunteers host a weekly afternoon tea with a difference. The China Tea Program celebrated its four year anniversary in February and involves tea being served in brightly coloured, fine-bone china with sweet biscuits.

Every Tuesday at 2.30pm, the rattle of tea trolleys and the cheer of the volunteer 'tea ladies' fill the halls at the subacute health service in Young, NSW. Ms Norwood said the simple gesture of serving tea in fine china has become a weekly highlight for patients.

"Serving tea in beautiful china is an act of love," said Ms Norwood.

"It provides theatre and a sense of occasion for all of our patients, particularly those who are palliative. We also encourage patients to reach out and invite family and friends to join us."

The China Tea Program's success is partly due to the fact the teacups provide a communication tool to help make visits easier.

"Many people wonder what you can ask a person who is palliative that won't make them feel upset or isolated," explained Ms Norwood.

"These brightly coloured teacups provide a great topic of conversation, in a very subtle way. The volunteer pouring the tea might notice a lapse in conversation and might bring up the history or story behind the teacup, and before you know it a whole new conversation has begun."

Ms Norwood said all of the teacups have an interesting back-story, a message of love or a memory. Each set has been donated by staff or members of the local community.

"Initiatives like the China Tea Program make an enormous difference. It's a simple idea but it shows the same type of hospitality patients would normally show visitors in their own home. It's also another way to show our patients that we care."

- Ends -

For interviews and photo opportunities, please contact:

Kasey McCulloch

Media Officer

Mercy Health

Ph: 8416 7521

Mobile: 0477 720 337

Email: KMcCulloch@mercy.com.au