

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

From: Alex Berriman, Porter Novelli on behalf of Mercy Health

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Mercy Health's Italian Club celebrates long-time volunteer

Volunteers are at the heart of every community, which is why this National Volunteers Week the generous efforts of one special volunteer will be honoured by residents of Mercy Health's Italian Club.

Sister Silvia of the Sisters of Mercy has been running the Italian Club at aged care homes Mercy Place Parkville and Mercy Place Wyndham for almost seven years.

The club meets once a week at each home and gives Italian residents a chance to engage with others in their mother tongue and reminisce about their experiences both here and in Italy.

Loved by both residents and staff members, Sister Silvia said she feels enormous joy when volunteering at the home.

"It's a truly rewarding experience – these residents have incredible stories and I've learnt so much about each of them over the years," Sister Silvia said.

"English is not their first language, so they love getting together and being in a culturally familiar environment.

"After years of meeting together at the homes, the Italian Club has turned into a fantastic community. It's a time for residents to celebrate their identity."

"We share memories and reminisce about the past, but we also have a lot of fun. We play cards, drink coffee and the residents select songs or artists they'd like to hear and we watch the videos on YouTube.

Sister Silvia herself was born in the Sicilian city of Ragusa and migrated to Australia when she was two years old.

Lifestyle and Volunteer Manager Karen Gooding said Mercy Health was very appreciative of Sister Silvia's volunteer work across the two residential aged care homes.

"Volunteers are an important part of the Mercy Health community. It takes a special person to be a volunteer, and each and every one shares a special connection with residents," Ms Gooding said.

"The residents love the Italian Club and Sister Silvia goes out of her way to celebrate residents' identity and Italian culture."

Ms Gooding said Mercy Health was always looking for new people to join its volunteering community, and encouraged those who were interested to contact their nearest [Mercy Health aged care home](#).

National Volunteer Week (Monday 8 to Sunday 14 May 2017) is the largest celebration of volunteers and volunteerism in Australia, providing an opportunity to highlight the role volunteers play in our communities and to give thanks to the six million Australians who donate their time each year.

– Ends –

For interviews and photo opportunities, please contact:

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