

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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

Date: Tuesday 9 May 2016

Mercy Place Montrose resident plants it forward

Volunteers will be the toast of Mercy Place Montrose this National Volunteers Week, but the selfless efforts of 81 year-old Tony Hopkins are unlike those of others who visit the home each week.

Mr Hopkins is not only one of the home's most valued volunteers, but has also been a resident for almost 3 years.

Since 2013, he has created fairy gardens to give residents who live with Alzheimer's disease a unique place to spend their time. Most mornings, Tony enjoys pruning, weeding, planting and decorating the gardens at Mercy Place Montrose to keep them in shape.

He also regularly scours op-shops for bits and pieces to decorate his gardens, even going as far as purchasing the plants with his own money.

"I get a lot of joy from volunteering at the home and creating the fairy gardens. My wife was a resident here and she had Alzheimer's. I have created the gardens so other residents who live with the disease have a beautiful space to enjoy," Mr Hopkins said.

"A lot of effort goes into my gardens and I enjoy every second of it. I want the residents to get as much enjoyment from them as I've had creating them."

Mercy Place Montrose Manager Janine Powell said the home was lucky to have Mr Hopkins as a resident and one of its most valued volunteers.

"Gardens are just one of Tony's volunteering ventures. He takes every opportunity to give to those in need," Ms Powell said.

"He's everything from the Easter Bunny to Father Christmas and even a green leprechaun on St Patrick's Day. Tony always volunteers for every initiative, and has even coloured his hair and beard for the World's Greatest Shave."

"Volunteers are a valued part of the Mercy Place Montrose community – we're lucky to have people come into the home and take part in activities and spend time with residents. It takes a very special person to be a volunteer, and Tony is a fantastic example of what it means to be a volunteer today."

National Volunteer Week (11 to 17 May) 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 6 million Australians who donate their time each year.

– Ends –

For interviews and photo opportunities, please contact:

Alex Berriman
Consultant
Porter Novelli
Ph: 03 9289 9555
Mobile: 0431 678 946

Kasey McCulloch
Media Officer
Mercy Health
Ph: 03 8416 7521
Mobile: 0477 720 337

Email: aberriman@porternovelli.com.au

Email: KMcCulloch@mercy.com.au