

Our Voice



Mercy Health
Care first

THE GROUPWIDE NEWSLETTER OF MERCY HEALTH
AUTUMN 2018

Oh baby – the power of social media

The Mercy Health Facebook post about baby clothes that reached more than a million people

Laptop or lifeline?

Meet the home care client who overcame his health obstacles to get online and connected

Healing the mind and body

How water exercise classes are helping Western Australian aged care residents get into shape





Dipping into health and happiness

Residents from Mercy Place Mandurah in Western Australia are proving you are never too old to dive into healthy habits. Their weekly hydrotherapy sessions boost balance, strength and mood, bringing sunshine and smiles all round.

Sylvia Willcock loves the water. The youngest of six siblings, Sylvia spent her childhood racing from school to relax and play in the waves. “I was brought up on Penang Island, Malaysia. It was very tropical and after school the first thing we would do is get changed and walk five minutes to the beach where the water was crystal clear,” recalls Sylvia.

Now a resident at Mercy Place Mandurah, 81-year-old Sylvia still benefits from her love of exercising in water, which eases her symptoms from osteoporosis (brittle bones) and Parkinson’s disease.

She is joined by fellow residents Shirley Crowhurst, Beth Vine, John Read and Mercy Health

physiotherapist Jill Sinclair at weekly hydrotherapy sessions at Mandurah Aquatic Centre, where the group meets and socialises with other fitness enthusiasts.

“It’s all about exercising body and mind and getting together with people”

“When I am in the water the buoyancy gives me freedom and I have a lot more movement than I would normally have. I am inclined to be stooped due

to the Parkinson’s, so it helps straighten me. It also helps with my balance,” she explains.

The refreshing sessions improve cardio, strength and brain health, says Mercy Place Mandurah Service Manager Christina Venables. “Exercising in water is known to be extremely beneficial to help lower the risk of injury and enhance mood and mental acuity,” says Christina.

“It enables older people to get into better shape without putting added stress or strain on the body, as well as being a social activity. It is for these reasons and many more that we wanted to offer our residents regular trips to the aquatic centre,” she says.

During sessions, residents use weights and the resistance of water to achieve a full-body workout. They also exercise in the sun-drenched, outdoor pool helping to boost Vitamin D levels, which can in turn improve bone density.

“After an hour at the pool, I feel wonderful. The more I move, the warmer I feel. It’s all about exercising body and mind and getting together with people. I just love it,” says Sylvia.



Mercy Place Mandurah residents John Read and Beth Vine with physiotherapist Jill Sinclair. Image courtesy of Jon Hewson and the Mandurah Coastal Times



Mercy Place Mandurah resident Sylvia Willcock, 81, enjoys weekly hydrotherapy sessions at Mandurah Aquatic Centre



Shared values the key to success

With a solid foundation of shared Catholic values, Mercy Health Foundation has found a like-minded partner in Catholic Super. A loyal corporate supporter of Mercy Health, Catholic Super has generously committed to a three-year partnership with Mercy Health Foundation — one that will provide significant benefits to both organisations.

“**M**ercy Health and the work of its Foundation are vital to the current and future wellbeing of many Australians. We have members who not only work for Mercy Health but also directly benefit from its care, dedication and service across Australia. Mercy Health is an integral part of our Catholic Super community and its values and purpose are the same,” says Frank Pegan, Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Super.

The partnership will support a number of different areas of Mercy Health including the annual Mercy Health Foundation Ball; Pram Jam — the Foundation’s annual community event

raising funds for stillbirth and prematurity research; the Werribee Mercy Hospital annual fair; and other programs based on the needs of Mercy Health residents, clients and patients.

Catholic Super has partnered with the Foundation since 2014. It is an exclusive, platinum sponsor of the Foundation’s annual ball and has a particular interest in supporting Mercy Perinatal, a three-pillar centre of excellence in clinical care, education and research for mothers and babies.

Catholic Super has also thrown its weight behind the Foundation’s annual community fundraiser Pram Jam, inviting members to participate and

even forming its own Catholic Super fundraising team.

Mercy Health Group Chief Executive Officer Stephen Cornelissen acknowledges Catholic Super’s longstanding partnership with Mercy Health that continues to grow stronger each year. “We are so appreciative of the relationship we have developed over a long period of time, initially with Loretta Drago and more recently with Frank Pegan and the rest of his executive team,” Stephen says. “Not only are they a pleasure to work with but they share our common bond to make a difference in the lives of those we serve.”

Undoubtedly, their shared spiritual values are central

“
We love working with them — they understand the value of partnering, have a desire to make a difference in the community, and are such lovely people.”

to the relationship and the reason why it is so successful. “We share the same values of caring and hospitality. We’re passionate about supporting the community and helping them to get through challenging times,” says Loretta Drago, National Partnerships Manager at Catholic Super.

The Foundation is continually working to establish partnerships with other corporations who share Mercy Health’s passion for the people it serves. Mercy Health Foundation Corporate Partnerships Manager David Furniss has joined the team to help with this goal. “Partnerships with corporate supporters are critical for the ongoing success of Mercy

Health Foundation,” David says. “We would like Mercy Health Foundation to be supported by a number of corporate partners who see the relationship with us as an important part of their business activity.”



Partnership information

If you are interested in finding out how to partner with Mercy Health Foundation, please email David Furniss at DFurniss@mercy.com.au or call **0430 436 293**



Left to right: Catholic Super Chief Executive Officer Frank Pegan and Mercy Health Corporate Partnerships Manager David Furniss



Christine's Mob



Christine (right) enjoys her time with Mary Nash, one of her trusted Mercy Health community care workers

As a girl, Christine Gray's mother used to call her an 'animated question mark' because most of her sentences started with 'why, how, what, when or where'. Now 92, Christine is still sharp as a tack — and determined to live at home for as long as she can, with help from Mercy Health.



Left: Christine is happy living at home with the help of her Mercy Health community care workers. Below: Patchwork is one of Christine's many hobbies.



Christine had a long stay in hospital in 2015 and received support from Mercy Health Home & Community Care Geelong on her return home. Impressed by the high standard of care, Christine successfully applied for a Home Care Package through Mercy Health.

"If you believe in prayer, I said, 'Thank you, God'." That was in April 2016 and she hasn't looked back.

Christine lives at home with the help of 14 community care workers who come to her Grovedale unit and help her with various everyday tasks such as shopping, making the bed and doing her accounts. "They do everything you ask for and more. They're a great mob — I call them 'My Mob'."

In particular, Christine appreciates the care and respect the Mercy Health team shows by consistently rostering the same carers she has come to rely on and trust. "One of the

“They do everything you ask for and more. They're a great mob — I call them 'My Mob'.”

things I love about Mercy is that I get help from the same group of people. I can't imagine how I'd react to different people. Routine is important."

Among Christine's brigade of trusted community care workers is Mary Nash, who visits her several times a week. Mary helps Christine get ready for the day, runs errands and takes her for walks and appointments. "I love the interaction with clients and to know that you're assisting them and that they appreciate the help," says Mary.

Mary also loves to help sort the many artefacts and knick-knacks Christine has accumulated through a lifetime of hobbies and interests such as nature, Indigenous culture, local history, poetry, crochet, patchwork... the list goes on.

Christine's sharp and enquiring mind led her to become a primary school teacher. She relished the job for 44 years, inspiring her students with her curiosity and great love of nature. Many of them have gone on to lead highly successful careers and still keep in contact with her all these years later.

Christine is still full of questions and creativity; she loves to read, complete crosswords and colour in mindfulness books. She also regularly goes to church and meets up with friends. With the help of her Mercy Health 'mob', Christine continues to pursue the interests and relationships that make her life meaningful. "I think I get a pretty good deal... I'm very happy with Mercy Health."



Greg Birkenleigh proudly shows off his computer certificate



Getting tech savvy

A stroke may have affected his memory and mobility, and blindness in one eye makes it hard to type, but Greg Birkenleigh won't let anything stand in the way of his weekly computer lessons. Greg's lessons at the local community learning centre in Shepparton have become a highlight on his calendar — and a lifeline.

Greg is now halfway through an intermediary computer course, having completed a 10-week beginner's course late last year. At 65, Greg is one of Southern Cross Care (Vic)'s youngest home care clients. Due to declining health, Greg had to stop volunteering at the Shepparton Football Club where he once sold raffle tickets at the gate. He has also been unable to visit the RSL as often as he used to. The computer has become his new outlet.

"I was lonely, but I didn't have the interest to join the day activity groups organised by Southern Cross Care or to attend a men's shed," says Greg. "I live on my own and was home by myself doing nothing. That's when my care manager, Dianne, suggested that I take up some computer lessons to stay engaged and keep my mind active."

Greg, who used to work at a food factory, suffered a stroke a few years ago which affected not only his speech and motor skills, but also his memory.

"I did a computer course many years ago so I knew a little bit about it," Greg continues. "But when I was hit by a stroke, I lost some of my memory. Learning computer is helping me to remember."

Through his Home Care Package, Greg was able to purchase a laptop and pay for his computer studies.

"Dianne [at Southern Cross Care] got me a laptop and enrolled me in an introductory course to learn basic instructions like how to operate a computer and find information on the internet," says

Greg, who also learned how to use email to communicate with family and friends.

Since he began studying computer skills, Greg has shown much determination and resilience to complete his lessons despite the odds: he is blind in one eye and mobility issues mean he can type with only one finger.

"I sometimes miss the keyboard because of my vision. I am also very slow because I use only one finger to type, but that doesn't stop me," says Greg, who diligently attends the weekly classes on his own using his mobility scooter.

"Learning computer is fun," says Greg. "I'm happy to have a new interest and something to do, like playing games on my laptop."

“
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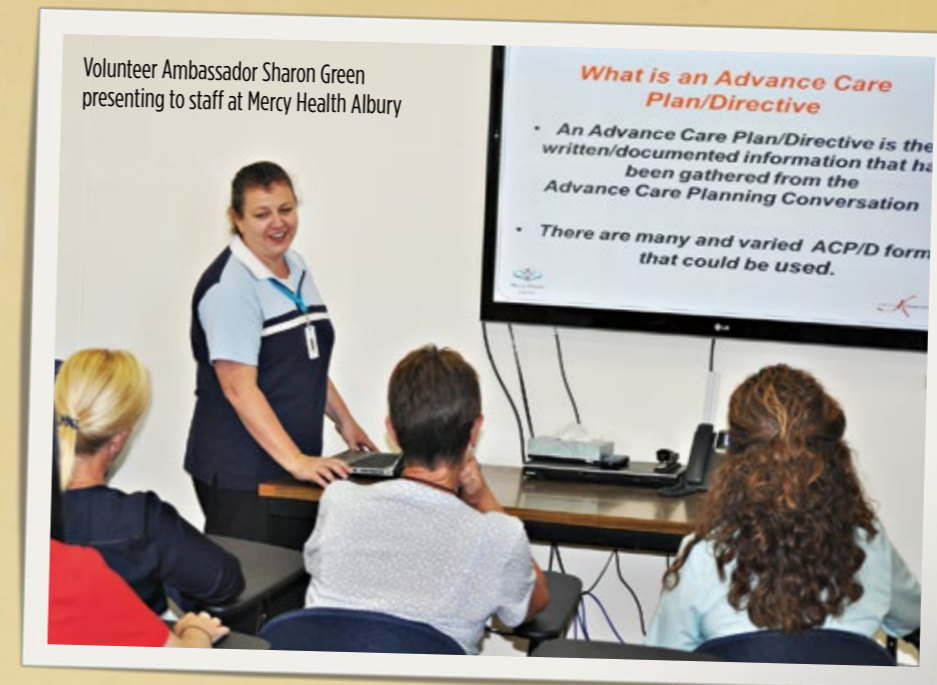
To many people, death is still an unspeakable subject. We need to be talking about end-of-life care to health professionals and getting it out to the community.”

on advance care planning or directives and Victoria implemented new legislation on 12 March 2018. The new Medical Treatment Planning and Decisions Act 2016 enables a person to create a legally binding advance care directive and to appoint medical treatment decision makers and a support person.

If a medical treatment decision maker has not been appointed, the Act specifies who has legal authority to make medical treatment decisions for a person who is unable to do so themselves. For example, this may be the person's domestic partner.

“Anyone at any age can think about advance care planning, particularly if they have a chronic illness. There is no right age,” says Christine. “This is an important decision, and it is best made by the person concerned when they still have the capacity to do so.”

For more information, visit health-services.mercyhealth.com.au/patients-and-visitors/advance-care-planning



villages, men's sheds, that sort of setup,” says Sharon Green, one of the volunteer ambassadors. “We found out that some people in the community have never heard of advance care planning.”

families they are welcome to attend and find out about advance care planning,” she says.

Each state and territory has its own legislation

Community groups host the program and volunteers give a short presentation that can be tailored depending on the audience. The presentation has even been offered in-house to Mercy Health Albury staff, family and friends.

Mercy Health Albury Operations Manager Christine Arnold hopes this will encourage more people to have constructive conversations with their family and friends about end-of-life care. “We’re asking staff to partner with us and tell their



Mercy Health Albury Operations Manager Christine Arnold (left) with Volunteer Coordinator Louisa Thompson

Getting difficult conversations going

While most Australians would prefer to die at home, fewer than 10 per cent actually do. Part of the challenge is starting a conversation about death and dying — particularly how we want to be cared for at the end of our lives. Volunteers at Mercy Health Albury hope to overcome this by raising awareness in the community about the importance of advance care planning.

“To many people, death is still an unspeakable subject. We need to be talking about end-of-life care to health professionals and getting it out to the community,” says Louisa Thompson, Volunteer Coordinator at Mercy Health Albury.

“We saw the opportunity to do something about it following

two community forums we organised in 2014 and 2015. We set up the Advance Care Planning Volunteer Ambassadors Program the following year and have not looked back.”

Funded by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, the program is

run by volunteers who provide introductory information about advance care planning to the community in Albury and surrounding areas.

“Our main objective is to talk to the average person on the street. That’s why we approached the Probus clubs, Rotary clubs, retirement



Mercy Health Marketing Coordinator Tamara Fulton helping label some of the donated baby clothes. COVER: The face of Mercy Health's best performing Facebook post, baby Henry Heath (pictured with his mum Kimberly) was born at Mercy Hospital for Women



One million views for baby bunting and counting

When Tayla Tullio was scrolling through her Facebook feed, a post asking for new and used clothes for sick and premature babies at Mercy Hospital for Women hit a nerve.

My little boy Lucas had to spend time in the Special Care Nursery (SCN) at Werribee Mercy Hospital," Tayla says.

"Lucas was born suddenly at 36 weeks and all of the baby items I'd planned to purchase for him were on my shopping list for week 37."

As a result Lucas wore donated clothing and nappies for his first few days in the SCN.

"Having donated items available took some of the stress out of an extremely stressful situation," Tayla explains.

Given her own experience, Tayla did not hesitate when she saw the Mercy Hospital for Women Facebook post. She hit 'share' — and she wasn't the only one.

Within 48 hours the Facebook post had erupted, receiving a whopping 25,619 reactions, comments and shares. That was just the beginning.

The Mercy Health Marketing, Communications and Stakeholder Relations team had put up the post following a request from the Neonatal Intensive Care Nursery. The response blew them away.

"We thought this particular post might generate interest — but it's always hard to tell with these things," Marketing Coordinator Tamara Fulton says.

"The team just kept watching the reach of the post climb until it eventually exceeded one million people. To put it into perspective, our Facebook posts normally reach a couple of thousand of people."

"It was all hands on deck replying to the messages, both public and private, and editing the message to try to divert some of the

donations to other hospitals and community organisations."

Mercy Hospital for Women Midwife Katherine Scott helped accept and sort the thousands of baby clothing donations that began flooding in to the hospital from around Australia.

"We were lucky that we had a spare office to store the clothing for a couple of days," Katherine says.

"We had to sort the clothing into sizes and label them before they were sent off site to be washed."

"The community was extremely generous and we were able to share any extra donated items with other Mercy Health services, including Werribee Mercy Hospital, Mercy Health O'Connell Family Centre and our Social Work team."

More than a fortnight after the Facebook post went live, people were still enquiring about making a donation.

Mercy Hospital for Women Midwife Katherine Scott sorting through some of the donated baby clothes

Tayla Tullio's son Lucas benefitted from donated clothing for his first few days in the Special Care Nursery at Werribee Mercy Hospital

"I had friends and family travel up to an hour and a half to drop off baby clothing," Tayla says.

"It's nice knowing that your donation is going to a good cause."

Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of the community we are now at capacity and can no longer accept clothing donations. If you would like to support sick and premature babies, please give at:
mercyhealthfoundation.org.au



Giving back with passion and experience

Maryan Bryant worked as a nurse at the former Mercy Hospital in Cootamundra, NSW, and later at Mercy Care Centre in Young, NSW. When she retired, she was keen to give back to the ministry that provided her with such a rewarding vocation.

In 2006, she accepted an invitation to join the Mercy Health Community Advisory Committee (CAC), which supports Mercy Health by providing strategic advice from consumer, carer and community perspectives. “I believe I can return something of the many gifts I have received from Mercy,” she says.

In her role as a consumer advisor, Maryan updates the CAC every two months with feedback and issues from Mercy Care Centre in Young. Her insights help the committee better understand, prioritise and respond to the needs of the Young community, as well as consumers more broadly. She is also a member of the Young-based Mercy Health Community Advisory Group (CAG), one of the groups providing local advice to our health services.

Her work as a nurse and the relationships she has developed living in Young for the past 50 years have proven incredibly valuable to her consumer advisor roles.

One particular issue that drives Maryan is palliative care advocacy. As a member of the Advance Care Working Party, Maryan sees a need to educate the community and hospital volunteers about palliative care, and the associated rewards and sensitivities. “There are so many consumers who don’t understand palliative care and the great privilege it is to be

with people when they are at their most vulnerable and honest. I also see a great need for volunteers in hospitals to be trained in dealing with palliative care situations because that type of patient environment is so sensitive,” Maryan says.

Maryan also promotes the work of Mercy Health to the Young community — part of the consumer advisor role she particularly enjoys. “I love the aspect of promoting Mercy Health to the community because we are so blessed to have a facility in Young,” Maryan says.

If you would like more information about becoming a consumer advisor, please email the Consumer Participation and Experience team at getinvolved@mercy.com.au or phone 03 8416 7872. You can also find out more about becoming a consumer advisor on our website: mercyhealth.com.au/our-structure/consumer-engagement/



Parenting support for Aboriginal dads

Over the past year, Mercy Hospital for Women has been providing parenting support and consultations for Indigenous fathers-to-be through its Aboriginal antenatal clinic Nangnak Baban Murrup, which means ‘Nurturing Mothers Spirit’.

Run in collaboration with the Children’s Protection Society, the program ‘I’m an Aboriginal Dad’ aims to assist Aboriginal men or those with Aboriginal partners to play an active role in parenting before and after birth.

“Times have changed and we want to encourage Koorie men to be more involved in the birth and upbringing of their children,” says Ron Briggs, the program’s counsellor and liaison coordinator. “However, it can be a challenge as many men still see parenting as a woman’s responsibility.”

Ron, whose father is Yorta Yorta and mother

is Gunditjmara, has seen firsthand the value of the ‘I’m an Aboriginal Dad’ program for the Aboriginal community.

“I’ve had people calling me two or three years later to thank me, which is remarkable,” says Ron. “This program is all about changing cultural norms. It’s about being a parent, and how to assist their partner in as many ways as possible around the care for their children, and be the good dad that they want to be.

“During consultation, they can ask or talk about anything. We just want them to be comfortable.”

To many people, Ron is like a father figure. That’s why many



Ron Briggs with Mercy Hospital for Women Aboriginal hospital liaison officers Meisha Duckford (left) and Joanne Pappas (right)

of them address him as ‘Uncle Ron’ as a sign of respect.

Although the program is tailored to the Aboriginal community, all Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are welcome to see Uncle Ron. ‘I am an Aboriginal Dad’ is available at Mercy Hospital for Women in Heidelberg every Thursday from 11am–2pm. No appointment is required.



Ron Briggs offers weekly consultations for fathers-to-be at Mercy Hospital for Women

“Times have changed and we want to encourage Koorie men to be more involved in the birth and upbringing of their children”

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



SAVE THE DATE



Mercy Health

Care first

an evening to
make
dreams
*come true****

MERCY HEALTH FOUNDATION BALL

Saturday 26 May 2018

The Sofitel Melbourne on Collins

Imagine there were experiences or achievements you had hoped to have accomplished during your lifetime but hadn't — your 'bucket list'.

A number of aged care residents and people we care for at home are still chasing their dreams. Some don't have the family support or the means to fulfil these dreams.

By supporting the Mercy Health Foundation Ball, you can help make their dreams come true.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES ARE NOW AVAILABLE.

For sponsorship opportunities please contact:

David Furniss, Corporate Partnerships Manager, Mercy Health Foundation

Mobile: 0430 436 293

Email: DFurniss@mercy.com.au

For general event enquiries please contact:

Cynthia Slattery, Events Coordinator, Mercy Health

Phone: 8416 7753

Mobile: 0499 825 000

Email: cslattery@mercy.com.au

Your feedback...

We hope you've enjoyed the autumn edition of *Our Voice*, Mercy Health's groupwide newsletter.

Please send your feedback and stories via the details below:

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Mercy Health acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the first Australians. We acknowledge the diversity of Indigenous Australia. We respectfully recognise Elders past, present and emerging. This report was produced on Wurundjeri Country.



Our Voice will be back in June with our winter edition. In the meantime you can keep up to date with current Mercy Health news at mercyhealth.com.au

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