



*Volunteering  
opens doors*



A celebration of  
community volunteering  
in Northern Sydney





ANDREA

Having come over from New Zealand and being a stay-at-home mum I decided that there was no reason why I couldn't do something to help someone out so I investigated my local community and the rest is history!

— *Andrea*

This brochure was produced by Northern Sydney Volunteer Network with the generous support of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing and the NSW Office of Family and Community Services, Ageing, Disability and Home Care.

**The Northern Sydney Volunteer Network (NSVN)** is a group of four Volunteer Referral Services that work collaboratively in Northern Sydney to develop and support community volunteering.



NORMAN

When I retired, I saw an article requesting volunteers for an organisation that offers shopping trips and social activities for adults with physical disabilities. So I volunteered my services and have been with them ever since. I've always liked helping people and the members are so appreciative and thankful, that at the end of each trip, one goes home with a "feel-good" feeling surrounding you.

— *Norman*

The NSVN works in partnership with National, State and local Community Aged or Disability services in the subregions of Lower North Shore, Manly/ Warringah/ Pittwater, Ryde/Hunters Hill and Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai.



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

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Family & Community Services  
Ageing, Disability & Home Care



home and community care



# VOLUNTEERING OPENS DOORS

This booklet is a tribute to our local volunteers and contains a collection of their diverse stories. The volunteers in this booklet are from different backgrounds, beliefs and age groups but they are united in the knowledge that volunteering can open doors and is a wonderful and satisfying experience.

Whether you want to meet new people, put your free time to good use, gain work experience, stay involved or just keep fit

**Volunteering is for everyone!**



MARY

## A FEW HOURS A MONTH MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

### *Our Volunteer – Mary*

I am one of the “newcomers” to volunteering at the Day Centre. Having just completed my first year, I can say that I enjoyed every minute of my involvement. My favourite activities include running the morning trivia quiz, engaging in current affairs discussions and organising the group crossword. The Day Centre is such a happy place – it’s great to be part of it.

- You may not realise but volunteers do not have to commit their time every week for 20 years.
- Most volunteers give 3 hours per month and choose a time that suits them.
- These few hours can make a big difference in someone’s life.
- These days volunteering is geared to suit peoples busy lifestyles and you can volunteer as little or as much time as you want to give.
- The volunteer services are very flexible and understand that their volunteers have many commitments around family, travel, work, study etc.
- We appreciate that volunteering needs to fit in with people’s lifestyles, and offer a range of opportunities that will suit most people.
- While most of our volunteer opportunities occur during the week, we do have weekend opportunities for full time workers.



## VOLUNTEERING OPENS DOORS TO NEW FRIENDSHIPS

**“Volunteering is a feel good activity! It is a win-win situation. Many of the volunteers have been together for 10-15 years, we hear each others highs and lows, and it is our extended family.**

**Complete strangers become friends overcoming barriers of age and race.”**

*– Suzanne*

- Surveys show that many people feel they have benefited from meeting other volunteers and developed better interpersonal and communication skills while participating.
- Volunteer work offers the opportunity to meet people who share your interests as well as people who are different from yourself.
- Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, especially if you are new to an area. Volunteering also strengthens your ties to the community and broadens your support network.



The first time I volunteered in a group for elderly frail people, an old lady sitting next to me said hello and introduced herself with a beautiful smile. Her warm smile moved me.

— *Li*

BILL



I started delivering Meals on Wheels nearly 20 years ago in appreciation of how this great service allowed my mother in Grafton to continue living at home until she died in her 90's. I enjoy the contact with so many people both for the support the daily contact and the pleasure I get from knowing about them.

— *Bill*

## VOLUNTEERS...

**Volunteers really do experience a sense of achievement and personal satisfaction and many of them say they get back more than they give.**

- The most valuable skills for a volunteer are compassion, an open mind, a willingness to help, support and share skills, and a positive attitude.
- Think about volunteering as an exchange, instead of considering volunteering as something you do for people who are not as fortunate as yourself.
- Most people find themselves in need at some point in their lives. So today you may be the person with the ability to help, but tomorrow you may be the recipient of someone else's volunteer effort.
- Volunteering is a fun and easy way to explore your interests and passions. Doing volunteer work that you find meaningful and interesting, can be a relaxing, energizing escape from your day-to-day routine of work, school, or family commitments.
- Volunteering also provides you with renewed creativity, motivation, and vision that can carry over into your personal and professional life.

## *What you can do...* NEIGHBOUR AID

**A range of activities providing social support to frail aged people living in their own homes in the community.**

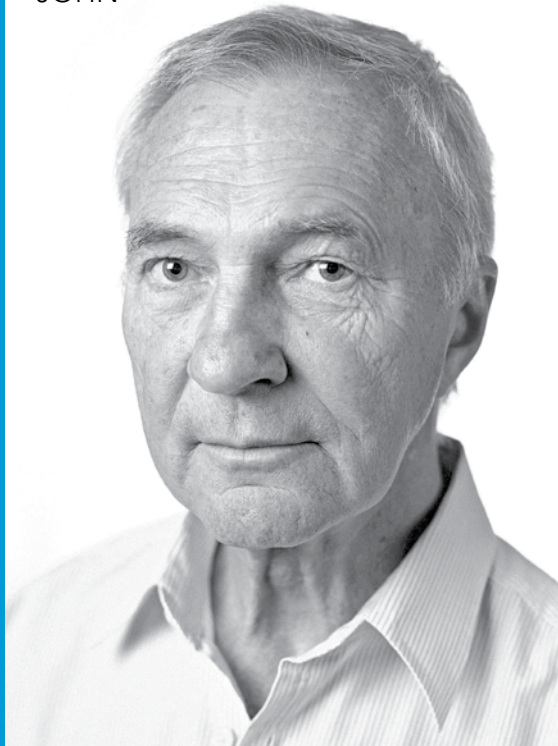
Volunteer activities include driving a person to an appointment, shopping, home visiting and companionship.

**Hours:** Monday – Friday during business hours.

**Needed:** Car and licence



JOHN



I've often heard it said, it is more rewarding to give than to receive and the satisfaction I receive is firm proof of that. When I first started volunteer driving three years ago, I did it because it thought it was the right thing to do, to put something back into the community. Now I realise that there is another perspective to it... I find it enormously satisfying.

– John

## *Our Volunteer – Fayleen*

I first met Lola just after Christmas two years ago. She told me she had spent Christmas on her own in her unit, and had lunch on her own as usual. I found Lola an amazing and interesting lady of 89 and she has been such an inspiration to me. Older people have lived through the amazing changes in the 20th century and have so much knowledge to pass on. The time we spend together is very special to me. In volunteering we not only help the person we are visiting, but we also learn to listen, be more patient and caring and become better people.



## *What you can do...* **LINEN SERVICE**

Together with another volunteer deliver linen and make the bed for a frail aged person or a person with a disability. All linen is commercially laundered.

**Hours:** Monday – Friday during business hours.

**Needed:** Normal fitness.

In a world that's sometimes bound by negative themes, I have been inspired to take action and become a positive volunteer to my community. Volunteering has allowed me to connect with various people, given me the opportunity to offer a valuable service to others, to spread joy, to ease pain or stress; and to make a powerful and positive difference in society.

– *Rodrigo*

RODRIGO



Joy and comfort is what I take back after every session at the Linen Service. As a volunteer with the Linen Service, I accompany my husband on his relocation from India. As a student volunteer during university days, I supported the visually challenged students and provided free tuition for the needy school children.

– *Preetha*

PREETHA





## What you can do... **GARDENING**

Working in a small team to create low maintenance gardens for frail elderly people living in the community.

**Hours:** Monday – Saturday.

**Needed:** Normal fitness, no previous gardening experience.



NOBUKO



I have learned so much through volunteering with people and enjoy giving back to the community!

– *Nobuko*

## *Our Volunteers – Karen & Maria*

### **KAREN**

I started volunteering in response to a North Shore Times newspaper advertisement 3 years ago. I have made wonderful friends. The gardening service is like a family and I really enjoy that we are helping people.

### **MARIA**

I have always enjoyed gardening & find being part of a regular team makes it more enjoyable. I work in 2 gardens each Tuesday so usually go home rather tired & feel I have earned my glass of red!



ADRIAN

## *What you can do...* **DISABILITY SUPPORT**

Accompanying adults with physical disabilities who use wheelchairs on bus outings to various venues. Volunteers enjoy a fun day out.

**Hours:** 7 days a week.

**Needed:** Normal fitness.

### *Our Volunteer – Adrian*

People with disabilities in our community are denied many of the pleasures in life which are readily available to everybody else. DARTS opens many doors for people who might otherwise be prisoners in their own homes. I joined DARTS in 1995 and have been rewarded so many times by seeing the happiness in members' faces when they can get out and about to all the varied and interesting places that we visit, such as this occasion at Georges Heights where we enjoyed lunch at the café and a stroll along the scenic walkway. Everybody smiles!

WAGHMA



When I moved to North Sydney a few years ago, I had no English and I needed help. I knocked on the door of a local community centre, they helped me and were very supportive. Last year I decided to return to this wonderful centre to offer my support and to be able to help someone who could be in the same situation as I was all those years ago. That is the motivation for me to volunteer.

*– Waghma*

*What you can do...* **MEALS ON WHEELS**

**Delivering meals to older people living in the community to help them maintain their independence.**

**Hours:** Monday – Friday during business hours.

**Needed:** Car and Licence.



ROSLYN



When my grandparents in Perth required home assistance I couldn't be there to help, so volunteering here in Sydney was my small way of repaying other volunteers' kindness. I started volunteering with Meals on Wheels. My son would come with us and as he grew older started to 'help' too. He is at school now and quite envious that his toddler sister now does "Meals AND Wheels" (as he calls it).

*– Roslyn*

*Our Volunteers – Craig*

After many successful years in corporate life I had a feeling it was time to give a little back to the community. For 4 years, I have been delivering Meals to the residents. I give up a few hours of my time each week and find it probably one of the most rewarding things I've done in my life.

All it is, is my time, but it makes such a difference to people who want to keep their independence. It is a humbling experience, that gives you perspective in life. I've taken all my children out with me to show them how a little simple kindness can go a long way".



*What you can do...* **CENTRE BASED MEALS**

Helping to prepare the centre dining room, serve a meal and socialise with frail elderly people who come from their own homes to the Centre for companionship.

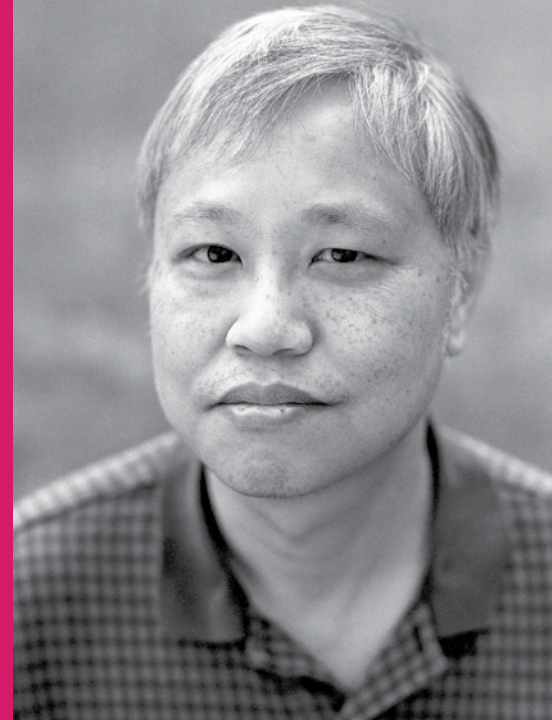
**Hours:** Monday – Friday middle of the day.

**Needed:** No previous experience.

*Our Volunteer – Maryanna*

I gladly give my time to Meals on Wheels as I love the company of the elderly that I work with and the camaraderie of the other volunteers I work alongside. The elderly need a lot of care and they are very appreciative of the support and attention that they receive. This makes for a really satisfying job. I thoroughly enjoy my time with the seniors' community lunch team.

WENG YIE



After working for 30 years and getting so much from society it is time for me to give something back to the community!

*– Weng Yie*

*What you can do...* **COMMUNITY  
TRANSPORT**

Providing transport for frail older people who are transport disadvantaged to assist them to access a range of activities including shopping and social outings..

**Hours:** Monday – Saturday.

**Needed:** Drivers: need Bus licence,  
Assistants: no experience necessary.

KEVIN



Following my retirement from corporate business, I felt I needed to get involved in community activities and applied as a volunteer. I also enjoy volunteering with other local organisations driving their community buses.

– *Kevin*

ELAINE



*Our Volunteers – Elaine*

We started our first trip in early April 2002, and now after 9 years we are enjoying it more and more each year. As well as the fortnightly mystery bus trip, we volunteer for the bi-monthly full day Saturday bus trips. We have up to 17 ladies registered for our Mystery Drive and on most Tuesdays everyone is on board.

We believe that volunteering is worthwhile for both the organisation and ourselves and encourage anyone to get involved. Volunteering is about giving something back to the community and what better way to spend your time than with our older citizens – helping them to have a better quality of life.



*What you can do...* **DAY CENTRE  
ACTIVITIES**

Volunteers help run activities and provide friendly support and companionship to frail elderly people coming to the centre from their own homes.

**Hours:** Monday – Friday.

**Needed:** No previous experience.

*Our Volunteer – Trevor*

The growing of vegetables and herbs gives immense satisfaction to everyone and reminds them of days past. I'm now in my 12th year of Volunteering and would not pass up this opportunity for anything.

I also drive the bus for scenic drives which is greatly appreciated by our Day Centre folk.

SHIRIN



I get great joy, satisfaction and fulfilment from my voluntary work. I meet new people from all walks of life and enjoy my conversations with them. I like to build relationships and I find that human contact is very important. Volunteering is a two way street. The organisation benefits from my experience and I maintain physical and mental health and still be useful to the community.

*– Shirin*



## DID YOU KNOW?

**In 2010 36% of the adult population volunteered.**

- These people have made a huge difference in the lives of others in their communities. You too can experience the satisfaction of volunteering.

**A University of Adelaide study has found that 6.4 million people volunteered in Australia in 2012. Volunteering is now worth more than the mining industry, declaring the true extent of its monetary value to be more than \$200 billion a year.**

- How wonderful to be part of this

**Volunteering provides many benefits to both mental and physical health.**

- Volunteering can provide a healthy boost to your self-confidence and self-esteem. When you are doing something good for someone else and your community you get a real sense of accomplishment.
- Studies have found that those who volunteer have a lower mortality rate than those who do not, even when considering factors like the health of the participants.
- “Volunteers tend to have the highest levels of wellbeing... Community connection and engagement is important to our sense of well being.” (Australian Unity Wellbeing Index).

# VOLUNTEERING OPENS DOORS TO MANY DIFFERENT OPPORTUNITIES

Once you decide that you would like to volunteer, please fill out the Volunteer Registration Form at one of the websites located in your own area.

NSVN will work with you to find the right volunteer job that suits your interests and skills. If you would like to seek more information, please call the numbers below in your area.



NORTHERN SYDNEY VOLUNTEER NETWORK

## **RYDE HUNTERS HILL COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS**

P: (02) 9952 8222

[www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/  
community/volunteering](http://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/community/volunteering)

## **LOWER NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS**

P: (02) 9777 7815

[www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/  
community/volunteering](http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/community/volunteering)

## **KU-RING-GAI HORNSBY VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

P: (02) 9424 0970

[www.kmc.nsw.gov.au/  
volunteer](http://www.kmc.nsw.gov.au/volunteer)

## **COMMUNITY CONNECT NORTHERN BEACHES**

P: (02) 9931 7777

[www.norbeachconnect.com.au/  
volunteering](http://www.norbeachconnect.com.au/volunteering)

