

# Sept The Bugle

## UnitingCare Community Options

If you would like to contribute to The Bugle, please email [info@ucco.org.au](mailto:info@ucco.org.au) or ring (03) 9239 2500. We welcome any ideas or suggestions you may have.



## Carers Week

CARERS Week is almost on us and this year's theme is 'Be Care Aware'.

Carers Week raises awareness, recognition, support and appreciation of carers across the nation and in 2012 is seeking to ensure all Australians know more about the important role carers fulfil and how they can be supported.

Carers Australia estimates there are more than 2.6 million carers in Australia, including parents caring for children young and old with a physical or intellectual disability, adults caring for ageing and frail parents, school-kids who support an ill or disabled parent or other relative, partners caring for people with alcohol and drug problems. It is also estimated that the combined replacement cost of carer contribution to society is more than \$40 billion each year.

Carers Week 2012 runs from Sunday 14 October until Saturday 20 October 2012 and will be launched nationally on Monday 15 October.

### *Get Involved*

Carers Australia is looking for carers willing to share their story to help raise awareness of this vital role. If you have a story to share, or simply want to learn more about Carers Week, please visit:

[www.carersaustralia.com.au](http://www.carersaustralia.com.au)

### *Carers Week at UCCO*

UCCO will be celebrating Carers Week by running two great events – a delicious high tea at Rosebank Receptions in North Ringwood on Tuesday 16 October and a day trip to Cranbourne Botanical Gardens on Thursday 18 October.

Both events are free for CRCC carers but places are strictly limited and filling fast. If you would like to be involved, please call 1800 059 059 or 9239 2580 (if calling from a mobile or outside the Eastern region).

### *National Carer Recognition Framework*

This year the Federal Government established the National Carer Strategy – the second element of the National Carer Recognition Framework.

The Strategy expands on the Australian Government's commitment to deliver greater recognition for carers and details areas for action so that carers needs are responded to, including being acknowledged and respected, having opportunities for paid work and education, improved carer health and wellbeing and better access to information and support. These aim to promote carer opportunities and the ability to participate in economic, social and community life.

To find out more, visit <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au>

# [www.ucco.org.au](http://www.ucco.org.au)

'A Good Life For All'



## A message from the Chief Executive's desk

RECENTLY I was fortunate enough to be awarded a Harvard Fellowship which gave me the rare opportunity to travel to the US and spend a week at Harvard University – one of the world's most prestigious learning institutions.

Since the last edition of The Bugle I have been able to take up this opportunity and it was certainly a privilege to spend time with 150 other not-for-profit representatives from all over the world and examine case studies about strategy, mission, planning, execution, performance evaluation and governance in organisations.

I also spent some time visiting other disability organisations throughout the United States and Canada and learned many things during my travels which I will be sharing with the rest of the UCCO team over the coming months.

One thing my experience did show me was just how lucky we are in Australia. We are significantly more advanced in our provision of aged care and disability services than many other countries in the world and I am more confident than ever that UCCO's model of care is up there with the best. On my return I was delighted to hear the Victorian Government had struck a deal with their Federal counterparts to fund a trial for the National Disability Insurance Scheme in the Geelong region. It's been a long journey to get this far (and there's still a long way to go) but it is a significant step

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towards a full implementation of the scheme and we will be watching with great interest as things continue to develop.

July's Participant Committee's Forum on self-directed care was a great success and many of those in attendance raised some excellent questions. The feedback we received on the day indicated that self-directed care was a very new and challenging development for many of you and that we need to keep you better informed. We have heard you and, starting with our feature on page 8, we will make sure we provide regular updates in coming issues.

We are mindful that even though there is a lot of change occurring in key policy areas such as ageing and disability, for most of the individuals and families that we work with it is business as usual and the most important thing is that UCCO continues to deliver the best possible service it can and to the people who need it the most. We understand this and will endeavour to keep you informed and up to date but not overloaded with unnecessary information and worry.

**Scott Sheppard**  
Chief Executive

# Progress for NDIS



UNITINGCARE Community Options has welcomed the deal struck by the Victorian and Federal Governments to establish the Geelong region as a trial site for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Victoria came close to missing out all together when the Premier locked horns with the Federal Government over funding during a tense Council of Australian Governments meeting in July. Fortunately a compromise was reached and Victoria will join South Australia, Tasmania, the ACT and the Hunter in NSW in operating trial sites for the Scheme.

"This is another great step forward for people with a disability and those who care for them and is a strong sign that our coordinated and sustained lobbying campaign is having an effect," said UnitingCare Community Options Chief Executive and Chair of the Victorian NDIS Campaign Committee, Scott Sheppard. "It is now more important than ever that we keep up the pressure on our governments and show them that there is genuine community support for a full roll out of a NDIS."

It is estimated the trial phase will assist more than 20,000 people around the country in the short term, while establishing a blueprint for a nationwide system that will make it possible for people with significant and permanent disability to get necessary care and support they require.

The trial program will involve active engagement with the local community and ensure the eventual implementation of the scheme is informed by feedback from those directly affected - people with a disability, their families and carers, service providers and community based organisations. The information gathered through this process will provide crucial information on how best to proceed to a full scheme that is comprehensive, robust and responsive to the needs of people with disability.

The NDIS will open the door to a more personalised style of care provision that will more accurately reflect the goals and aspirations of each individual. It will offer more control over services and supports and greater flexibility to explore and choose from a wider range of options and providers.

The Productivity Commission estimated about 410,000 people with a disability will be eligible for direct support from a fully rolled out NDIS so, with 20,000 people benefitting from the initial trial, there is still a long way to go.

For more information or to find out how you can contribute to the campaign for the full introduction of the Scheme, please visit [www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au](http://www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au).

## **NDIS Your Story**

As part of the trail phase, the Federal Government is inviting the community to share their stories and experiences to illustrate how we all expect an NDIS to work. People with a disability, their families and carers and the wider community are invited to share their views via a 250 word essay, a collection of photos or even a video - whichever way best tells the story.

For more information or to share your story, visit [www.ndis.org.au](http://www.ndis.org.au)

# UNITINGCARE COMMUNITY

## UCCO News at your fingertips

The latest news and information from UCCO is now just the click of a mouse away...

We'll be launching our email version of The Bugle in the coming months so now is the time to register your details and make sure you receive it.

While you will continue to receive your printed version every three months or so, the e-news version will be sent out via every two months and will be packed full of immediate news items and upcoming events.

It's your fastest and most convenient way to stay in the know about UCCO so what are you waiting for?

To subscribe, simply visit [www.ucco.org.au/news](http://www.ucco.org.au/news) and register your details.



## Review of fees

We are currently investigating the need for an increase in our fee structure to help us stay in line with the Government's changing funding arrangements.

Our existing fees were introduced in 2010/11 to help cover some of the gap between the actual cost of the service and the financial contribution the Government makes (most Government departments require recipients to contribute to the cost of their own care in some way).

Our fees have not changed since then but, with the State Government flagging further funding reductions in certain areas, it is

important that we revisit our fee structure in the coming months to ensure we can continue providing the high level of service you would expect from us.

We'll keep you up-to-date as the review process continues.

## UCCO Awards 2012

If you deal with someone at UCCO who has made an important difference to your life this year then we want to hear from you!

The annual UCCO Awards are a great opportunity to recognise those staff who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to achieve great outcomes for the people they assist. To be successful, they will also have consistently demonstrated the vision, mission and values of our organisation through their work.

If this sounds like someone you know at UCCO then make sure you complete and submit the nomination form that will be mailed to you in the coming weeks by 5pm on Friday 28 September.

All nominations will be reviewed by a panel of judges (including a member of UCCO's Board of Governance and a participant representative) and the final winners will be announced at our Annual Report to the Community on 23 October.

You'll find out who the 2012 winners were in the next edition of The Bugle.

## Dental reform

Last month the Federal Government announced it would deliver dental care to disadvantaged adults and children from low income families. Under the new arrangements:

- Adults on low incomes, pensioners, other concession card holders, and those with special needs, will have better access to dental health care
- Around 3.4 million children will be eligible for Medicare funded dental care



# OPTIONS NEWS AND VIEWS

- Dental services – both in terms of capital and workforce – will also be expanded for people living in outer metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas

To find out more visit: [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)



## Honours for Rosh

Belated congratulations to UCCO Partnership Worker, Rozan 'Rosh' Perera who was honoured with a Victorian Disability Sector Award earlier this year. Rosh was presented with the Individual Support Worker Award by Victorian Minister for Mental Health, Women's Affairs and Community Services, Mary Wooldridge, during an entertaining awards ceremony at Zinc in Federation Square.

He was nominated for the award by Beryl Power for the exceptional work he has done with her 53-year-old son Geoff (who is profoundly blind, has an intellectual disability, is epileptic and non-verbal) since 2006.

"What should be recognised above all is the profound impact Rosh has had on Geoff's quality of life. I believe this has largely been facilitated through the respect UCCO shows towards families and me in particular, through the family governance arrangement," she said.

"As a result of the splendid relationship Rosh has developed with Geoff, he has

become more content than he has ever been which has contributed to my peace of mind immeasurably."

## Apps for Autism

UCCO recently provided funding for a number of participants to attend a special workshop designed to help parents of younger children with autism navigate their way through the myriad of iPad apps currently on the market.

The "Apps for Autism and Learning" course – run by Queensland-based Bronwyn Sutton Speech Pathology – seeks to simplify the process of choosing the right app by encouraging attendees to ask themselves a series of simple questions such as 'why are you looking for an app?' or 'is it for education or entertainment purposes?' The choice can then be narrowed down further breaking the selection down into categories of learning connection, real life experience, feedback, adaptability, user friendliness and motivation.

One attending participant recently contacted UCCO to say the course had given her greater confidence in her ability to find apps that would meet the needs of her son.

"The iPad world is new to our family... once you start looking on the internet it is incredibly confusing and overwhelming because there are just so many apps ranging in price from free to very expensive," she said.

"I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to attend - it has already saved me lots of time and my son and I are enjoying our time together making social stories to help with his anxiety through the icommunicate app."

For more information or to find out when this course will run again in Melbourne, visit [suttonspeech.com.au](http://suttonspeech.com.au)

To find out how UCCO might be able to help you attend the course, please call us on 9239 2500.

# UCCO News contd....

## Sharing knowledge

UCCO was fortunate to host a recent visit by Anne Kinuthia - a staff member from an African/Australian organisation situated in Kenya called the Kivuli Project.

Kivuli Project is a non-profit Christian aid and development organisation – that works closely with the Kenyan Children's department to care for, advocate for and protect children classified as being 'in need'.

She spent a day with UCCO learning about our organisation, working with participants and learning more about our management styles. Anne also shared her experiences of working in Kenya and the joys and challenges that she faces.

Anne commented that she learnt a lot from the time spent at UCCO and was looking forward to using some new skills when she returned.

For more information on the project, visit [www.kivuliproject.org](http://www.kivuliproject.org)



## Hawthorn Community Chest

Many thanks to our friends at the Hawthorn Community Chest who recently helped fund two very important items of equipment for our participants.

Since 1958, the Hawthorn Community Chest has raised and distributed funds to charitable organisations and not-for-profit groups throughout the Boroondara region, providing health, welfare, education and recreation services for the local community.

In recent months, this important organisation has helped fund a new second skin (a type of splint) for one young participant and for another participant, contributed funding towards a new motorised wheelchair, some necessary chair alterations and an assessment for a walker.

To find out more about the great work The Hawthorn Community Chest does, visit <http://www.hawthorncommunitychest.org/>

## Scarf sale success

Congratulations to Participant Committee member, Iris Dawson, whose skillful knitting has helped raise some funds for the Realising a Dream project.

Realising a Dream provides UCCO participants with access to one-off grants to help them purchase a range of services or pieces of equipment they might need. The only requirement is a genuine need and that the item or service will contribute to their ability to realise a particular dream or goal.

Iris has been knitting scarves for fun for many years but this year decided to offer them for sale to UCCO staff and their friends.

Needless to say they sold like hot cakes and Iris kindly offered to pass on the proceeds (nearly \$200) to Realising a Dream.

You can read Iris' story on page 12.



*Opening Doors Inner East participants Victoria (left) and Genie sport some of Iris' scarves.*

# Tour de Heartland

UCCO Chief Executive, Scott Sheppard, and Group Manager, Quality & Disability, Andrew Johnston will be taking on a 400km across the heart of Victoria this month to raise awareness of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) campaign and raise funds for UCCO's Realising A Dream program.

Tour de Heartland was 'born' in September 2009 and covers some of Victoria's most picturesque and hilly country, winding its way through Mansfield in the Alpine region through to Castlemaine in Victoria's historical Goldfield region. The ride brings together a diverse group of people who share a passion for cycling and a desire to make a positive impact in the lives of those facing significant challenges in this world. In the past this has included raising funds for World Vision's annual 'Multiplying Gift Appeal', but this year the group is focusing on local issues by throwing its support behind the NDIS campaign. It's an issue close to the team's heart given a number



of the group are touched by disability in some way.

Fundraising will also be a big part of the trek and it's hoped more than \$1000 will be raised for this important program which helps people in need purchase equipment or services that will help them realise a particular dream or goal.

For more information about the Tour de Heartland Cycling Group, or to offer your support or sponsorship, please visit: [www.ucco.org.au/news](http://www.ucco.org.au/news).

## Off and running

The Opening Doors program's inner east group have wasted little time in getting some of their community-based projects off the ground with the first one already underway.

In most years, the community leadership programs that are developed by participants are implemented in December but the inner east's class of 2012 had other ideas. Emily and Yoyo from the Inner East group launched their project in August and, with the support of Manningham Council and the Chinese Community Social Services Centre Inc., are using a series of books entitled 'With The Light' to promote inclusion and understanding of autism in

youth within the Chinese community. Deputy Mayor of Manningham, Cr. Jennifer Yang, welcomed 70-plus guests, who heard from a member of Bulleen Heights School on why social inclusion is important—especially for students with autism.

The audience also heard from Karen Campbell about her journey in raising a daughter with autism, a presentation by members of the Chinese Parents' Special Net and an address by Project Manager Emily Ma, who discussed importance of creating awareness and inclusion within the community.



# Consumer Directed Care:

THE recent Participant Committee forum took a closer look at Consumer Directed (or Self Directed) Care and what this much-used term actually means. In this edition of The Bugle we shed some light on what lies ahead for those who choose to take it up.

## Disability

*By Rachael Scott, UCCO Program Manager, Disability*

Historically, money was given to organisations such as UCCO which would then decide who would receive funding based on a series of guidelines. This meant that everyone would receive the same amount of funding regardless of their circumstance or their disability and subsequent needs. It was also a system that responded to crisis; a system that dripped out support rather than investing in someone's future.

Feedback from people with disabilities and people within the system indicated that it was a system that was failing and in many ways inequitable. Couple this with a growing push for greater recognition of the value and strengths of people with disabilities (rather than seeing them as a burden on the state) and it was clear the system desperately needed an overhaul. After a long period of research and consultation with service users, The Victorian Department of Human Services decided to follow in the footsteps of countries such as the UK and Canada and move toward a more person-centred or client-directed service provision model. This is also a feature of the new National Disability Insurance Scheme which is in the future... who knows how that will look, but it is exciting...

## What does it all mean?

It is all about recognising that people can and should be able to make decisions about the important things in their lives. All disability services in Victoria will be based



on a self-directed system, which ensures organisations like UCCO focus on people's needs, aspirations and the choices they make about their lives. This approach has three components:

- Self-directed planning – planning that is directed by the person (or is family-centred for children)
- Self-directed funding – funding that is tied to the person and portable
- Self-directed support – supports that are flexible and tailored to individual needs

One key component of self-directed care is the concept of assumed capacity, meaning we assume participants:

- are the experts in their lives
- can coordinate and direct their supports

This means that people are now able to manage their own care should they choose to and may no longer need a partnership worker to assist them. In fact many people may soon find that, rather than having a long-term relationship with one partnership worker, they will have access to a whole team of qualified staff to assist when needed.

## What isn't changing

It is important to note that material supports such as funding have not changed and UCCO will continue to ensure all supports are accessed where funding is available. What has changed is the way we plan and the way in which we can spend the money.



# what does it mean for you?

UCCO is working with participants to reduce the bureaucratic burden attached to funding. The focus is on disability specific funding and outcome based planning. Individuals will plan for their specific support needs and UCCO will work toward accessing funding to meet those needs rather than 'one size fits all' funding. Our aim is to make the funding stretch further while delivering the most potent impact.

## Ageing

*by David McCoy, UCCO Program Manager, Ageing*

Last August, the Productivity Commission released its report on Aged Care reform. The report found the system needed a major over haul and recommended a series of initiatives that would give those in need of care support greater flexibility over the services they received and remain living at home longer.

Fortunately the Federal Government heard them and recently announced a package of \$955.4 million as part of its 'Living Longer, Living Better' initiative.

## What does it mean?

As part of this initiative, the Government will move their funding model away from residential care (eg aged care facilities) and towards home care (formerly known as community care, acknowledging that this is the preferred option for many in the community).



The many and varied funding packages will also be consolidated into a more streamlined home care package system which will feature two additional levels:

- 'basic' home care - up to \$7500 per year
- 'intermediate' home care – for support needs of up to \$30,000 per year

Both levels will be provided on top of the current EACH and CACP funding arrangement that many participants are already receiving.

## Consumer Directed Care

As part of the reforms, new packages from 1 July 2013 will be available on a consumer directed care basis, UCCO's model of Consumer Directed Care will ultimately give care recipients more:

- Flexibility – you decide when and how your services are delivered
- Choice – you decide which service providers deliver your care needs
- Control – you decide how your package is spent and on what

A good example of this is the way in which you might use a taxi service. Consumer Directed Care gives you control over budget to use a taxi, the flexibility to decide when and where you are picked up (and to go wherever you like) and the choice of which taxi service you want to use.

The most important thing to remember is that the choice is YOURS! There's no doubt Consumer Directed Care will give people a greater say in how their services are delivered, but choosing this path is entirely optional. For many people, having an organisation like UCCO to guide and manage their package for them makes life a lot easier and, if that's your preferred option, then that's fine too!

The good news is that, whether you choose to take up Consumer Directed Care entirely, in part or not at all, UCCO will be with you every step of the way.

# NEWS & VIEWS FROM THE

THE Committee's first forum for the year - I do it MY way! – was a great success and it was great to see both newer members and long-time members roll up their sleeves to bring it to life.

Held at the Brandon Park office on 4 July, the forum featured presentations on the move towards self-directed care in both Aged Care and Disability services. Hosted by UCCO Program Managers Rachael Scott (Disability Services) and David McCoy (Ageing Services), the presentations helped explain what the changes mean and reassured participants that UCCO would continue to adapt its supportive role to best suit the needs of those who require assistance with the management of their care. For more information, turn to page 8. Padma Saripalli, (Participant Committee Chair) again kept the show running as MC (and "jack-of-all-trades" behind the scenes), while Kevin Nunan skilfully facilitated participant input.

This is a very important part of Participant Committee forums, as the information collected is fed back to the organisation. Committee recommendations are then used to further improve practice to provide better outcomes for participants.

Bernadette Clancy, a 2012 new member, rose to the challenge of summing up the trends of participant input on the day.

Other new members joined together with longer standing members to register and greet participants; help prepare and serve a lovely morning tea and tasty lunch and assist at tables to make sure that everyone had an opportunity for input.

The topic generated a strong response from those in attendance, with many indicating that the government's move towards self-direct care was confusing and a little threatening.

Both UCCO and the Participant Committee have already responded to the feedback and have committed to providing more information on this important topic and the changes progress. You can expect to see more information in The Bugle, the UCCO website and via your Partnership Workers. Watch this space for more information! While it was great to see plenty of support from UCCO staff who helped out and joined in wherever there was a need, it was particularly special see so many participants in attendance. Participant contributions to events like this are extremely important and the feedback we received about the forum itself will help us stage an even better event next time!



*Above and below: Scenes from July's 'I Do It MY Way' Forum.*



# PARTICIPANT COMMITTEE

## LS Commissioner visit

Two representatives from the office of the Legal Services Commissioner recently took some time to visit the Participant Committee.

The Legal Services Commissioner took over the role of the Legal Ombudsman in 2005 and deals with public complaints about services they may have received from lawyers and other legal professionals. Legal Services Commissioner Education and Outreach Adviser, Bradley Roberts, and Assistant Manager, Tina Stagliano, attended the Participant Committee's August meeting to share some important information about the service and the process for lodging complaints.

Essentially, complaints can be divided into two different types:

### *Complaints about costs*

- can be made after paying all money, part of the money, or no money
- must be lodged within 60 days if accounts are not itemised
- complaints about accounts that are itemised must be lodged within 30 days

### *Complaints about behaviour/service (ie unsatisfactory conduct or professional misconduct)*

- may be lodged up to six years later.
- For complaints about both areas, the financial part of the complaint must be lodged within 60 days.

The Legal Services Commissioner is an independent body and a FREE service. For more information, contact:

Legal Services Commissioner

[www.lsc.vic.gov.au](http://www.lsc.vic.gov.au)

Phone: 1300 796 344 (local call)

Fax: 03 9679 8101

Mail: GPO Box 492 Melbourne VIC 3001

Address: Level 9, 330 Collins Street,

Melbourne VIC 3000

Email: [admin@lsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:admin@lsc.vic.gov.au)



*Bradley Roberts meets the Participant Committee*

## Upcoming dates

During the lead up to Christmas we will all be celebrating some significant events. Remember to mark these dates on your calendar:

- 1 October: International Day of Older Persons
- 10 October: World Mental Health Day
- 14 - 20 October: Carers Week
- 23 October: UCCO Annual Report to the Community
- 3 December: International Day of Persons with Disabilities

## Want to help?

- Are there any topics or issues you would like the committee to address?
- Can you occasionally help the committee in its work to benefit all UCCO participants?

If so, please talk to your Partnership Worker, or contact us on:

Email: [parcom@ucco.org.au](mailto:parcom@ucco.org.au)

Telephone: 1300 651 463



# IRIS DAWSON: HER STORY



I was born on the 1 July, 1930 at the Werrimull Bush Nursing Hospital, and have a twin sister who was born 20 minutes later. My family (which included an older brother and sister) lived on a farm at Karrawinna in the Mallee but my father died when I was six years old. After years of drought, my mother could not keep the farm going so we moved to Mildura in 1939 where she ran a boarding house. Apart from regularly swimming in the river nearby, one of the most significant things I remember from the move was having running water to brush my teeth, instead of relying on the half cup of water we were rationed to on the farm. Great luxury!

Mildura was my home for many years until I went to Melbourne to finish my Pharmacy degree. From there, I did mainly locum work in the country before meeting my husband in Bunyip in 1959. We were married in October 1959. Stan was from England and had come to Australia in 1951 intending to go on to Canada and South Africa... but he never did! He remained in Australia for the rest of his life, apart from one short visit to England to see his parents. In 1998, Stan developed arterial disease and his right leg was operated on. One morning we could smell gangrene (once smelt, never forgotten).

The nurse attending Stan couldn't smell it, but we could. His leg was amputated below the knee and later, in a second operation, above the knee. Ten days later his left leg died and was amputated, also above the knee and Stan spent four weeks in rehabilitation but we were not given any advice or information on the type of help that may have been available to us, so this was a very busy time.

My husband was marvellous. He said, "I'm 75 years of age and have to learn a completely new way of life". It was many months before I learned we could get some help from the council and it was probably a couple of years later when someone suggested UnitingCare Community Options might help.

Our Partnership Worker, Lorraine Murray, has been wonderful, particularly during Stan's last year of life. She helped facilitate an electric armchair which lifted him into a sitting position so I didn't have to lift him up. She also arranged an electric wheelchair and Stan soon became well known around the neighbourhood as he travelled up and down our nearby streets.

Stan died in 2011, one day before his 87th birthday and I'll always be very grateful for the help we received from UnitingCare Community Options in the last year of Stan's life and for the care I am receiving now for myself.

I have always kept myself busy and involved in various projects. I was on the Blue Cross Animal Shelter committee and, in 2000, I was awarded the Australian Sports medal for my volunteer work with the Pony Club.

Now I am a member of the UnitingCare Community Options Participant Committee and, because of the help that both Stan and I have received, I am happy to help in any way possible.

# A CARER'S TALE

FOR many people thrust into a caring role, being aware of what type of help is available to you can be crucial. When Peter Vassilou developed vascular dementia, his wife, Athena, was unwilling to put him into residential care and bravely took on the role herself.

"The hospital recommended Peter be placed in a transitional care facility but he would have been too confused in yet another facility - it would have been the end of him and I knew it would be best for him at home," she said.

But Peter's condition continued to deteriorate and he was soon forgetting to eat, experiencing frequent falls (even breaking his hip) and having frequent bouts of illness. As Athena struggled to cope with the round the clock care he needed her own health began to deteriorate and felt isolated.

"It was affecting my health. I didn't know what help I could get and was just exhausted trying to keep up with the showering, dressing, cooking, shopping and so on."

Fortunately, Athena was referred to UCCO's Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre (CRCC) during a hospital visit and soon made contact to find out what support she could receive.

After an assessment, the CRCC team immediately arranged Sunday respite so Athena could attend Church (something very dear to her) and referred her to the Manningham Centre where George was soon attending a full day every week, providing Mary with a valuable opportunity to visit friends and do the shopping.

The team also put Athena in touch with a carer support group - a group of local carers who get together once a month to share stories and learn from each other's experiences which has also provided extra support. As a provider of short-term and



*Athena (left) with Partnership Worker, CRCC Ageing, Kathryn Seeger*

and emergency respite solutions, CRCC has made an immediate difference to Peter and Athena's lives. They have now been referred to Villa Maria for short-term assistance with respite. Finally, CRCC and Villa Maria (in conjunction with the family) have helped purchase a light-weight wheelchair for Peter, which has given him the mobility to attend more family gatherings and even occasionally accompany Athena to pick up the bread and milk.

Peter is now on the waiting list for an EACH package and the future is looking brighter for both of them.

"It's so much better now....I am more relaxed," said Athena.

"I know Peter has all the care he needs and I have time for myself and to get the other jobs done without pressure. It has really helped."

And her advice for those in a similar situation?

"You can't do it on your own. You might be ok for a few weeks but in the end it will make you very tired so you have to ask for help."

"When you have help you don't feel like you are alone - you know someone is there when you need it."

# Spotlight On.....

## Hospital Admission Risk Program (HARP)



Having a chronic illness is difficult to cope with at the best of times, but when that illness leads to repeated and frequent visits to hospital, life can become particularly stressful.

That's where HARP (Hospital Admission Risk Program) comes in.

Developed in the late 1990s, HARP is specifically designed to help relieve the stress of frequent hospital admissions on the patient, and ease the burden on our hospitals. It provides specialised client-centred medical care (and care coordination) at a community level via an integrated response of hospital and community services.

The program exists to:

- improve patient outcomes
- provide integrated seamless care within and across hospital /community sectors
- reduce avoidable hospital admissions and emergency department presentations
- ensure equitable access to healthcare

UCCO is just one of two organisations (outside the hospital system) partnering with Eastern Health to run the program in Melbourne's east and boasts a HARP team of three Case Management and one Social Work role.

### Who is a HARP client?

A HARP client is a person with chronic

disease and or complex needs, who is frequently presenting to hospital or at risk of doing so. This includes:

- People with chronic heart disease
- People with chronic respiratory disease
- People with diabetes
- Older people with complex needs
- People with complex psychosocial needs
- People with other chronic diseases and complex comorbidities

In fact, it is anything that increases someone's vulnerability in the community and that requires assistance to safely live independently, while addressing their chronic illness.

For HARP eligibility, clients must have had at least one emergency department presentation or hospital admission in the preceding 12 months.

### How does it work?

On most occasions, our team is alerted about the needs of their patient by Eastern Health who would have already investigated the medical issues and established whether or not a doctor needs to be involved.

Once briefed, the HARP team will contact the patient to establish the person's willingness to work with us in order to improve their circumstances. While some patients will capably decide whether HARP is needed or not, some are unable to make that decision due to their condition (eg dementia, mental health issues, extreme frailty, malnutrition etc). In these cases, the team will formulate a plan of action to ensure the person receives all the support they need to continue living in their local community. The HARP team can work with people for up to three months and, where there is a need, for a further three months. If you or someone you know could benefit from this service, help is just a phone call away. Simply call 9239 2500 and ask for the HARP worker.



# Young Carers go GaGa



THE June/July holidays presented the Young Carers with a rare opportunity to let their hair down at one of the year's biggest concert events.

A group of 16 young carers was lucky enough to take in the 'mind blowing' experience of seeing Lady GaGa in concert. Everyone was up on their feet dancing the night away as they took in the sights and sounds of one of the world's most recognisable performers.

In recent months, Young Carers also trialed something different by providing activities outside of the usual school holiday period – the first being a memorable trip to Bayside indoor rock climbing centre, where 12 young carers had the opportunity to challenge themselves (and staff!) by tackling the different levels of climbing walls and an overhead ropes course! Next, a group of primary and secondary aged young carers were invited to join hundreds of other young carers from around the state at FEST of ALL – a special event designed to help celebrate the roles of the approximate 380,000 young carers in Australia, who provide support to another person in need.

It was an opportunity to enjoy free entertainment, recognise the good work young carers do, meet others in similar situations and build support networks. FEST of ALL is funded by the Australian Government as a part of a national

campaign to recognise the contribution carers make to individuals and their community.

Our young carers also spent a day at Knox City taking in the Spiderman 3D movie and using up the rest of their energy by running through Laser Tag and checking out the arcade games at Timezone.

Last, but not least, we received a great response to our call out for any young carers interesting in forming a working group to develop a winter camp for September. The number of young carers willing to take on this extra responsibility was overwhelming and a final committee of four was developed using the high-tech 'names out of a hat' method!

Watch this space for the next edition of The Bugle for a full report on the camp.



# The Bugle

Issue 3, September 2012

## ABOUT US

UNITINGCARE Community Options is a community services organisation, dedicated to assisting people to live good lives in their own homes and communities. We have been supporting older people, people with disabilities and the unpaid carers that support them since 1987. Each year, we support around 4000 people throughout Melbourne's east and south.

Our vision is to achieve 'a good life for all' regardless of their abilities. We aim to support people in achieving the goals they have and living the life they hope for. If you know anyone who might benefit from our support, please ask them to contact us.

## FEEDBACK

We're always looking for ways to improve our service so please let us know if you have any feedback you'd like to share with us. If you have an issue or complaint, please raise the matter with your Partnership Worker who will raise the complaint with their Manager if they are unable to help. Issues that remain unresolved will be dealt with by Senior Management. You can also ask for support from an external advocate. See your Participant Information Pack for more information.

## CONTACTING US

### Direct2Care

Freecall: 1300 121 121

### Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre

Disability: 1800 052 222

Ageing: 1800 059 059

### Head Office

Ground Floor, Building 5  
Brandon Office Park  
530-540 Springvale Road  
Glen Waverley VIC 3150

Tel.: (03) 9239 2500

Fax: (03) 9239 2522

### Website

[www.ucco.org.au](http://www.ucco.org.au)

### Interpreters Available On Request

ΔΙΑΘΕΤΟΝΤΑΙ ΔΙΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΣ  
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For assistance, please call the Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450.