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VillaNews

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED



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spirits in Lilydale

VILLA MARIA

www.villamaria.com.au

CEO Message

“If you don’t create change, change will create you” - Anon.

This year looks set to be one in which Villa Maria will help shape, and be required to adapt to, a changing landscape across senior, disability and education services.

There is enormous change afoot in terms of policy and the legislative environment which will affect our three service areas, particularly in senior services, for decades to come.

As you may be aware, on January 21 the Productivity Commission released its draft report, Caring for Older Australians. Villa Maria made a submission to the inquiry in July last year, outlining our perspective as a service provider and that of more than 2,500 service users and carers who we had engaged to share their personal experiences and future needs for support.

The Commission found Australia’s aged care system is in need of a major overhaul to meet the challenge of an ever increasing ageing population and, most importantly, to improve the wellbeing of older Australians.

The Commission is proposing many reforms to address the challenge, including a simplified ‘gateway’ into care, a flexible and individualised range of care and support services, and a government-backed Aged Care Equity scheme enabling seniors to contribute to the costs of their aged care and support.

We will also be making a submission into the Federal Government’s Issues Paper: Enhanced Prudential Regulation of Accommodation Bonds which aims to increase protections for aged care residents’ savings.

The paper explores the permitted use of bonds for meeting capital works costs and financial investments.

In disability services, the vital need for a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) continues to gain momentum.

Five of our disability services staff joined around 500 people in a public rally supporting the scheme in Geelong on February 10.

As a continued and active supporter of the scheme, I urge you all to visit the new campaign website www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au and if possible, attend one of several public information sessions to be held across Victoria from March to May explaining the draft Productivity Commission report, which was released on February 28.

And finally on the educational front, Villa Maria will also be making a submission to the Review of Funding for Schooling. This Federal Government review will look at funding and regulation across the government and non-government schooling sectors.



It is the first review of its type in Australia since 1973, and will no doubt result in some major changes across the educational sector that may affect St Paul’s College well into the future.

Closer to home, we have been engaging stakeholders across the organisation and are well advanced in reviewing our own strategic planning process in preparation for the next three years.

Through the implementation of Villa Maria’s 2008-2011 Strategic Plan, we have continued to successfully develop our organisational and service capacity and capability. The 2011-2014 Strategic Plan aims to bring about our desired future and further embed our person centred philosophy in all we do and say.

All in all, 2011 looks set to be an exciting year, full of change and the opportunity to be involved in shaping the future to provide better outcomes for the people we support. I look forward to sharing the journey with you in the months ahead.

Valerie J Lyons
Chief Executive Officer

Our Values: Compassion, Accountability, Respect and Courage.

Strengthening community partnerships and building sustainable communities

Community partnerships and volunteer engagement are a vital means to ensuring not-for-profit organisations such as Villa Maria continue to provide quality services to the people they support.

Over two days in December 2010, eight employees from the Building Commission and Plumbing Industry Commission and 12 executives from MLC & NAB Wealth Technology volunteered their time to plant an indigenous garden at the Bundoora aged care facility.

National training organisation Conservation Volunteers Australia helped to support and educate the volunteers during the day, which involved the removal of ground weeds and planting of locally indigenous plants and a range of trees, shrubs and wildflowers, funded and supplied by Banyule City Council and LaTrobe Wildlife Sanctuary.

Villa Maria Chief Executive Officer Valerie Lyons said it was hoped the project would be the first of many across Villa Maria's

other 42 sites, encouraging volunteers to get involved with the organisation and enhance the surroundings for the benefit of children and adults with a disability, older people, and their carers.

"The health and wellbeing benefits of gardens and gardening, particularly in aged care, have been widely researched and it is anticipated that our low-care residents at Bundoora will be actively involved in the long-term maintenance of the indigenous area," Ms Lyons said.

Muriel Marczynski, Director People & Culture and Information Management from the Building Commission and Plumbing Industry Commission, said the volunteers enjoyed working hard to create a beautiful, sustainable garden for Villa Maria's residents, family and friends to enjoy.

"A fantastic sense of accomplishment was felt at the end of the day, with all volunteers agreeing they look forward to

returning and contributing again," Ms Marczynski said.

"Villa Maria was chosen by the Commissions as a worthy organisation to support via volunteer work and donations of goods."

Glen Iris Hire donated the use of working tools to the project including wheelbarrows and chainsaws.

"We are very interested in contributing towards community projects and thought this project sounded very worthwhile," said manager Rob Sprackman.

There are many avenues for individuals, organisations and businesses to support Villa Maria's work through volunteer projects such as this, sponsorship programs, or financial or in-kind support.

For more information contact Villa Maria Development Manager John Gorman on 9855 7679.

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Building Commission and Plumbing Industry Commission volunteers hard at work

Former St Paul's student an inspiration to Australians

The 2011 Senior Australian of the Year has credited Villa Maria's St Paul's College for laying the foundations for his inspirational life and career achievements.

Professor Ron McCallum AO, a law professor and passionate equal rights campaigner, who is blind, was an inaugural student of Villa Maria's St Paul's College (formerly St Paul's School for the Blind) in Kew from 1957 to 1962.

St Paul's College is now a specialist school providing education for children aged 5 to 18 years with a wide range of needs including intellectual, physical, profound multiple and sensory disabilities including autism and complex medical needs.

Prof McCallum spoke with Villa Maria a week after winning his prestigious award on January 26.

"Without the superb education which I received from Bill Holligan in grades 3 and 4, and from the Late Mrs Esther Eather in years 5 to 8, I would not have achieved what it has been my fortune to achieve," Prof McCallum said.

Prof McCallum, who was the foundation Professor in Industrial Law at the University of Sydney and served five years as Dean of Law from 2002, said he had



Professor Ron McCallum

"very fond memories" of St Paul's, which had given him an "extraordinary basis of education."

"Mrs Eather said, 'Ron, I think you're going to end up a lawyer'. She taught me public speaking and debating. She said (to students), 'you are going to have to be ambassadors for blind people in Australia and around the world and you must learn to speak clearly and to dress appropriately'," Prof McCallum said.

"And now, being Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, I have ended up an ambassador around the world and when I get up in Geneva and speak I think of her words."

Prof McCallum said he also vividly remembered Brother Patrick O'Neill, principal of St Paul's College when it was established.

"Br O'Neill was a very interesting man and I certainly owe him a great deal for starting the school and I think those who are still there owe him a great deal because of his philosophy to



Brother Patrick O'Neill with some St Paul's students

never to turn a child away," Prof McCallum said.

"I'd like to tell the current students of St Paul's that things have improved for we persons with disabilities in the last 50 years since I was a student. My hope is that people approach we people with disabilities in a more thoughtful way and treat us more inclusively. I simply say to my sisters and brothers, 'go out and grab the world with both your hands'."

As Senior Australian of the Year, Prof McCallum also had a message for older people supported by Villa Maria in residential care and out in the community.

"I like to think of being a senior Australian as at the 'wisdom end' of the life spectrum. I wish everyone who is a fellow senior well."

Pet therapy brings joy to residents of Austin Street

The adoption of a puppy at Villa Maria's Austin Street has seen amazing reactions from residents and some generous offers of support from the community.

Austin Street staff member Eric brought two Jack Russell x Chihuahua puppies in for a visit with the young residents, who have high level complex care needs (including Acquired Brain Injury), on January 20.

The simple action of touching the puppy's skin brought tears to the eyes of one resident, Corey, who requires 24 hour-a-day support.

So successful was the visit that Austin Street Manager Jenni Williams said they now will adopt one of the puppies to live at the Alphington home permanently to act as a form of pet therapy for the eight residents.

"They were taken into residents' rooms and into the community areas and we (the staff) assisted their interaction with residents, putting them in their laps or up to their faces and helping them to pat them," Ms Williams said.

"Corey is normally not hugely reactive to his environment but he was quite animated, visually tracking the puppy's movement and trying to verbalise. He was smiling a lot, patting them, and he became tearful when I held one of the puppies up to his cheek."

A story on the puppies, which aired on Channel 7 on February 2, struck a chord with viewers, some of whom answered Villa Maria's call for support to help with the ongoing costs of caring for the adopted puppy. One viewer, Louise O'Hara, said she felt touched by the story and compelled to offer support.



Austin Street resident Julian cuddles up to the puppy

"Animals are a wonderful way to help people with any type of disability to express themselves. It's so beautiful to see their smile and watch their face light up. Puppies have so much love to give and unconditional love at that."

If you would like to help sponsor the puppy, please call Cassie Maher on 9855 7729.

Cultural connections in residential care

Ensuring residents feel connected to their cultural heritage is vitally important to staff at each of Villa Maria's three residential aged care facilities.

With 12 nationalities represented among 91 residents at Bundoora, 17 nationalities represented among 42 residents at Villa O'Neill, and nine nationalities among 60 residents at Berwick, there is much scope to acknowledge a variety of backgrounds in fun ways, including Cultural Days.

Particularly popular was Australia Day celebrations held on January 26, where residents and their families tucked in to lamingtons and a traditional Aussie BBQ, had a sing along to some Australian tunes and took part in an Aussie quiz.



Bundoora resident Neville Sayers and his wife Kathy enjoy Australia Day festivities

Respite for working carers a "lifesaver" at Villa Maria

A new program at Villa Maria's Avebury House is building on vital respite for carers and stimulation and interaction for their loved ones.

For the past six years, Avebury House in Berwick has been providing a day respite service to meet the individual needs of working carers living or caring for someone who is frail aged or has dementia in the southern metropolitan region.

On January 11, Avebury House launched its Out and About program, which sees about ten people who are frail aged or have dementia picked up from their homes by bus and taken on outings in the local area.

Avebury House team leader Cathy Kenny said the Out and About program – including pub lunches, scenic drives and visits to local attractions - was an extension of Avebury House's existing in-house activities program which included theme days, arts and crafts, and cooking.

"The aim of the weekly outing is so that the carer has a scheduled time where they know the person they're caring for will be out, so it gives them a day to do something for themselves, such as going out to lunch or meeting up with friends," Ms Kenny said.

"It also gives their loved ones an interest and an outing and they benefit from meeting other people and developing further friendships."

Berwick resident Gordon McLeish said discovering Avebury House soon after his wife Marian was diagnosed with frontal lobe dementia two years ago had been a "lifesaver".

Marian began Avebury House two days each week and then later five days, which allowed Gordon to work full time.

"Without Avebury House I would have had to resign from my job and at my age, 62, the prospects



Gordon McLeish and his wife Marian

of being rehired would have been minimal. I don't know what I would have done without Avebury House, it's been invaluable," Gordon said.

Although Marian, aged 60, has been in full-time care at Villa Maria Berwick aged care facility since December, Mr McLeish felt the support at Avebury House had given Marian a better quality of life.

Community care package boost

Villa Maria is thrilled to announce the delivery of an extra 94 community care packages to frail older people across Victoria and southern New South Wales, enabling them to remain living independently at home and active within their communities.

Villa Maria received the largest allocation of community care packages among Victorian community aged care providers in the 2009-10 Aged Care Approval Rounds (ACAR),

announced by the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing Mark Butler on December 8.

The extra packages mean Villa Maria will soon provide a total of 920 care packages including 815 Community Aged Care Packages (CACP), 61 Extended Aged Care at Home Packages (EACH) and 37 Extended Aged Care at Home Dementia (EACH D) packages across metropolitan and regional Victoria and the Riverina region of New South Wales.

In December 2010, Villa Maria's Community Services was also given Quality Improvement Community Services Accreditation (QICSA) by the Quality Improvement Council Limited (QIC).

The QICSA process involved a detailed review of organisation procedure, systems and documentation against relevant industry based standards (Health & Community Services Standards) and development of a program of continuous quality improvement.

Raising the bar in respite care

Each and every day at Villa Maria, we see the enormous amount of love and dedication from families who are raising children with a disability.

To support them in continuing their vital role, Villa Maria provides high quality children's respite services to give parents and siblings a much-needed break.

A recent donation of \$13,000 from Variety for a playground at Villa Maria's respite house in Lilydale is a fantastic example of how improvements to infrastructure can have a dramatic impact on children's lives.

Lilydale Respite Coordinator Marita Carew said the 25 children supported at Lilydale had "fallen in love" with the new outdoor playground.



the new playground at Villa Maria's Lilydale Children's Respite House.

Variety volunteers Gerrard Parkinson and Graham Reynolds chose Villa Maria's children's respite houses because they wanted to improve the quality of life of children with disabilities.

Ms Carew also thanked the Melbourne Magistrate's Court for their \$2,000 contribution, and local Kilsyth businesses Mighty Mini Diggers, We Blow Landscaping and Awesome Playgrounds for offering

landscaping and playground installation services free of charge.

She also thanked staff member Graham Hilton who designed and created a cement crocodile called Daisy to live in the garden, which the children love.

If you would like to help make a positive difference to the lives of children with disabilities and their families call 9855 7600 or visit www.villamaria.com.au

Quiet achiever gets some well deserved recognition

Villa Maria in-house architect Angela Roennfeldt's passion for improving housing options for people of all abilities has seen her win a 2010 National Disability Award.

The awards, part of the Australian Government's celebration of International Day of People with Disability (December 3), celebrate and acknowledge the achievements and contributions made by individuals with a disability to the community, and recognise those who have contributed to the disability sector.

Ms Roennfeldt, who has been Design Manager with Villa Maria for four years, said she felt "quite humble about being the successful recipient when there are many other equally worthy people working across Australia with the common goal of seeing accessibility features incorporated into all mainstream housing."

Ms Roennfeldt has lent her expertise to innovative projects across Villa Maria that have helped improve the lives of older people and people with a



Angela with Austin Street resident Sarah

disability, including ten young people with acquired brain injuries who are living at Villa Maria's Austin Street. Through Angela's work they now have greater control over their environment.

Congratulations Angela and well done!

Thank you

Villa Maria and the people we support would like to extend a very sincere 'thank you' to those who contributed to our 2010 Christmas Hamper appeal.

We have had some very heartening feedback from more than 350 hamper recipients, some of whom have had a particularly tough year and cried with happiness upon receiving their hampers.

Your generosity helped us to ease the financial burden felt by these individuals and families and enabled them to better enjoy their Christmas Day.

We are very grateful for the generous support of main donors: 3AW Drive Program, SKF Australia, Premium Health, Flavour Makers, Jonny's of Kew, Clover Valley Fine Foods, Australian Bearings, Bearing Dynamics, Des Munday and Son, The Modern Group, Commonwealth Bank – Brandon



Santa's little helpers' who assisted the Christmas Hamper committee in packing the hampers in December.

Park, and the Building Commission & Plumbing Industry Commission.

We look forward to your continued support in the year ahead.

NDIS update



National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) campaigners have begun the New Year with a new campaign logo, website, and an even stronger resolve to ensure the proposed disability insurance scheme becomes a reality.

Villa Maria is a strong supporter of the NDIS – a proposed taxpayer funded scheme, similar to Medicare, which would provide equitable cover to everyone who has or acquires a significant disability to help cover costs of essential care, support, therapy, equipment, etc.

National Disability Services launched the new NDIS website on January 26, which includes clear information on the details of a NDIS, personal stories about the people it could help if introduced, plus ways you can get involved in the campaign if you wish.

If you would like support a NDIS it's very simple to take action.

Simply visit:

www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au and sign the petition to support people with a disability and their families to achieve independence.

Athelstan progresses



Inside the Athelstan display suite

Villa Maria is excited to announce that excavation works to the Athelstan Camberwell site – our first major retirement village development – are due to commence shortly.

Sales Manager Dianne Lane said apartment sales were proceeding well, with a display suite now open at 391 Camberwell Road where visitors can preview a scale model and individual apartment plans.

"The display suite also features an example kitchen and bathroom showcasing the high quality appliances, fittings and finishes that will be installed to each apartment," Dianne said.

"Each generously proportioned apartment is thoughtfully designed to accommodate an independent lifestyle, with spacious community facilities to entertain family and friends."

Please call Dianne on 1800 799 087 to make an appointment to visit the suite.

VILLA MARIA

Villa Maria Society
Registered Office: 6 Studley Park Road Kew Victoria 3101
Private Bag 20 Kew Victoria 3101
T: (03) 9855 7600 Freecall 1800 036 377 F: (03) 9855 7899
E: villamaria@villamaria.com.au W: www.villamaria.com.au

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Villa News:
We welcome your feedback and contributions to Villa News. Contact Cassie Maher on (03) 9855 7600 or email cassie.maher@villamaria.com.au