



ISSUE 30 /SUMMER 2010

VILLANNEWS

The competition heats up among Epicor players

Corporate golfers swing into action

Villa Maria's 2010 Charity Golf Day on October 25 was a huge success, with corporate golf enthusiasts making their drive count to help us create brighter futures for young people with a disability and their families.

More than 100 people lent their support as players in 27 golf teams and 38 companies generously sponsored or supported the second annual event at one of Victoria's premier golf courses, the Southern Golf Club, in Keysborough.

The sun shone brightly as players teed off to raise more than \$70,000 for two very important Villa Maria services: The 'my future my choice' initiative at Austin Street, Alphington, a purpose-specific home for young people with high level complex care needs (including Acquired Brain Injury), and Villa Maria's Children's Respite Services, which provide safe, fun and enjoyable experiences for children with a disability aged six to 18 and support for their families.

Villa Maria Chief Executive Officer Valerie Lyons said the widespread support of companies, and in particular gold sponsors Reflex Technology Group (RTG) and Epicor, was a fantastic example of how corporate donors and industry supporters were giving back so generously to their communities.

Ms Lyons said some of the money raised will go towards capital works at Villa Maria's children's respite houses in Croydon, Lilydale, Wheelers Hill and Kew so they can better cater for children with physical support needs through new equipment and home modifications.

"Regular respite is a vital means to ensuring families can stay together and gives parents much needed time to re-energise and focus attention on other members of their family. And importantly, it gives children with a disability an outlet in which to participate in a range of fun and social activities. Aside from our respite houses, Villa Maria runs flexible respite options which

include exciting weekend and holiday activities, camps and outings," Ms Lyons said.

"Villa Maria's capacity to continue to provide quality programs relies on the generosity of our supporters through fundraising activities such as the Villa Maria Charity Golf Day. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all our sponsors for their continued support, and to much-loved Australian announcer Pete Smith, whose trademark voice we were lucky enough to secure for MC duties for the second year running."

Craig Charlton, Senior VP Operations for Epicor Software Asia-Pacific, said it was an "absolute privilege" to sponsor the Villa Maria Charity Golf Day.

After a long day of golf, participants enjoyed some post golf drinks, sponsored by Villa Maria's first major retirement village development Athelstan Camberwell, and a delicious dinner sponsored by Coady Valuers.

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A year of growth, empowerment and achievement

At Villa Maria, empowering individuals to lead a life full of choice, inclusion and happiness is at the heart of everything we do.

And while we have long been dedicated to supporting people to achieve this through our quality services, I feel that 2010 in particular has been a year full of significant achievements, which will indeed change the lives of the people we support now and into the future.

As many of you know, August 18 marked the beginning of a brighter future for ten young people with acquired brain injuries and their families with the opening of Villa Maria's Austin Street residence in Alphington – Victoria's first purpose-built home for young people with high level, complex care needs who would otherwise be living in aged care facilities.

I hope these young people and their families enjoy their first Christmas in their new home, and many more joyful occasions in the years to come.

This year has also seen the start of exciting new beginnings for a different demographic of people seeking a place to call home.

In keeping with our commitment to provide important services where they are needed, Villa Maria has embarked on its first major retirement village development, Athelstan Camberwell.

Excavation works will commence in February 2011, with construction

of the 66 apartments expected to be completed in 18 months.

Developed in conjunction with LU Simon Builders, the contemporary and elegantly designed independent living apartments will be home to those seeking a conscious lifestyle choice of independence, freedom and peace of mind.

The Athelstan display suite is now open at 391 Camberwell Rd, Camberwell. I encourage you to visit the suite, or call sales manager Dianne Lane on 9882 5800 to find out more.

While Villa Maria's achievements can be measured in many ways – through industry benchmarks, financial targets, public recognition and awards, innovative service delivery and practice – the most meaningful measure, and the one truly worth celebrating, is the difference we made to a person's life; that through our vision, mission, spirit and values we enabled people to shape and lead their own lives.

There have been many examples of this throughout 2010: from the intensive interaction program being implemented for the young students at St Paul's College; to carer support services providing interesting and varied opportunities for carers to connect back with life; to special events held throughout the year, such as Dreams Day, to enable people with a disability to focus on achieving their personal aspirations, or the Be Inspired and Spring Festival

events to promote positive ageing and community participation among older people.

It is with great pride and appreciation that I reflect on these programs and activities, none of which would be possible without the commitment and dedication of our staff and volunteers and the generosity of our individual donors and corporate supporters. To each of you, my sincere thanks.

As the year nears its end, I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of everyone within the Villa Maria community, to wish you all a happy and joyous Christmas and a safe and restful holiday season, and I look forward to sharing with you all that we can achieve together in 2011 and beyond.

Valerie J Lyons
Chief Executive Officer



Kevin, Hilda and Valerie wave goodbye as they leave Albert Park Lake .

Adventurous ageing

Villa Maria joined peak aged and community care body Aged & Community Care Victoria (ACCV) and other leading providers to organise a Harley Davidson ride from Albert Park Lake to Federation Square as part of their Be Inspired! campaign on Sunday, October 3.

Bundoora aged care resident Brother Kevin Nangle, 87, joined fellow resident Hilda White, aged 93, to ride in a motorbike side car along with Villa Maria CEO Valerie Lyons.

The campaign, run in conjunction with the 2010 Seniors Festival, aimed to encourage older people to achieve their dreams and keep active within the community.

Brother Nangle described the bike ride, shared with other seniors and CEOs from participating aged care facilities, as "quite fascinating and most enjoyable".

"I've been on a motorcycle before but a much smaller model – a little two stroke – which was nothing compared to the Harley Davidson," Brother Nangle said.

"It wasn't a scary experience but I'm thankful I never went down the 'back of the bike' avenue, shall we say!"

Brother Nangle said he could easily relate to the idea behind Be Inspired!

Since becoming a resident at Bundoora two years ago, he has learned how to operate a digital camera, and how to use the computer, with the help of a student from nearby Parade College, where he once taught.

"I was born in 1923; almost before radio, certainly before television, and a long time before computers, but you have to embrace these things and join in with them. I have great confidence in youth and I find young people tremendously helpful.

You can be inspired by them and learn how to follow their lead."

Brother Nangle, who keeps active by playing lawn bowls and gardening, said it was important to remember old age was a privilege, not a right.

"For various reasons not everybody is lucky enough to reach this age. Stagnation and sitting in a room feeling sorry for yourself is not the intended reward for growing old. Life is to be enjoyed and things are to be done and achieved, for the satisfaction of just seeing flowers grow or tapping the right key on the computer!"

Villa Maria CEO Valerie Lyons said Brother Nangle and Hilda White were fantastic examples of aged and community care residents and clients proving that ageing could be a positive phase of life and a time when people continued to achieve their dreams.

"I would like to congratulate all of the organisations involved in this positive event and particularly to Brother Nangle and Hilda, who are terrific representatives of Villa Maria and all seniors of Victoria."

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The Christmas gift that keeps on giving



Professional auctioneer Michael Fry of Nelson Alexander and Marketing and Multimedia Officer Veronica Lyons with the most expensive piece of the night *Sociable by the Beach*. Created by St Paul's teacher James O'Brien, it sold for \$2200

There is still time to purchase a 2011 Villa Maria Art Calendar – a great Christmas gift for family and friends – to help support Villa Maria's art therapy programs.

The second annual Art Calendar Launch, Exhibition and Auction on September 22 at the George Paton Gallery was a great night, with supporters turning out to bid on colourful and vibrant artworks created and donated by staff, volunteers, established artists and people who access Villa Maria services.

More than \$5000 was raised through silent and loud auctions and there are still plenty of calendars available to purchase to raise even more funds for Villa Maria's art therapy programs.

White Road's Wendy Elkington said the centre's Wednesday group was "extremely excited" that their vibrant multi-media artwork, *Napoleon the Peacock*, had been chosen to appear in the calendar.

The White Road Activity and Respite Centre runs a range of

programs and activities for adults living in the East with an acquired physical disability, such as a brain injury or stroke, a visual or physical impairment, or who are frail aged.

"About six members of the group lent their own area of expertise to the peacock creation, whether it was colour coordinating or sticking on feathers," Wendy said.

"Art therapy is something that the people we support really love and enjoy doing and it enhances their day-to-day skills in many ways."

Yarra Ranges resident Rhonda Pels, who had a stroke more than two years ago, had carefully stuck on a large number of sequins to the peacock creation.

Before her stroke Rhonda had been a top golfer and accomplished cook, but is now enjoying her talents in art and craft and completing puzzles.

Wendy said White Road's four dedicated staff members and two volunteers had also chipped in to help create the artwork and were



Napoleon the Peacock



contemplating new art therapy activities to run following proceeds from the art calendar sales (\$20 each) and auction.

To view and purchase the calendar visit www.villamaria.com.au or call 9855 7600.

Villa Maria's residential facilities enjoy an exciting October

Villa O'Neill in Prahran was filled with exciting sights, smells and sounds from across the world when the annual Spring Festival was held on October 6.

The festivities included a smorgasbord of exciting cuisine, live entertainment, and fun activities.

Lifestyle coordinator Jo Bozin said it was important to acknowledge each of the 42 residents' 17 different cultural backgrounds because it gave them back a sense of identity.

"It fosters a relationship where the residents realise they are important to us (staff) and that their cultures are important too."

The day was a chance for local residents to pop in and say hello, and for residents at Villa Maria's other aged care homes in Berwick and Bundoora to come and see where their peers lived and what they experienced.

Meanwhile, residents at Villa Maria Berwick and people supported by Avebury House respite service got up close and personal with some cute and cuddly creatures on October 27.

The Myuna Farm, a public community farm in the south-east of Melbourne, made a special two-hour visit to Berwick to give residents, carers and respite guests the opportunity to pat and interact with animals such as guinea pigs, rabbits, lambs and goats.

Lifestyle coordinator Ester O'Brien said the experience, organised by Avebury House, gave residents in particular "much joy and pleasure".

"The residents don't really get a chance to go out to these types of places so it's about bringing the community into the facility. They just loved the animals and were all smiling and happy. It's a tactile experience for them as well."



Jo Bozin (centre) with her mum Eileen and daughter Jessica



George Chudleigh enjoys the farm visit

Corporate golfers swing into action (cont.)



The winning team from RTG

And as for the champions of the fairway...

The four-member team from RTG took out first place with a winning score of 57.25 (total handicap of 8.75) each securing themselves a \$200 gift voucher for lunch for two at a Yarra Valley winery. Other prizes included an Apple iPhone from Optus, and the use of a luxurious Audi A5 Cabriolet for a weekend of style thanks to Audi Centre Brighton.

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A new home in time for Christmas



Care and wellbeing assistant Anne Octigan

This Christmas will mark the first festive season celebrated by Carinya in its new home at Lysterfield.

The team moved from Wantirna South, where they had been since 1996, to the Palmerston Rd property in Lysterfield in early October.

Program coordinator Melanie Allsop said the move would see Carinya continue to provide services to people with dementia in

a homelike environment as part of the community, which was the way of the future. "The large grounds, modern appliances, decor and space give people opportunities to feel relaxed and safe while they spend time with us," Melanie said.

"Our guests and carers are very happy with our spacious new home. We had an open house prior to reopening with a fabulous response of over 60 carers and guests enjoying afternoon tea and guided tours with a staff member."

A caring practice evolves

Since Villa Maria was established as the Catholic Braille Writers Association in 1907, pastoral care has been delivered to thousands of people, offering comfort and companionship, spiritual and emotional support and encouragement, and helping to reconnect people with what gives life meaning and value.

Maureen O'Sullivan is one of Villa Maria's two dedicated pastoral care coordinators who are committed to offering this support to residents, their families and Villa Maria staff, regardless of their individual religious backgrounds or spiritual beliefs.

As Villa Maria moves into the future, Maureen has recognised the need to train more people in the skills of pastoral care in order to reach as many people as possible from increasingly diverse backgrounds.

Since December last year, Maureen has been developing a Pastoral Care Volunteer Program in a bid to recruit volunteer pastoral care workers and increase pastoral awareness.

A volunteer information session on September 28 garnered an extremely positive reaction with eight people undertaking an



Maureen O'Sullivan (left) and pastoral care recipient Imelda

interactive, four-week training program developed by Maureen that commenced on October 27.

Maureen said the volunteers needed to share Villa Maria's general values of compassion, accountability, respect and courage, as well as being attentive listeners, grounded in their own spirituality and sensitive to others needs.

The volunteers will be trained in various areas including grief and loss issues, team building and communication.

"We are a Catholic organisation but we are open to multicultural faiths, so we would love some volunteers from various multi-cultural backgrounds," Maureen said.

Pastoral care recipient Imelda, who accesses Villa Maria's Eastern Community Services respite, said she and her mother were grateful for the support of Maureen following the death of her father in June 2009.

"As Mum's carer, it was hard for me to grieve. Thanks to Maureen's listening ear and caring response, I was given the space to at least attend to some of my own grief, and feel like a human being by being able to share my feelings with her and offload without being judged," Imelda said.

To access or find out more about pastoral care at Villa Maria call 9855 7675 or 9800 7269 or email pastoral.care@villamaria.com.au

Villa Maria makes voice heard to support National Disability Insurance Scheme

On October 17, Villa Maria and other campaigners for the introduction of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) received their strongest indication yet that it may become a reality.

The Victorian Government, along with the Opposition, declared its support, announcing it would urge the Federal Government to develop a NDIS when the Productivity Commission completes a report on its viability early next year.

National Disability and Carer Alliance Executive Director Kirsten Deane said the announcements were significant because "reform of this magnitude would require a high level of coordination and cooperation between the Commonwealth and the States".

The news followed a significant Doorstop for Disability action rally at 1 Treasury Place on October 11. Organised by National Disability Services Vic, the event aimed to encourage the Victorian Government to commit to adequately fund services which support people with a disability in the lead up to the November 27 election.

Villa Maria representatives joined other disability services to attend the event, including Adam, a member of Villa Maria's Circle Network Committee and a Villa Maria service participant, who ensured the Shadow Minister for Community Services Mary Wooldridge heard what he had to say.

"I said to the Shadow Minister that I believe all people who are disabled should have a choice in what they want to do in life from what they want to do on weekends, where they want to work, where they want to live and who they want to go out with," Adam explained.

Adam, who is a keen public speaker through advocacy organisation VALID, said the Shadow Minister was receptive to his comments and interested in what he had to say.

"I want to teach people to speak up and speak their minds about whatever they want to do in life and to give some encouragement.

There are several opportunities for people with a disability and their family members or friends to become more involved in the NDIS



Circle Network Committee member Adam talks with Shadow Minister for Community Services Mary Wooldridge at the rally

campaign, including giving talks to community groups. If you are interested in finding out more, please call Cassie Maher on 9855 7729.

To see more photos of Adam at the Doorstop for Disability event please visit the Villa Maria Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/VillaMariaVic

For more information on the NDIS visit: www.ndis.org.au

Villa Maria on the world stage

Villa Maria was the only not-for-profit organisation in Australia to be represented at an international conference in Singapore in October.

General Manager of Projects and Development Russel Chesler was invited to sit on a panel at the Retirement Communities World Conference to present on the potential opportunities of joint ventures or partnerships between not-for-profit and for-profit organisations in the development of retirement living communities.

"We believe there are tangible benefits in the fostering of partnerships between not-for-profit and commercial entities. Each party brings expertise in their specialist field. The commercial entities, for instance, bring to the table development expertise, whereas we bring expertise in care supported by our reputation," Russel explained.

"For a long time both sides have been wary of each other and believed that they had different objectives, where essentially they

do have a shared objective, that is, to create a successful development. It is finding a balance between the two parties that is the key."

So well received was Russel's information that he has been invited to speak at the Australian conference in Sydney next March.

There, he will use Villa Maria's first major retirement village development, Athelstan Camberwell, as a successful example of the sharing of expertise to achieve fantastic results for the community.

Special events

A day for the carers

Villa Maria, in partnership with Upper Murray Family Care, hosted a huge celebration during Carers Week on October 20 in honour of the amazing dedication shown each and every day by carers in the Hume region.

The Culture of Caring Music Fiesta saw more than 200 carers, families and friends flock to St Patrick's Hall in Wangaratta to enjoy great food and live performances from community groups including the Alpine Contemporary Bellydance Academy, Wangaratta West Primary School

African Drumming Group and the Villa Maria Carers Choir and Carers Singing Circle.

Villa Maria supports more than 1400 carers across Wangaratta, Shepparton and surrounding areas.

Community Engagement and Liaison worker Sarah Weijers said the event aimed to raise awareness of carers in the community and to acknowledge the important job they do; supporting loved ones who are frail aged, have dementia, a chronic illness, a disability, or mental health issues.



A performer from the Alpine Contemporary Bellydance Academy



Members of the Villa Maria Singing Circle

St Paul's movie stars make their debut

The annual St Paul's College social on October 8 saw around 120 students, family members, staff and volunteers join together for a night of fun, friendship and fundraising.

Committee member Evan Costello said the social was a chance for the whole school community to get together, as well as celebrate the official launch of a special movie project.

The school received a \$6500 grant from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and Arts Victoria to engage professional video artist Mim Whiting in November 2009.

Mim and St Paul's drama teacher Annie Curran have spent the past year creating the movie *Has Anybody Seen My Dream*.

Starring St Paul's students, the movie sees the children "living out their dreams" in sequences including enjoying a tea party dressed as superheroes.



St Paul's student Sophie

The social was held at Xavier College's Burke Hall, with Youth Minister Peter Ryan, and a large group of students helping to decorate the venue as well as serve food and assist with parking.

Villa Maria would like to thank generous businesses including Leo's Supermarket of Kew, Toscano's of Kew, Myer, Dan Murphy's, Kew Hotel, Inspirations of Nature and the Entertainment Book, for supporting the event.

A special lunch in Wangaratta

Staff from Villa Maria's Wangaratta office spoke of "great anticipation and excitement" before meeting with Professor David de Kretser, AC Governor of Victoria, and Mrs Jan de Kretser, Patrons-in-Chief of Villa Maria, at a special lunch on September 9.

Northern Community Services team leader Maria Connor said the Governor had specifically requested that the staff of Villa Maria be extended the invitation to lunch during a visit in August. "They were both charming, delightful people," Maria said.

"On the day of the visit the Governor and Mrs de Kretser decided to shorten their tour as it was only days after Wangaratta had experienced the most significant flooding since 1998. We had a lovely lunch and each of the staff had the opportunity to speak with them."

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