

# SEASONS

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED

ISSUE **52**

**A fundraising event  
with a difference**

**Young carer's dream  
comes true**

**Multicultural centre  
meets huge demand**

**Senior volunteers  
give back**



**ARE YOU READY TO  
'MAKE A SPLASH'  
FOR CHILDREN  
AND ADULTS WITH  
A DISABILITY?**

**FIND OUT HOW ON  
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### THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING SUPPORTERS OF OUR DAWH FUNDRAISING EVENT (PAGE 9)

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### SEASONS

We welcome your feedback and contributions to Seasons.

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## CEO'S MESSAGE

**The past few months have been a busy time for the Villa Maria Catholic Homes (VMCH) community.**

On April 5, the Victorian Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs, Mr Hong Lim, officially opened the VMCH Multicultural Wellness Centre (MWC), located on the top floor of our Wantirna aged care residence.

The MWC is considered to be the first of its type in Australia and will cater primarily for the needs of older Chinese and Filipino people, who as they age, can often become isolated and lonely.

**ONE OF THE GREAT THINGS ABOUT BEING PART OF THE GREATER CATHOLIC FAMILY IS THE OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN WITH SIMILAR ORGANISATIONS TO BETTER HELP THOSE WE SUPPORT.**

On April 6, His Grace Melbourne Archbishop Denis Hart, launched the VMCH/Cabrini collaboration at an evening event held at the Catholic Leadership Centre.

There are great benefits to the people supported by both organisations occurring from this initiative. Cabrini patients who require home care following acute discharge can be supported by VMCH's Community Services, and people supported by VMCH who require timely admission to hospital can access this through Cabrini.

To mark National Volunteer Week and thank the many VMCH volunteers for their support over the past year, a High Tea was held at the iconic Plaza Ballroom on Collins Street on Wednesday, May 11.

This was the first time a joint celebration between volunteers from the former Villa Maria and Catholic Homes had been held, and I am delighted that more than 200 volunteers attended.

Board Chair Bill Scales and I both thanked our volunteers for their ongoing commitment, as without their dedication and care VMCH would be much the poorer.



I would also like to thank the more than 200 VMCH supporters who turned out to support children and adults with disabilities in this year's Dinner and Art with Heart (DAWH) fundraising event on Friday, June 3.

The event was held for the first time in the River Room at Crown Casino; the perfect backdrop for such a successful event.

The theme of this year's DAWH was 'Make a Splash', with the focus on raising funds to refurbish the warm-water pool at Kew, which is used for a range of therapeutic treatments. In addition to the silent and live auctions, there was a wine 'lucky dip', including donations of wine from many VMCH staff members and supporters.

I would like to make special mention of our three sponsors Reflex Technology Group, Russell Kennedy Lawyers and Cura Health Pharmacy, whose generous support helped make the night our biggest and best yet.

If you would like to assist our 'Make a Splash' appeal, it is never too late to donate. Please call **1800 036 377** to find out more.

Kind regards

**Greg Pullen**  
CEO



## VICTORIAN-FIRST MULTICULTURAL CENTRE OPENS

**Villa Maria Catholic Homes (VMCH) has been hailed as a leader in caring for culturally diverse seniors by the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs.**

Mr Hong Lim MP, member for Clayton, made the comment at the official opening of the VMCH Multicultural Wellness Centre (MWC) in Wantirna on April 5.

The centre, which has been running exercise groups, education sessions and social outings for around 60 seniors since October 2015, already has a waiting list to join its Chinese and Filipino social groups.

“There is a high demand for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)-specific social support services for older people, especially with significant growth of the older Chinese community in the eastern metro region,” said VMCH Lifestyle and Respite Services Operations Manager Angela Ng.

The Migrant Information Centre reports many older Chinese Australians have become frustrated by their inability to speak or read English and rely on their children for transportation and communication with service providers. They say the existence of senior support services can help to reduce their social isolation.

Mr Lim commended VMCH for establishing the Victorian-first centre and meeting a “great need” in the community.

VMCH Board Chair Bill Scales said one in eight older people with dementia did not speak English and were more comfortable with people from a similar cultural background.

“We need to address the serious misconception in society that all people from migrant backgrounds have a family who can care for them,” he said.

MWC client Geok Hwa Low, 81, gave a moving insight into how the service has helped he and his wife, Geck Ming Tan, who has dementia.

**“MY WIFE’S MOOD HAS CHANGED A LOT (SINCE WE JOINED). SHE’S BECOME HAPPIER AND THE QUARRELS BETWEEN US HAVE DECREASED,” HE SAID.**

Guests at the opening were also treated to cultural performances by a MWC Chinese group who sang “Jasmine Flower” in Mandarin, and an uplifting rendition of “How Great Thou Art” by the centre’s Filipino group.

## INTERESTED?

The MWC accepts people over the age of 65 from CALD backgrounds living in Melbourne’s eastern region. Priority is given to those who have dementia, a disability, who are frail aged and socially isolated. Call **0437 076 187** for more details.

## YOUNG CARER'S DREAM COMES TRUE

By age 12, there are few household tasks a teenager shouldn't be able to handle, but when you are a young carer like Wangaratta's Lachlan Fraumano, it's not just as simple as taking out the garbage or doing the dishes.

Lachlan is a carer for his older brother, Brandon, who was diagnosed with a brain tumour in 2006. On top of general household chores, Lachlan provides great support to his parents and relieves them of some of their daily stresses by taking responsibility for his brother and seven-year-old sister, Maddison, before and after school every day.

On Easter Monday, Lachlan enjoyed his time to shine, realising his dream to join captain, Joel Selwood, in leading the Cats onto the field for their season opener against Hawthorn at the MCG. The opportunity was thanks to a partnership between the Geelong Cats and the nib foundation, which sponsors VMCH's Young Carers Mentor Program.

It has been a harrowing journey for the entire Fraumano family since Brandon was first diagnosed with cancer ten years ago.

As well as the incomprehensible issues of dealing with a child going through cancer treatment, Lachlan's parents also face the daily challenge of ensuring they provide him and his younger sister with the care and attention they not only require, but deserve.

VMCH's Young Carers Mentor Program has been the answer for both Lachlan and his parents.

"Villa Maria Catholic Homes' program has been invaluable for Lachlan. Having access to a mentor has helped him not only deal with his own needs and challenges of becoming a teenager, but also those associated with having a brother who is living with a serious illness," said Lachlan's mother, Mellissa.

"LACHLAN'S EYES LIT UP WHEN HE WAS TOLD ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY TO RUN ONTO THE MCG WITH THE CATS PLAYERS. WITH SO MUCH OF OUR ATTENTION BEING ON BRANDON, THIS WAS A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR LACHLAN TO BE IN THE SPOTLIGHT."

Lachlan said running onto the field with his team was "exciting and amazing".

"It was a great feeling but I wasn't sure where to go once I got through the banner so Half Cat (team mascot) found me pretty fast and took me for a run with the players!"

"The best part was meeting Joel Selwood and running onto the field with him."



## ACT

In 2014, nib foundation established a multi-year partnership with VMCH to support the Young Carers Mentor Program, which links young carers with an adult mentor to increase their social connections and help achieve their life goals and aspirations. If you'd like to become a mentor, call Marion Rak on **(03) 5722 9046**.



## LET'S MAKE A SPLASH FOR JULIAN AND ORLANDO

**Disability Support Worker, Emma, helps adults with a disability who attend the Villa Maria Catholic Homes' (VMCH) warm-water pool program each week.**

One of those people is her brother, Julian, who has a severe intellectual disability and cerebral palsy.

"I'm pretty lucky that I get to work with him weekly in the pool ... as a support worker and as a sister," she said.

**"LIFE CAN BE FRUSTRATING AND LIMITING FOR HIM AND I THINK GETTING IN THE WATER WOULD RELIEVE A LOT OF THAT. THE POOL IS ONE OF HIS FAVOURITE THINGS."**

Julian is among the hundreds of people with a disability who have enjoyed the pool since it was built in the 1970s and it is for people like him that VMCH has launched its Make a Splash appeal.

We hope to raise \$400,000 to pay for major renovations of the pool and to transform the pool hall.

The plans include a bright mural on the pool hall's main wall, a colourful roof canopy, a music sound system to replace an old CD player, stained glass windows looking into a lovely garden and other unique features that would make it a truly special place to visit.

Emma (pictured above left with Julian) is excited about the plans.

"If the pool was given a facelift, we would be beside ourselves. The lives of the people we support are so restricted ... they go through a lot. The water is a place for them to feel independent, free, relax and have fun," Emma said.

"You can see it in their faces, how happy and how good they feel in the water."

The pool is used daily by adults and children with a wide variety of disabilities who can receive one-on-one support to enjoy programs that deliver many health benefits and lots of fun.

It is accessible to people of all abilities, thanks to the dedicated VMCH staff who run the water-therapy programs, and special equipment like hoists that can assist those with even the highest needs get into the pool.

Pool therapy also gives people with physical disabilities vital health benefits. Warm water helps relax muscles and the buoyancy of the water can alleviate pain. For people with a disability that severely limits their movement, it can be a place where they can move around with little help – a liberating feeling.

The sad truth is that a lot of these children and adults would miss out on the joy of water if they did not have this swimming pool.

“The local pools don’t have appropriate equipment to get all people into the water,” Emma said

“The majority of the people who attend this service wouldn’t probably be getting in the water at a local pool.”

Students at VMCH specialist education school St Paul’s College also love the pool.

Orlando, who is 11 and has autism, is one of those students and his mum Carla says there is no doubt about how he feels about the school’s warm-water pool.

**“ORLANDO IS PREDOMINATELY NON-VERBAL, HE CAN’T VERBALLY SAY HE IS ENJOYING THE POOL, BUT YOU CAN SEE IT ON HIS FACE – HE SMILES, HE MAKES NOISES THAT WE KNOW ARE HAPPY SQUEALING,” CARLA SAYS.**

Orlando (pictured left) has always loved the water and this once frightened his parents. But now that he can swim thanks to his time in the pool, they can rest a bit easier when they are near the water.

“Given that drowning is a leading cause of death for children with autism, I just think potentially this pool is saving lives,” Carla said.

Parents like Carla, who work hard to help their children find accessible and enjoyable activities, are very excited about this campaign.

“It’s very easy to underestimate how important something as simple as a pool is for people with disabilities. I think to donate to this pool will enable it to improve so that the children can really have that joy in life,” she said.

“If the pool undergoes a big resurrection and becomes the best it can be, I think that the children and adults who use it are going to really feel that they are valued.”

## HELP

People who want to make a donation to the **Make a Splash** appeal can visit our website at **www.vmch.com.au** or phone **1800 036 377**.

We’ll keep you updated on the progress of our fundraising for this exciting project.



## SAVE THE DATE!

If you are a golf enthusiast and interested in raising money for a great cause, please join our annual Charity Golf Day on Friday, October 14 at the Southern Golf Club in Keysborough.

All funds raised through player registration and corporate sponsorship will go towards our Make a Splash appeal. To secure your place at this popular event, please call **Narrelle Paige** on **9926 2412** or email **narrelle.paige@vmch.com.au**.

## COLLABORATION OF CARE

**Seniors and their families will be given more choice and control over their future following their hospital stay thanks to a collaboration of care between Villa Maria Catholic Homes (VMCH) and Cabrini.**

The two Catholic-based, not-for-profit organisations have been working together to develop and implement support and restorative programs for older Victorians in their homes following hospitalisation.

The ultimate aim is to decrease the need for patients to prematurely enter residential aged care following their hospital stay with Cabrini, and be able to remain living independently and safely at home, where they want to be, with appropriate support services from VMCH.

The collaboration was formally celebrated and blessed by the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, the Most Reverend Denis J Hart DD, on April 6, 2016 at the Catholic Leadership Centre in East Melbourne.

**CABRINI AND VMCH SHARE A LONG AND PROUD HISTORY OF CARING FOR FRAIL AND DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY; PRESERVING AND PROMOTING THEIR DIGNITY THROUGH HIGH QUALITY HEALTH AND SUPPORT SERVICES.**

“In recent years, Cabrini has been working hard to identify community partnerships and increase engagement with our partners, in order to expand community care options for elderly people, many of whom have complex health conditions,” says Natalie Sullivan, Executive Director, Brighton and Continuing Care.

“We recognised that these patients present challenges to our discharge planning due to the lack of supportive follow-up options for private patients when the intensity of an acute hospital or rehabilitation setting is over.”

Heather Catherwood, VMCH General Manager Community Services, says it is becoming increasingly important for organisations with complementary services to work together on service planning and share knowledge to help improve the experiences of people moving between the health and aged care sectors.

“The escalating pressure on hospital beds, healthcare costs and the preference for people to remain living at home necessitates that improved and innovative strategies be developed to help to address this growing challenge,” she said.







## FUNDRAISER MAKES A BIG SPLASH AND BREAKS A RECORD

**Water helped Sam Bramham win five Paralympic swimming medals, but he says it gave him something even more important – independence and confidence.**

Sam was the special guest speaker at our fourth Dinner & Art with Heart event held at Crown Melbourne on June 3. More than 200 people enjoyed an evening of entertainment and fundraising for the people Villa Maria Catholic Homes supports.

Sam told the audience he began to see the challenges presented by having a prosthetic right leg at school.

But in the water he showed that he was just as fast and even faster than the other kids.

Sam is no stranger to breaking records in the water and this year he has helped VMCH break a record of its own.

**WE AIMED TO RAISE \$40,000 FOR OUR WARM-WATER POOL AT ST PAUL'S COLLEGE IN KEW, USED DAILY BY ADULTS AND CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY. THE FINAL TOTAL RAISED ON THE NIGHT IS A RECORD-BREAKING EFFORT OF JUST OVER \$60,000.**

VMCH Board Chairman Bill Scales kicked off the special night by telling the audience how important the warm-water pool is to the adults and children with a disability who use it.

He spoke about what an important place our specialist school, St Paul's College, is for many families and how much joy and freedom the pool brings to so many students.

St Paul's College parent Carla Veith-Carter was also a guest speaker and talked about what a difference the pool has made to the life of her son Orlando, who has autism.

Comedian Jean Kittson returned as our MC, along with the engaging auctioneer for the night, Michael Fry, of Nelson Alexander Real Estate.

Michael did a wonderful job auctioning almost 30 pieces of very collectable artworks donated by our generous contributing artists. The art auction's show-stealer, an etching by Archibald Prize winner John Olsen, fetched \$5,500. It was donated by artist Jeremy Kibel.

The wine-wall – stocked with wine donated by VMCH staff – was hugely popular, along with the silent auction and caricaturist Paul Harvey.

VMCH CEO Greg Pullen described the night as our "biggest and best yet", giving special thanks to DAWH sponsors Russell Kennedy Lawyers, Reflex Technology Group and Cura Health Pharmacy.

"We look forward to sharing the progress of the Make a Splash campaign and hope to see everyone again next year."

**You can donate to Make a Splash by calling Narrelle Paige on 03 9926 2412.**



## SENIOR VOLUNTEERS GIVE BACK

**Two grandparents who have dedicated more than half a century to brightening the lives of others say giving back is the key to staying fulfilled.**

Kevin Dooley, aged 80, and Colleen White, aged 74, have recently celebrated 25 and 30 years respectively of volunteering with Villa Maria Catholic Homes (VMCH).

Musician Kevin can be found twice-weekly at VMCH's John R Hannah aged care residence in Mulgrave, providing compositions for Mass on Wednesdays and lively piano tunes for sing-alongs with 71 residents on Thursdays.

"I like to play songs of their era and youth like 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' or 'I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen,'" said Kevin, a former Music Master at Xavier Junior College.

"You might find some of the residents who wouldn't normally speak or perhaps sit there quietly start mouthing the words and tapping their feet when the piano starts up. It makes them happy. They enjoy the singing and the fact that they're enjoying it – that's all that matters to me."

Kevin said he'd continue volunteering "until his fingers give it away".

"When you're quite well yourself and you've had a pretty good life, it's good to give something back."

Colleen spends Wednesdays at VMCH's White Road Activity and Respite Service in Wantirna South, supporting seniors have an acquired physical disability, a visual or physical impairment, who have dementia, or who are frail aged.

Undertaking quizzes, calling bingo and helping with art and crafts are just some of her roles.

"I just love the people," the grandmother-of-six said. "I call them (clients) my friends because that's what they are. What I've got out of my 30 years of volunteering has given me a really full life."

**KEVIN AND COLLEEN WERE AMONG AROUND 200 VMCH VOLUNTEERS CELEBRATED AS PART OF NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK AT A SPECIAL HIGH TEA AT THE PLAZA BALLROOM ON MAY 11.**

VMCH Volunteer Services Manager Bronwyn Summers said the event was a way to show the organisation's 500-plus volunteers – some who have dedicated more than 50 years – how much they are appreciated.

### ACT

To find out more about volunteering with VMCH, visit:

[www.vmch.com.au/get-involved/volunteer-services/](http://www.vmch.com.au/get-involved/volunteer-services/)

## COUPLE MAKE BIG (APPLE) DELIVERY

Melbourne couple Lisa Buxton and Ariel Lakman have kept a busy schedule planning a wedding and moving into a new home since recently returning to Australia after living in New York.

However, on top of their priority list has been a visit to Kew specialist school, St Paul's College, to deliver a cheque for almost \$29,000.

While living in New York the couple raised the money for St Paul's Build a Bus appeal, supporting students with disabilities to get to and from school.

They organised a group of about 50 people to walk in the New York Lap4Life fundraiser in September last year and hoped to raise about \$10,000.

The couple said they challenged themselves for one day to help others that were challenged every day.

"The idea came from when we were walking one day (in New York) and how easy it was to walk 200 blocks and we really wanted to do it for people who potentially couldn't walk a block," Lisa said.

Ultimately the group smashed their fundraising target, raising just under \$29,000 and walking 55km around Manhattan in about 11 hours.

Lisa's cousins attend Gateway Services in Kew, an activity program for adults with a disability, which is located next to the school and also run by VMCH.

**"THERE ARE SO MANY CHARITIES THAT ARE DOING AMAZING WORK... AND WE WANTED TO FOCUS ON AN ORGANISATION THAT WE KNEW WAS DOING AMAZING THINGS," ARIEL SAID.**

The couple said they received great support from sponsors, especially Bluestone Lane, a café in New York which sells Aussie coffee and breakfast – who kept the walkers nourished on the day.

They celebrated their Big Apple achievement in a very Aussie way – with Coopers beers and sausage rolls.

VMCH CEO Greg Pullen thanked the couple for their "amazing achievement".

"This donation will go such a long way to supporting a service that is so vital to the school community. We can't thank them enough."



