



February—March 2019

CVS Newsletter

Community Visitors Scheme

An Australian Government Initiative
Proudly auspiced by Community Care TASMANIA since 1996



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Hi everyone

I cannot believe how quickly the days and weeks of 2019 are rolling over, and there is much to tell you but little space and time in which to do so!! So I will start with the important things first. We have now signed a Memorandum of Understanding with our consortium partner Lifeline. As flagged in the December-January newsletter, our program remains based in the north but the number of volunteers CCT is funded for has dropped from 47 to 36. 31 volunteers will remain matched with one-on-one visits to residents in aged care facilities and five volunteers spots will be matched as one-on-one visitors to people living at home receiving Home Care Packages. Please let me know if you would be interested in visiting someone in their home.

Despite the reduction in volunteer numbers, which also means a reduction in the hours I am employed to coordinate the CVS program, I will, as I have done for a number of years, continue to work fulltime at CCT working on a range of other programs and projects. For example, I put together another 4 newsletters, three of which are monthly, as well as the CVS one!

My official title at CCT is 'Special Projects Coordinator', and one of the 'special projects' I am currently coordinating is the Live Well Live Longer Expo Community Care TASMANIA will host on Wednesday 17 April. As the title of the Expo suggests, the aim of the expo is to showcase what activities, products, services and ideas are available to help you live well longer. The many different spaces available to us at the Expo venue-the Punchbowl Christian Centre-will allow us to offer a variety of interest 'hubs', such as a Cooking nutrition and Cooking Hub, an exercise hub, an art therapy hub, just to name a few. See the back page for more info. Hope to see you there.

Community Care TASMANIA's Live Well Live Longer Expo Billboard is now up in Wellington

LIVE WELL LIVE LONGER FREE EXPO



10am, Wednesday April 17th, 2019
Punchbowl Christian Centre, Launceston



1300 722 400 | cct.org.au

Returning your Record of Visits Forms by the 10th of each month is greatly appreciated.

The canary has landed



Perry the canary is 12 weeks old and he is named after Perry Mason, says his delighted owner Dianne. Perry has been happily ensconced with Dianne at The Manor in Kings Meadows since early January. As she introduces him to me, Dianne tells me Perry love visitors; ‘but he is a bit agitated at the moment because he is moulting and uncomfortable’.

The day I visited the ‘canary gang’- Manor residents Dianne and Neil and CVS visitor Malcolm -they were moving Perry into a bigger cage that Dianne has just purchased. ‘Most of us are downsizing’, laughs Malcolm, ‘but Perry is upsizing!’ This is the trio’s latest ‘canary project’ activity, which has taken months to plan and execute. But it is clearly a project that has been worthwhile. When asked what the project has meant for each of them, Dianne is quick to respond: ‘The project and Perry have brought so much joy into my life.’ ‘It’s better than watching TV! or watching a fish in a fishbowl’. Fellow resident, and canary gang member Neil agrees, but while he has found the exercise totally enjoyable, ‘It has also been a lot of hard work.’

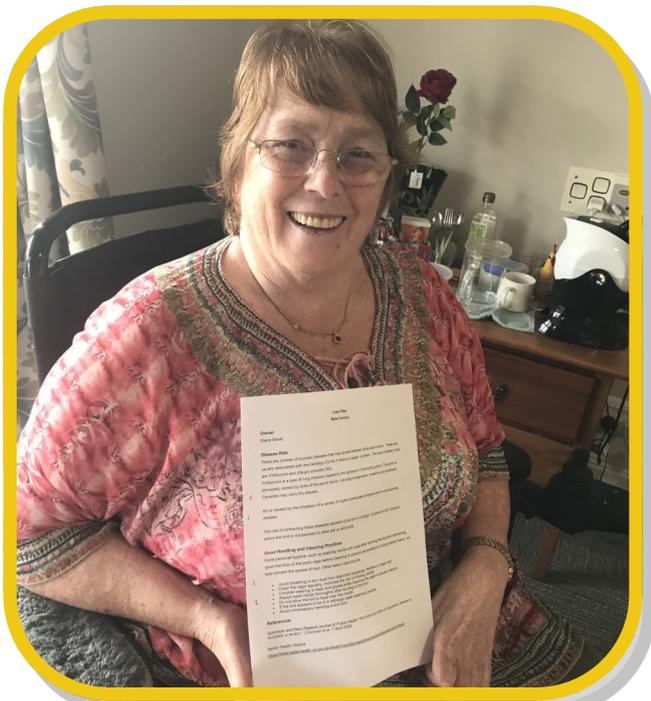
CVS visitor Malcolm has likewise enjoyed putting in the effort. He enjoys doing things for others and he wants those things to matter. And the canary project does. In a nursing home environment where people have already had to relinquish so much, ‘what can be more important than providing something for people to care for or about?’ he asks.

Malcolm’s inspiration for this philosophy comes in part from the writings of Atul Gawande, an American surgeon who is trying to inject humanity into the US healthcare system by not looking for a medical solution to fix everything but for people to take the time to relate better about what is important (see ‘*Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End*’.) Simplistically put, not everything can be fixed with pills or an operation, and people are not commodities, and regardless of what can’t be changed, there is a lot that we can do to improve people’s wellbeing, regardless of age or disability, by remembering to treat people as people.

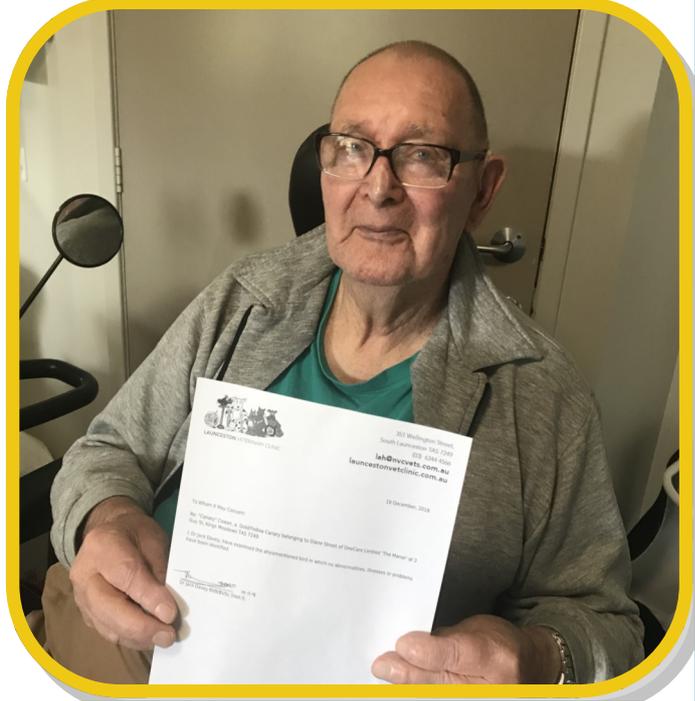
Malcolm’s enthusiasm for the canary project has spread to his friends and family; one donated the original bird cage, which is now looking for a new home, another contacted the canary breeder who donated Perry. Dianne is half-way through knitting him an appreciation scarf!

One of the great things about this project has been the involvement of others, both at the Manor and beyond. Even the bureaucratic chores have been an adventure, such as taking Perry to a vet to get him a health certificate for him to be kept at the Manor, or preparing a care plan for him, which now lives in the same folder as Dianne’s.

Considerable forethought and effort has gone into executing the practical tasks too. Take for example the assemblage of the whiz-bang, state-of-the-art waste-collecting bird feeder they ordered online. It arrived in 19 pieces and it took more than an hour to peel off all the adhesive paper protecting the Perspex sections. It also arrived with no instructions and attempts to slot the pieces together failed dismally, in the end Malcolm took it



Dianne with Perry’s Care Plan, devised by Malcolm:
It lives next to hers.



Neil with Perry’s Health Certificate:
Neil is the ‘keeper of the greens’ for Perry.

The canary has landed

Dianne watching Malcolm placing the final canary requisite in Perry's new super-sized cage



home and painstakingly glued it together.

Now there is Perry's ongoing upkeep. Neil, who has been involved in the exercise from the get go is the 'keeper of the greens'; he keeps Perry's fresh greens in his fridge as Dianne does not have one. Every morning at breakfast he hands these to Dianne so she can replenish Perry's supply. Throughout the day he makes several visits to check up on Perry and he is the designated minder when Dianne is away. Neil is not Perry's only visitor, other residents and staff have also started to drop by to see him.

'Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End'

Some people have the ability to change the way we think about the way things could be done better. Atul Gawande is such a person. He is a surgeon at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, a staff writer for *The New Yorker*, a professor at Harvard Medical School and the Harvard School of Public Health, and in June 2018, he was chosen to lead the new US healthcare company set up by Amazon, JPMorgan and Berkshire Hathaway. But it is his book 'Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End' that Malcolm lent to me prior to joining the CVS program that I want to bring to your attention and recommend. The following review captures the spirit of the book, and you will see where the spark for Malcolm's canary project had its genesis.

"'Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End,'" Atul Gawande's masterful exploration of aging, death, and the medical profession's mishandling of both, is his best and most personal book yet – though a little depressing, until you get to the parakeets.

Dr Atul Gawande leads panel with President Barack Obama on the future of medicine in 2014



In the first half, Gawande details, through intimate stories of his patients' and his own relatives' experiences, the realities of old age in modern America: broken hips and dementia, overwhelmed families and bank account-draining geriatric care, loneliness and loss of independence. Then, Gawande introduces Bill Thomas, who, as a young doctor in the early '90s, proposed a radical idea: Treat old people like people.

Thomas redesigned the upstate New York nursing home where he served as medical director, planting a garden for residents to tend and an on-site day care so they could interact with children. He also ordered 100 parakeets to fill the place with song, but the cages arrived unassembled. The staff scrambled to put them together as birds flew free, and the old folks, as Thomas recalled, "laughed their butts off." Death rates and use of sedatives in the nursing home plummeted.'

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/books/2014/10/11/book-review-being-mortal-medicine-and-what-matters-end-atul-gawande/JwyaLEIAGOs5guUGBiG2YN/story.html>



Live Well Live Longer Expo

Wednesday 17 April 2019

Proudly sponsored by **THE Senior**

The aim of the Expo is to provide information about services and programs that will help current or prospective clients and their carers, as well as interested members of the public live the best life they can. A list of who's coming will be posted on our webpage and facebook page shortly, but here a few things you can experience:

- You've seen them on the telly, you've heard them on the radio, now you can meet the three ladies featured in the Four Roses Flour ad in person and bake a cake with Lexie Young, Sandra Atkins & Jan Atkins.
- Caring or working with someone with Dementia? You can experience what their world looks like through Enabling EDIE (Educational Dementia Immersive Experience), Dementia Australia's virtual reality technology
- What did you say? Need a free hearing test from Hearing Australia?
- Dying to Talk? Pick a card with Palliative Care Tasmania that will help you prioritise your values to sort out what you want and don't want at end of life
- Neck in a knot? Let Wendy Thomas' Hands of Inspiration unwind you
- Learn how to make biscotti from an expert, and one of Community Care TASMANIA's clients, Mrs Antonietta Bolzonello
- 'Aged Care: What are your options and what will it cost?' Emily Dent from Elm Retirement & Financial Planning will tell you
- Paint a canvas, play a drum, or create mind-stimulating activities with Art Therapist Victoria Wentworth Ware that will help improve cognitive recognition for people with dementia
- How fit are you? Ask the Physiofit experts to show you some simple fit-for-purpose exercises
- How can the three national cancer screening programs help save your life? Ella & Mary from the Cancer Council and McGrath Breast Care Foundation will explain the simple steps you need to take
- Find out from The Natural Alternative-Tas Essential Oils team how to use the right essential oils to make your home toxin free and keep you and your family happy and healthy
- Need equipment to help with your health or mobility issues? Talk to local expert provider McLean Healthcare
- Reduce your risk of a stroke: find out how and have a heart screening test from the 'What's your beat' UTAS research team
- Croquet anyone? Try your hand at a sport suitable for just about anyone!
- Have your say and protect your rights! Advocacy Tasmania will help you understand your options



Watch out for the three 'Four Roses' Ladies & CCT client Mrs Antonietta Bolzonello, who will promote CCT's Expo in a TV ad that will go to air at the beginning of March.