

# Turning the Page

ACH  
GROUP

Good Lives for  
Older People

Latest news, services and developments of ACH Group

Spring 2011

## 'If These Hands Could Talk' bringing generations together



Members of ACH Group McLaren Friends sharing their stories and experiences with Cardijn College students

### **ACH Group McLaren Friends have joined hands with Cardijn College to work on an exciting new project called 'If These Hands Could Talk'.**

Aimed at connecting generations, the project brought together members of ACH Group McLaren Friends and Cardijn College to share their stories. The students not only hear the stories of previous generations, but also get to share their own experiences as well. These include ex-teachers offering advice on exams and students sharing their

experiences of shopping for a formal dress, while McLaren Friends recounted sewing their own party dress.

"Nowadays there aren't many opportunities for the generations to mix," said Neil, one of the participants. "This is a great opportunity to share some of our experiences with them."

Rebecca, a Cardijn College student, looks forward to meeting the visitors during her lunch time. "I really enjoy listening to their stories. In every story, there is a meaning

that we can take away and learn from."

At the end of the project, artwork showcasing the hands of the older person and students holding something important to them will be on display at the Aldinga Library.

**McLaren Friends is a group that meets twice a week for people with memory loss. If you would like more information on McLaren Friends and other social respite groups in your area, please contact ACH Group on (08) 8349 3515. ■**

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## CEO's message



Mike Rungie, CEO, ACH Group

The recent external review of the ACH Group Board has resulted in a new Board Committee focusing specifically on Quality, Safety and Risk Management. This might not sound that interesting, but the effects of getting this wrong can be disastrous for older people, staff and the organisation. Getting it right can be delightful and even life changing for people.

So at the highest level, the Board has asked that we highlight quality, safety and risk management, measure it, report on it, and create a system of delivering on it and improving it across all of our services and activities. We are asking everybody to make sure they are aware of our quality framework and to focus their efforts in all areas of quality, and contribute to our feedback processes.

Thanks to all of the people who completed our consumer survey last April. These results are now analysed and available. Generally feedback was very positive, but a number of areas for improvement were identified in Housing, Community and Residential Services and you will see improvement actions being taken.

Staff safety is always a major focus for ACH Group. Our recent external audit has highlighted where we can improve our efforts, particularly systematically identifying risks well in advance and taking action across the organisation before anyone is injured.

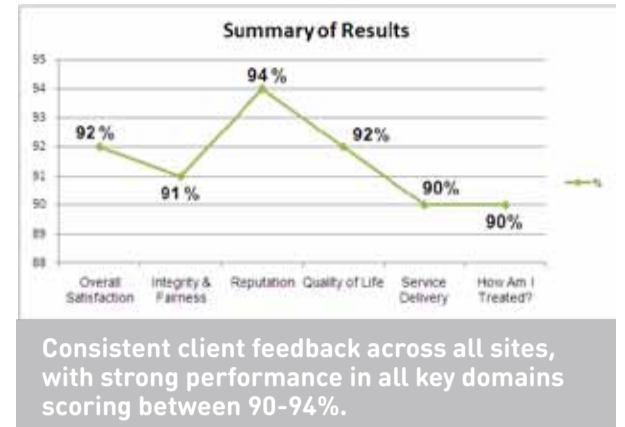
We can only provide great services that enable good lives if we are a soundly and safely running organisation. ■

## ACH Group acts on survey results

In response to the feedback received from ACH Group's Client Satisfaction Survey in November 2010, we are taking strategic steps to address the processes relating to satisfaction management, information and referral services.

The organisation's commitment to good lives for older people saw Residential Services roll out the 'Weekend Interests' project to review lifestyle planning and opportunities for activities on weekends in our residential settings. There's also something for the palate, with reviews being made to meal preparation and presentation to enhance our residents' overall 'Meal Enjoyment' experience. Another project that is occurring is the development of a new range of activities adapted for people living with dementia.

Within Health and Community Services, our ongoing commitment to a customer focused culture has resulted in a substantial review of our service model so that we consistently deliver services that are customer controlled and support recovery, restoration, fitness



and prevention. We have also worked to improve the accessibility of information to support people in providing important feedback to us.

Consistent with our focus on areas that are important to clients, our Housing Services have changed their service provision model for gardening services by having teams of gardeners move from site to site. Previously, one resident gardener attended to the designated site. The change means we will be more timely, productive and efficient. We are also dedicated to establishing a robust customer-focused service culture through ongoing training programs and increased office resources to better respond to customer enquiries. ■

## New ACH Group website is now live!

We're excited with the recent launch of our new website, which marks another milestone in our aspiration to present a fresh approach to growing older. Sporting a new look, our website exudes vibrance and symbolises our renewed focus on innovation to challenge the way people think about aged care in general.

Based on conversations with clients, families and staff, our website now features a client-focused site structure and improved layout, particularly for housing and residential services. Everything you need to know about ACH Group services can now be found in one place.

The website is a constantly changing tool, with ongoing changes expected over the next couple of months. We would love your feedback on the new site, i.e. suggestions, things you like and things that could be better.

Please email your suggestions to [corporatenews@ach.org.au](mailto:corporatenews@ach.org.au) ■



**Turning the Page** is a quarterly publication by ACH Group. If you have any questions about Turning the Page or would like to make any contributions to the publication, please contact the Marketing and Communications Team on telephone (08) 8159 3632 or via email: [corporatenews@ach.org.au](mailto:corporatenews@ach.org.au).

**Aged Care & Housing Group Inc.** ABN 99 437 071 895  
22 Henley Beach Road, Mile End, SA 5031  
PO Box 646 Torrensview Plaza, Torrensview, SA 5031

**General enquiries (08) 8159 3600 Website [www.ach.org.au](http://www.ach.org.au)**

## 'Celebrating Food' Highercombe style

For Highercombe residents Alida Kerkhoven and Elma Gates, trying sushi for the very first time was a totally different gastronomic experience all together.

"I've never tasted this kind of food, but I appreciated the different flavours and taste," said Alida.

Alida and Elma, both in their 80s, were among the many residents who participated in Highercombe's 'Celebrating Food', a new food lovers' program with a focus on celebrating cultural culinary heritage.

Residents were invited to venture into new tasting territory, with Japanese and Indian marking the residents' first 'Celebrating Food' event. The rise of popular cooking television series such as MasterChef, My Kitchen Rules, and Ready Steady Cook has done nothing to diminish our fascination with food and as some of Highercombe's residents have discovered, food could be a great source of joy, pleasure, social interaction and



A bonding experience for residents and staff at Highercombe

sometimes even a little culture shock.

Organiser and food enthusiast Graham Harding, Highercombe's Partner in Positive Ageing Project Officer said the program might not be for everyone, but the residents at Highercombe are keen to try new things highlighting ACH Group's 'good lives for older people' approach.

"We're not your typical residential home.

We like to try new things. They might fail, they might flourish but you won't know until you try them. Food is a great way to go," said Graham.

A monthly food celebration event equipped with a guest chef, 'Celebrating Food' is possible thanks to the generous donation made by ACH Group's Foundation for Older Australians. ■

## Two generations call Perry Park home

For Max and Audrey McDonald, moving into an independent living unit in Perry Park, Port Noarlunga in 2002 was a fairly easy decision. A few years later, it was also an easy decision for Max's mum who moved in to a nearby unit. This was soon followed by Max's cousin and Audrey's brother – all of them liked what Perry Park had to offer.

"We came to Perry Park to visit a friend, liked what we saw and moved in not long after that! We didn't even check out other

available options elsewhere," said Max.

"Having travelled regularly in a caravan around Australia for the past 25 years, we're used to a small space so it didn't take us long at all to settle into our cosy one-bedroom unit at Perry Park."

Max and Audrey had been living in Reynella, about 10-12 km away from Port Noarlunga for 38 years. When their children grew up and moved out, they found it hard to maintain their house which had a big rear garden.

"It was just too much work. We decided to make the move to Perry Park, and sold many of our belongings through a garage sale - many of which we've amassed over the course of 40 years," said Audrey.

The McDonalds particularly like the location, which is near to the beach and close to local services and amenities.

"Three years after we moved to Perry Park, Mum decided to move here too," said Max.

"She's 98 and has always been very independent, having lived on her own in Kurralta Park. She's happy she's able to continue to maintain her independence here."

Life has not changed much for the McDonalds since moving to Perry Park as they have maintained their usual lifestyle. They love having more time for themselves due to having less work to do around the house. They also try to catch up with friends and family who live around the area at least once every fortnight.

"This is a nice place to live. We should have moved here a long time before we did. We like the communal atmosphere we feel here, but we also get to enjoy our privacy." ■



Max and Audrey McDonald are happy to call Perry Park home

## Available support for people living with dementia

A diagnosis of dementia will bring about many changes to one's life. ACH Group strives to provide services for people with dementia to enable them to continue to live good lives. This involves integrated approaches to lifestyle and daily living tasks, and an emphasis on maintaining relationships, retaining roles, promoting social interactions, and optimising control.

Our approach to dementia goes beyond standard services and includes a range of social and recreational activities to enhance and maintain skills, support

links, provide information and support, and advocacy.

In this edition of Turning the Page, Brian Butler – newly appointed director of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples shares with us the importance of having advance directives on end-of-life care to ensure one's wishes are respected should they become ill, have memory loss or an accident. We shine the spotlight on one of our current programs for people with dementia, the Hill Climbers' Group, which provides an opportunity for people experiencing

memory loss to be active. We are also proud to share the achievement of one of our dementia champions, Jodie Roberts, a Clinical Enrolled Nurse at Kapara who was recently recognised at the ACS Aged Care Awards for her exemplary work with people living with dementia.

**To find out more about our services for people living with dementia, please contact our Customer Service Centre on (08) 8349 3515. ■**

## Planning ahead made easy

**Help is at hand for Aboriginal elders when it comes to making life decisions about the enduring power of attorney, making a will and how they would like to be cared for if they become ill.**

**A DVD produced by ACH Group on 'Planning Ahead for Aboriginal Elders and their Families in the Lower Murray' was launched by National Congress of Australia's First Peoples director Brian Butler in Murray Bridge on August 12.**

**Funded by the Department of Health and Ageing as part of a Dementia Community Grant, the DVD is aimed at raising awareness among Aboriginal communities in the Lower Murray region on the importance of planning ahead.**

**Here, Mr Butler shares with us why it is imperative for elders to make their wishes known when they still have the capacity to express their wishes.**

Planning ahead can be confusing for many older people. The various forms of advance directives can be complicated and the terminology is often off putting. Yet the risk is, if we do put it off, then we miss the chance to write down what we want and we risk not respecting the wishes of our elders.

Many years of disempowerment and the denial of the rights of Aboriginal people had led to a lack of trust of the legal systems and a lack of knowledge of the forms and processes to document our choices. Yet elders and their families are increasingly seeing the benefits of planning ahead to ensure that their wishes such as what care they receive, where they live and what they want to keep doing as they age, are respected.

The decisions about end-of-life care are sensitive topics but essential to be discussed in families. The younger people should help our elders to document their wishes, so that we can reduce the conflict that can occur in times of grief.

I have been an advocate for Aboriginal people to find the services and information that will help them gain access to the systems that will support them. ACH Group has services such as Aboriginal Wyatt Holidays and now this DVD which can be trusted to support Aboriginal people.

I have been pleased to endorse this DVD as a way of improving the access and rights of Aboriginal people to the legal benefits of advance directives. It will be useful to all older people as it is explained simply and tells people where to get information. ■



Brian Butler sharing the importance of advance directives with guests at ACH Group's DVD launch

# Our goals

## Kapara sets the bar high

The residents at Kapara believe that a good life involves being part of the greater community. They enjoy regular outings and a number of them participate in swimming and water aerobics class, having fun putting on their bathers and getting fit. Other residents prefer their monthly film fix, with a trip to Marion cinemas, getting out to the community and socialising.

Their families couldn't be more thrilled, as one resident Nat Bailey's daughter notes.

"Thank you for making life in Unit 9 a warm, caring and enjoyable environment. All of these things contribute to ladies like my Mum, being acknowledged and supported as valued individuals," she said.

Members of the public would be surprised to learn that the ladies have memory loss and are part of 'Unit 9' - a low level dementia secure unit at Kapara.

This fantastic unit, supported by 12 dedicated care workers has seen one of the team's Dementia Champions,



Jodie Roberts (left) is an inspiration to her team at Kapara and residents alike

Jodie Roberts receiving a certificate of recognition from Aged Community and Services South Australia and Northern Territory (ACS SA and NT) as a finalist in the Employee of the Year in Aged Care Awards.

As part of a larger network of Dementia Champions trained by ACH Group, these individuals have a passion for developing good lives for people with dementia.

According to Kapara Site Manager Lyn Bertram, the award of recognition goes further to highlight the amazing work happening at Kapara.

"It certainly offers encouragement to other staff, on the change that they can make to residents' lives and that of their families," said Lyn. ■

## Not over the hill yet

There is a story behind the name of one of ACH Group's most recently created Social Links programs - the Hill Climbers' Group.

The brainchild of ACH Group's Dementia Learning and Development Unit, Findon regional office staff, and Occupational Therapy students from the University of South Australia, the Hill Climbers' Group comprises men aged 79 years and over who meet on a fortnightly basis to enjoy one another's company and do things they love.

Showing a great sense of humour, the men developed the name of the group, explaining that although they have all 'climbed the hill', they are by no means over it. All of them have memory loss and have struggled with loneliness and feeling cut off from friends and activities.

Based in Adelaide's western suburbs, the program began with a five-week trial period in which the men engaged in a range of activities and outings including playing board games, sharing morning tea and visiting places like the aviation museum and the Bay Discovery Centre.

Hill Climbers' Group member Gordon, 84, speaks highly of the benefits obtained from social interaction.

"Being a part of the group makes me feel better emotionally and we help one another. It's nice to have a joke around, it really makes a difference. You need companionship as you get older, particularly if you are alone," he said.

At 95, Anton said, "Living alone, you can become bored easily - you need to get out and about to keep yourself well."

Getting out and about and having fun is what the group is all about, with new activities and events planned fortnightly when the gang gets together every two weeks at the Findon Community Centre.

Donald, the baby of the group at 79, thinks what makes the group so enjoyable are the conversations and the chance to meet new people. He therefore extends a warm invitation to new members!

**For more information on The Hill Climbers' Group, please contact Belinda Push on (08) 8353 9000. ■**



The Hill Climbers' Group looks forward to their fortnightly meetings

## A larrikin's perspective

Growing up in Port Adelaide and the Lefevre Peninsula, Francis Thompson would never have imagined that someday he would be a published author.



Francis Thompson's book keeps his personality alive

His book, 'After World War II Came Rock 'n' Roll, Then Larrikins' is a fascinating account of his experiences from the 1940s to the 1960s – an era when Adelaide underwent huge changes.

Francis has lived in the area for 71 years and has seen the area change from a rural sea port to a built-up suburb.

The book is full of photos courtesy of the Port Adelaide Historical Society, and a map which guides readers on the most important locations in the book.

While the book required Francis to write seven days a week for up to six hours a day, he is proud of his accomplishment.

"Once I'm gone, my side of Port Adelaide history will be gone."

A regular respite guest at Swan Cottage, Francis is still a proud larrikin today and wanted to make sure his story stayed as true as possible. "I made sure the book was published with almost no editing or spelling mistakes at all, so it keeps my personality."

If you are interested in purchasing a copy of Francis' book, it is available for sale from Newspower in Port Adelaide Mall.

**For more information on cottage-based respite, please contact (08) 8349 3515. ■**

## Residents pedal to better health and well-being

A successful grant application by Highercombe Residential Care Facility for electric pedals and a circulation booster has opened a number of doors for residents and staff.

More than 80 residents are now part of the Exercise and Circulation Program, taking part in mobility and improved circulation exercises, thanks to a \$3,449 donation from ACH Group's Foundation for Older Australians.

Healthy Ageing Coordinator David Cassidy said the new equipment means more than building an impressive on-site gym collection for residents - it's a new and exciting way for staff to connect with clients.

"It's not only opening up opportunities for the residents to get active, it's allowing them to move their joints with greater ease, improve their circulation, and increase their mobility," said David.

The electric pedals offer a great way for residents who may not normally visit the on-site gym and instead prefer the privacy of their rooms to access exercise. Less intimidating than an exercise bike, some residents feel more confident sitting in a chair, slipping their feet into the electric pedals and exercising from the comfort of their own room.

According to David, a little training goes a long way, both emotionally and physically.

"The residents enjoy more confidence and independence with the benefits of better joint movement, the ability to stand longer, improvement of leg and hip strength and the fear of falls is diminished as well."

Many residents have experienced the benefits of increased mobility first hand.

One resident was unable to lift her legs into her car without using her hands for support, but she no longer needs to use her hands now. Another client who suffered a stroke and was wheelchair-bound for eight years has now progressed to walking over 200 metres with the assistance of a walking frame. ■

## Quilting gets Barbara going

Barbara West is no stranger to the intricate process of hand quilting and has made countless quilts ranging from bed spreads, wall hangings, blankets and cot quilts for family and friends for the past 20 years.

Barbara, who has made quilts for flood victims, was happy she could put her hobby to good use when the need arose. Her love affair with quilting came about by chance, when a friend suggested they take up a new hobby.

"Before I knew it, we were enrolled in a class. I've always liked handicrafts so taking up quilting seemed like a natural progression!"

Quilts are traditionally made or given to mark important life events such as marriage, the birth of a child, a family

member leaving home, or graduations. However, it is a tradition going out of fashion, according to Barbara.

"Depending on the size and intricacies of the design, a normal handmade quilt could take up three to four months to complete. It's hard work and very time-consuming but the end result is always worth the effort."

Barbara, who hailed from suburban Blackwood, now lives in an ACH Group independent living unit in Willunga.

"Since moving here in 1994, I've enjoyed the independence of having the maintenance of my house taken care of by ACH Group. Quilting is a big part of my life and I'm glad to have my time freed up to indulge in my hobby!" ■



Barbara West was happy her quilting hobby could help flood victims

## A SALA of a night



Milpara resident artist Barbara Strathern poses with her artwork

In an exciting night for ACH Group Milpara's art mob and residents, the Milpara SALA Exhibition night was officially opened by the Mayor of Campbelltown, Simon Brewer.

Over one hundred guests attended on August 11, to view 30 pieces of artwork produced by Milpara residents. From paintings to mosaics, there was something for everyone.

This innovative and overwhelmingly positive initiative would not have been possible without the generous donation from ACH Group's Foundation for Older

Australians, which aims to provide opportunities for older people to experience activities they love and to also try new ones. This haul of three awards is a first for a residential service anywhere in Australia.

The night was also attended by Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency General Manager, Elizabeth Pringle, who presented Milpara with three 'Better Practice in Aged Care Awards' for its pioneering programs including Creative Works, Partners in Positive Ageing, and Health Promotion in the 21st Century. ■

## Royal Adelaide Show orchid win!

Congratulations to Kelvin Staples, a client of ACH Group community services, who recently won the Champion Paphiopedilum at the 2011 Royal Adelaide Show!

Mr Staples has been growing orchids for over 60 years and has been a member of the Orchid Club of South Australia since 1962.

"I've won prizes at the show before, but that's not why I do it. I really enjoy getting out and into my greenhouses to tend to my orchids," said Mr Staples.

Mr Staples has a wide range of orchids in his greenhouses, including cattleyas, slipper orchids and paphiopedilums.

"They take a bit of care, but I think they are just beautiful". ■



Kelvin Staples and his winning paphiopedilum

## New community services hub in Melbourne

Residents at Bedford Heights Estate can now enjoy both housing and community health services under one roof, with the opening of a new Health and Community Services office at the site's Community Centre.

Boasting a hairdressing salon, allied health rooms, a computer lab, library, general meeting spaces and the site's administration office, the Community Centre is the hub of the retirement village in Box Hill.

The new Health and Community Services office has been operating since May 2011 and offers 38 community aged care packages for people with low care and high care needs, as well as those who are experiencing challenges relating to memory loss. Some of the packages are delivered through ACH Group's new service model Consumer Directed Care, giving consumers more choice and control of the services that support them.

The packages are also open to residents of St Thomas Community Retirement Village in Forest Hill, as well as people living in the eastern region of Melbourne who are eligible for packaged care. This is a great opportunity for residents and staff of Bedford Heights Estate and St Thomas to have easy access to information and advice when support and care needs change.

Bedford Heights Estate has warmly welcomed our new staff and we look forward to extending and developing our community services in the future.

**For more information on the services available, please contact our Customer Service Centre on (08) 8349 3515 who will be able to put you in contact with our Melbourne staff. ■**

# Foundation for Older Australians

## Yoga classes a hit at West Park



Sophie Van Eunen (left) and Ellen Rose enjoying their breathing classes as part of the Impaired Mobility Yoga program

When the new 'Impaired Mobility Yoga' program was first introduced to West Park residents, Impaired Mobility Coordinator Heather Seyhun was understandably a bit apprehensive, particularly as many older residents had no idea what yoga entailed.

"At first I thought there would be a bit of closed-mindedness towards it, because people have a preconception that yoga is wrapping your feet around your neck," said Heather.

She could not have imagined how well people would take to the classes, organised by West Park staff once a week in two-session blocks.

'Impaired Mobility Yoga' is a chair-based yoga program using traditional yoga techniques to make it easy for people who may face physical limitations. The program caters for people suffering from various degrees of physical impairment and depression.

It's a holistic program based on the principles of simple exercise, breathing, relaxation, and meditation techniques designed to help regain and maintain health, well-being and independence.

"Some of the people taking part have had a stroke, Parkinson's, depression or some have a limited amount of mobility. One lady is a paraplegic but she joins in. She sets goals to improve her mobility, especially her neck, head, fingers and wrist," said Heather.

When asked what she knew about yoga before participating in the program, West

Park resident Ellen Rose confessed she had no idea what she was getting herself in to.

"I didn't know what they were all about, now I know. I use yoga when I'm sitting in my chair and use the breathing exercises. I'm getting a lot of fun out of them, and I'm learning to relax."

As many residents have noticed, physiologically there are a lot of benefits from yoga such as increasing lung capacity over time and learning to develop a deep sense of calm.

"The breathing exercises works on all the systems of the body so when you slow down the breath, you also slow down the mind, you reduce blood pressure and you can also calm the nervous system," said Heather.

Lifestyle Coordinator, Samantha Manoel is thrilled by the success of the program, particularly as the West Park team originally didn't have the finances to support such an initiative.

"We went through the Foundation for Older Australians to get this program up and running financially through a small grant application," said Samantha.

"Grants like the ones provided by the Foundation allow you to implement ideas that are a little bit different or that's beyond the realms of what you could afford." ■

## Your generosity helps create better lives

The Foundation for Older Australians is driven by a vision to create opportunities for older people with a focus on healthy ageing, independence and emotional well-being.

Between 2004 and 2010, the Foundation for Older Australians funded a total of 58 projects, with 20 projects focused on healthy ageing and 38 projects promoting good life opportunities. Funding was made possible by individual family donors and the generous investments made by ACH Group sponsors. The Foundation for Older Australians has now approved \$235,231 to support older people to live good lives.

The Foundation for Older Australians' efforts have reached and benefited many individuals, far and wide, with an excess of 780 people participating in these projects and approximately 175 volunteers engaged in directly supporting these projects.

It's not surprising then that some of ACH Group's innovative projects are the result of the Foundation for Older Australians' funding. If you would like to make a difference to the lives of older Australians, support the Foundation for Older Australians by making a donation or bequest.

**To find out more or to make a donation, visit our website to download a form:**  
[www.ach.org.au](http://www.ach.org.au) ■