

Turning the Page

ACH
GROUP

Good Lives for
Older People

Latest news, services and developments of ACH Group

Summer 2011

Pumping weights to better community links



Social Links members having a go at the Yankalilla community outdoor gym

Best friends Maureen Stone and Gwyneth Gallagher braved the bad weather, showing the community just how easy it is to stay active at the official launch of the Yankalilla community outdoor gym on October 14.

Through the Social Links program, Maureen and Gwyneth have become two regulars at the Yankalilla community outdoor gym, both benefiting greatly from the exercise.

"I can run a bit now, just a short distance without being breathless. My arms and legs feel better too," said Maureen.

Proudly donning her ACH Group t-shirt, hat, and a "can do" outlook, Gwyneth enjoyed the festivities while catching up on some core strengthening exercises. She attends

classes on a weekly basis, come rain, hail or shine.

"I enjoy the exercise because I feel stronger and I also sleep better now," she said.

Gwyneth who joined Social Links after her husband's death, also found the program helpful in linking her with activities she enjoys within her local community.

The event provided Gwyneth and Maureen not only the chance to talk about the importance of staying fit and active, but also to mingle and chat with the Yankalilla community which included the Mayor of Yankalilla District Council, Mr Paul Newman.

"Initiatives like Yankalilla's community outdoor gym are working examples of how a lot of difference can be made to the lives of others when the community

works together," said ACH Group General Manager Innovation and Development, Jane Mussared.

In her speech to the launch gathering of around 40 people, ACH Group Coordinator, Anita Greening touched on the benefits of reconnecting older people who feel isolated by geography and limited access to transport.

"Over the last three years, more than 150 people across the Fleurieu region have been part of the Social Links program, participating actively in their community and building friendships and interests," said Anita.

A joint 'Good Lives' project of the Yankalilla District council and ACH Group, the gym was funded by a donation from ACH Group Foundation for Older Australians. ■

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CEO's message



Mike Rungie, CEO, ACH Group

At our recent End of Year event, eleven staff were awarded the Good Lives Awards for their outstanding commitment to older people.

Congratulations to all our winners! Staff are way more influential than they think, and the award winners are all the people who use their influence to both delight older people and to support the members of their teams.

ACH Group has also inducted three staff members into the ACH Group Hall of Fame. They join only 12 other people - a group which has not only done great things for older people, but has done it over many years. The Awards Night is a great time for us all to pause, reflect about what we have done over the last year and thank everyone for what they do.

In making awards to individual staff members, we are really thanking everyone. Champions really only ever exist in teams of champions! The feedback that we receive from the many people who are part of the ACH Group community is invaluable to us for many reasons. Not only does it enable us to continually improve the services we offer, but it also helps us to recognise the truly outstanding staff who are committed to our promise of "Good Lives for Older People".

One outstanding staff member who was instrumental in driving the success of our Residential Services is Greg Adey, General Manager Residential Services. Greg, who has been with us for six years will be leaving ACH Group soon to pursue new interests and we wish him well.

As the year comes to a close, I would like to take the opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! 🍷

Housing team takes annual meeting to whole new level

Attending the 2011 Resident Annual Meeting in Findon some 30 km away was a fresh change for Elizabeth resident Gladys Keating. The one hour drive did little to deter her from attending, as she thoroughly enjoyed chatting throughout the bus ride with her neighbours at Knighton Road.

"It was a good thing that transport was provided from door-to-door because we don't drive. We had absolutely no idea where the venue was," said Gladys.

Since moving to Knighton Road seven years ago, Gladys had attended every annual meeting organised by ACH Group.

"It used to be held at our site - just a small meeting involving residents from 11 units. It's a good idea to combine all the smaller annual meetings into one because we get to meet the entire Housing team, the Executives as well as residents from other sites," she said.

"I enjoyed myself very much and would encourage those who missed the meeting to attend it next year," said Gladys.

"Some people were reluctant to attend thinking that the new format would not give them an opportunity to ask questions, which was not true.

"We got to ask questions during the Questions and Answers session, and after

lunch. There was also a table set up at the back of the room for private one-on-one discussion on anything we liked, including gardening and maintenance issues," she said.

Held on October 28, the inaugural combined annual meeting attracted about 120 residents from 24 housing sites. The meeting included an outline of housing financials and initiatives, as well as information on what is happening around ACH Group. There were ample opportunities to meet all the Housing staff, Executives and people living in other ACH Group housing sites.

About 80 per cent of people who attended the annual meeting were happy with the event which not only provided transportation, but also some light entertainment and lunch.

"Only four of us from Knighton Road attended the meeting because others had prior commitments. We made a point to share with our neighbours what they've missed when we got back, and they were very appreciative of it," said Gladys.

"I had a good time at the annual meeting and am really looking forward to attending the next one! Who knows, I might even perform with others for the fun of it!" 🍷



More than 120 residents attended the inaugural combined 2011 Resident Annual Meeting

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 (08) 8159 3632 or email: corporatenews@ach.org.au.

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Building bridges through art

Making a splash at Port Noarlunga Arts Centre, the Riverside Artists' exhibition "Down by the Seaside" had its official opening on Friday, October 7.

Present at the opening were proud Riverside Artists Bob Guild and Norma Scholfield displaying their beachside themed paintings to an impressed audience.

Watercolour enthusiast Bob Guild is one of Riverside Artists' longest serving members. Part of the group since its inception in 1985, Bob has never missed a lesson.

"I enjoy everything about painting and I have since I was a kid. I like getting a photograph and painting it – it's a challenge. I try to put my own touch, you know, different things," he said.

Managed through ACH Group, Riverside Artists is a community based arts group which turned 21 this year. Targeted at older people above 60, the program is designed to provide an opportunity for people who thought they were too old to paint or learn new techniques. It also allows participants to socialise, learn new skills and rekindle old ones.

Norma Scholfield is also a regular and although she requires a hearing aid to hear most conversations, she jokes that



Riverside Artist Bob Guild with one of his masterpieces

she doesn't need to hear to be able to paint.

"For me it's simply relaxing and a challenge. Sometimes it's good to put your work away and come back to it, and try to improve on your technique," she said.

"I think the exhibition is terrific, a bit nerve racking but exciting. It's good to see everything that the group has set out to do, they've done it beautifully."

The arts have also taken centre stage in McLaren Vale, where an intergenerational photographic exhibition between ACH Group McLaren Friends and

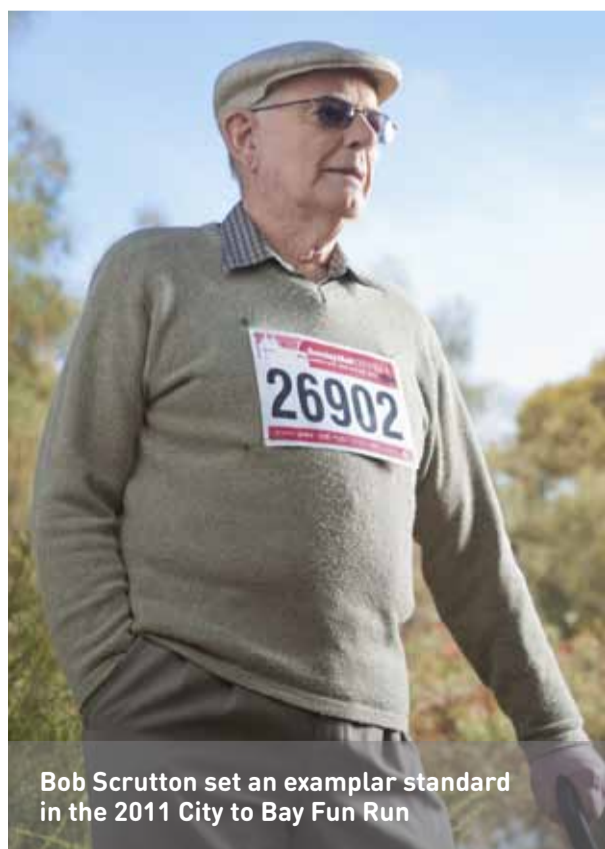
students from Cardijn College titled "If These Hands Could Talk" took place. The initiative's aim was to connect generations through sharing of stories.

ACH Group clients including Neil Parson got together with Cardijn College students to compare the different generations and build new friendships. At the presentation, photographs of the hands of the two generations were placed together, each holding something significant to their lives.

"I've always loved meeting the kids," said Neil. "It's been great working with children and getting to know them." ■

Carrying the baton for healthy ageing

Proving that you're never too old, 85-year-old Bob Scrutton completed a gruelling 12 km walk in one of Adelaide's premier fun runs. Yet Bob's accomplishment was



Bob Scrutton set an exemplar standard in the 2011 City to Bay Fun Run

not attained lightly, having to build up his fitness level from scratch.

"When I arrived at Highercombe, I was on medication. I couldn't walk around the block and to add to that I was also clinically diagnosed as blind. I was in a bad state," he said.

Bob joined one of the gym programs at Highercombe, where he began walking and slowly building back his well-being. As his strength increased, he was able to break through the one km walk barrier to stride it out for five km on most days of the week.

"The sense of wellness that you get after exercising is something that needs to be experienced to be believed," said Bob.

A modest man, Bob does not understand how inspiring his story might be for other older people who have found themselves in similar situations.

"I set a goal to walk the City to Bay Fun Run, with the help of my daughters for the 12 km walk. I don't see what all the fuss is about."

Completing the walk first in his age category in a time of two hours and 42 minutes – Bob's is a remarkable story, and one that the team at Highercombe is proud of.

Highercombe's extensive exercise program includes easy moves and balance classes, gym sessions, walking, swimming, golf, carpet bowls and tennis as part of Highercombe's Partners in Positive Ageing (PiPA) model of well-being.

Winning two Better Practice Awards in high quality residential aged care by an internationally recognised accreditation body, the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency, Highercombe is well set to continue their support of older people living good lives into the future. ■

Foundation for Older Australians

Empowering older people with a voice

After sustaining a serious head injury from a fall, and losing her memory and voice as a result, Elizabeth Trenouth never expected herself to join a choir group.

But that's exactly what she did and to her own amazement, Elizabeth found more than just another sing-a-long group. Along her journey she has found strength, a renewed sense of confidence, companionship and most importantly, her own voice.

Elizabeth, who spent 15 months at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, joined ACH Group's Sing for Joy choir after limited progress with speech therapy.

"For a long, long time, my body couldn't do anything and my brain wasn't working," said Elizabeth.

She discovered the choir by chance, driving past a sign looking for more volunteers. Looking back over her journey, Elizabeth is astonished by the amount of progress she has made, attributing her success to the program.

"Part of my brain has come back. Each week I find myself remembering things that I had forgotten – I'm sure that's because of the classes," she said.

Funded by ACH Group Foundation for Older Australians, the Sing for Joy choir has been run by ACH Group along with professional choir leaders and volunteers since 2010.

The choir consists of a mixed group of 30 older members, many who are frail while some experience memory loss or other conditions which have made it difficult for them to be part of other choirs.

Attracting attention from the community, the program has received further recognition from the Foundation for Older Australians for its outstanding achievement and was given an additional \$20,000 contribution by the Foundation.

Most members have noticed an overall positive impact on their emotional well-being as well as stimulating their physical and cognitive abilities.

"I look forward to it tremendously every week. I especially enjoy the singing, the people and the companionship," said Elizabeth, who has loyally attended the choir since its inception, only missing one session due to the cold.

"The choir leaders are just marvelous! The way that they present the music is wonderful. Their help has been out of this world."

Sing for Joy regular, Rena Langsford, has only missed one session of the choir in the last 18 months. At 80 years old, Rena lives alone and has difficulty with mobility but attends each week.

"I decided to join the group since I started having to think about things that I never had to think about before. Like now, I can't get around without my walker," said Rena.

"I'm hearing songs that I haven't heard for years, especially since I don't like the music that's playing on the radio now."

For Rena who has a history of depression and dementia, the program has offered her a lifeline and new opportunities to establish relationships she otherwise wouldn't have. ■

About ACH Group Foundation for Older Australians

ACH Group is dedicated to creating opportunities for older people to thrive. We believe growing older is like turning a new page and with it comes a sense of great anticipation and optimism.

Our focus on innovation and services that respond to changing needs reflects our desire to shift the way the community thinks about older people.

The Foundation for Older Australians was formed with the vision to create opportunities that enable older people to enjoy activities they love and try new ones.

The Foundation relies on the goodwill and financial support of generous donors. The Foundation is always developing and funding innovative projects that focus on fitness, well-being, and intergenerational activities.

If you would like to make a difference to the lives of older people, please download the donation form from our website: www.ach.org.au. ■



Elizabeth Trenouth (left) and Rena Langsford have made longstanding friendships while attending the Sing for Joy program.