

# Building Volunteer Capability Through Community Partnerships

## A FRESH APPROACH

The Southern Highlands Community Hospice (SHCH) has utilised its strong community partnerships to design a specialised training program for 20 palliative care volunteers. Once trained, the volunteers are rostered to support residents of a community owned aged care facility, Harbison, who are receiving end of life care and who often have little family support.

## OBJECTIVE

Build a sustainable group of well trained, compassionate volunteers to work closely with resident care personnel in providing an accessible and responsive palliative and hospice care program for patients in the Southern Highlands of NSW.

## OUTCOMES

- \* Palliative residents' responses indicate they keenly anticipate, enjoy and value the interaction with volunteers.
- \* Feedback from families and the Harbison Team endorses the program as significantly worthwhile.
- \* Volunteers have developed confidence and a willingness to share and consult as the program has progressed.
- \* Close relationships have evolved with the Harbison Team and the Palliative Aged Care Consultancy Service (PACCS) Clinicians.

## HOW WE WORK

**Recruiting:** Community interaction, social media and a monthly newsletter promote interest and engagement

### Training:

- New volunteers participate in buddy sessions with trained volunteer
- 3-day course based on NSW Palliative Care Handbook and delivered by an experienced senior palliative care clinician, ensuring knowledge of palliative dynamics and how it evolves through an integrated Care Model.
- Volunteers understand their role as a supportive presence and active listener.
- Sessions include Grief and Bereavement Support, Death as a Process, Suffering, Total Pain, Spirituality, Cultural Diversity and Self-care.

### Support:

- Volunteers complete extensive orientation before filling rosters at two aged care facilities.
- Monthly clinical sessions support growth and wellbeing and ensure a sustained volunteer workforce.
- Training in Manual Handling, PPE/Hand Hygiene and Feeding Competency, with additional training in Dementia and Spirituality.
- Residents identified for volunteer support are often receiving additional Palliative Care nursing and medications funded by SHCH.

### Funding:

- An Australian Government Grant.
- Raised through SHCH's 'pre-loved' furniture and clothing store.
- Individual bequests.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Working with Primary and Community Health, local Pharmacists and Doctors. Established Memorandums of Understanding with PACCS, Southern Highlands Private Hospital, Can Assist Southern Highlands, End of Life Angels the SHCH and its 80+ wonderful volunteers provide:

- End of Life (EOL) Palliative Care Nursing
- EOL Palliative Care Pharmaceutical costs
- Funding for specialist Palliative Care nurse training
- EOL Planning & Support
- Biography Service
- Equipment hire



**THANKS** to all the people who have ensured the success of the program, particularly the staff at PACCS and Harbison for welcoming us into their community. Feedback from residents and staff has been very positive and humbling.

