

## Bi-lingual volunteer makes a difference in finding common ground

As individuals become older the importance of maintaining a connection with their past is particularly critical. It supports us to feel more secure in our environment with a degree of familiarity and aids in reducing feelings of isolation. This is even more so for residents in aged cared facilities who are separated from their families, friends and everyday surroundings.

When there is a language barrier, in particular, finding a connection and associated interests can be potentially challenging. However, at [MannaCare](#) we have amazing volunteers who make such a difference to our residents. Three years ago, Sophia asked Manningham Council for suggestions about where she could volunteer. “I wanted to work for someone who needed my help the most,” she says, and so she got in touch with what is now MannaCare.

She has been involved as a volunteer in a variety of roles: as a driver for clients of the rehabilitation services run by MannaCare; as well as helping residents in various other parts of the facility, currently at Melaleuca Lodge. “I volunteered because I thought I needed to help. Society has changed a lot and I didn’t have enough power to change everything but I wanted to help people and do what I could.”

Sophia who was born in China in the tumultuous 1960s is bi-lingual in English and Cantonese. Here, Sophia assists a resident with her lunch while chatting to her in Cantonese. This makes mealtimes much more pleasurable for our seniors. Sophia feels she can “help and make the residents happy” which she enjoys and “is my reward.”

“This place is just the best environment for older people who at this age need interaction so that they are not lonely. There are a lot of activities that they come together to do.”

Sophia who is proud to help the residents participate in those activities hopes her own family might themselves volunteer to help other residents in future.



### For more information about:

#### MannaCare’s Services:

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Volunteering: <http://mannacare.org.au/support-us/>