

Making a difference for those living with dementia

“If I make someone smile, I feel like I have made a difference”, says Priscilla Savopoulos. “I feel like [the clients] are my extended family.”

Priscilla photographed below is leading a discussion on current affairs with clients at MannaCare’s day respite program at Grevillea House.

Dezlie Marrison, Coordinator at Grevillea House says Priscilla’s bright and bubbly personality energises the place.

“The clients cannot help but smile when they see her and speak to her: they relate to her as they would their own grandchildren.”

The program provides social support for frail older people but equally aims to support their carers’ with flexible respite options. The clients love discussing the news. It keeps them active, mentally stimulated and enhances their wellbeing by acknowledging their contribution and knowledge to the conversation. By engaging with the clients in conversation, Priscilla “is able to draw out memories from the past to reminisce and laugh with all”, reveals Dezlie.



Priscilla who is a psychology and law student at La Trobe University has been volunteering at MannaCare for over 5 years, and finds the experience “very rewarding”. She knew she was making an impact in the lives of the clients when she had been away some weeks to do exams. “When I returned, I was told that I was missed [by the clients].”

She is a “real asset to the team”, says Dezlie “because the clients love to see a young person. She relates well to everyone from staff to clients and she brings the clients a different perspective as the clients want to tell her about ‘in their day’”.

The importance of volunteering is not lost on Priscilla who says it helps her gain perspective in life and to determine what is important. “I have learnt not to take a problem home and also to adapt to difficult situations.”

The centre-based day Respite Service operates between 10.00am and 4.00pm, Thursday, Friday and Saturdays.

The Grevillea respite program, suitable for people living with dementia, operates weekly from Monday to Friday from 10.00am to 3.00pm.

For more information about the program:

T: 1300 90 20 23 | **E:** contact@mannacare.org.au

W: <http://mannacare.org.au/our-services/community-services/community-respite/>