

Age is only a number to Aileen with no hint of slowing down

No one would begrudge Aileen if she were to put up her feet up and smell the roses. Well in her 80s, Aileen leads a very busy life with no hint of slowing down.

Her friendship with Helen Larkin (founder of the Cassia House Café) led Aileen to MannCare (formerly Manningham Centre Association) almost ten years ago for a brief stint to help out in the Café “for a week or two” while Helen travelled to Western Australia for a holiday.

Aileen continued volunteering at the Cassia House Café for six years before deciding she wanted to spend more time having conversations with the residents. She usually has about seven people to visit in a day, however, if she sees any resident on their own she still has a chat with them even if they are not on her list, speaking to the residents about ‘anything’.

“I think they look forward to seeing me (even if they don’t say so),” says Aileen. “I talk for ages with some people. I call them ‘my girls’. I love going over. I seem to walk miles [to get from one person to another] which is also good exercise for me,” continues Aileen.



A widow for 22 years, she met her husband Les, at a book-binding firm where they both worked; they were married for 40 years. She has three daughters and a son; six grandchildren and great grandchildren. If this is not enough to keep her busy, Aileen also attends the Lion’s Club, an exercise class and helps out at Church with supper a few times a month on a Sunday morning.

A ‘mad’ Essendon supporter, she also loves gardening, growing roses and azaleas...”and weeds!” she says. Having travelled extensively, she has seen most parts of Australia and has spent time travelling in the UK, USA, Canada and Europe, declaring “I don’t know how people get bored [in retirement].”

“I never thought I would be at MannaCare this long,” states Aileen. But why wouldn’t she be. As Tanya Warms, Volunteers’ Coordinator declares, “She is kind and compassionate always having a pleasant manner about her. She is very resilient.”