

MannaCare volunteer recognised on Australia Day

One of MannaCare's long serving volunteers was recognised on Saturday 26th January with a Menzies Community Australia Day Award presented by local Federal Member, The Hon Kevin Andrews MP.

Geoff Chandler has been volunteering at MannaCare for nearly thirteen years. He came at the request of his long-time friend Margaret (also a volunteer). Someone was needed to assist with Church Services at Doncaster Melaleuca Lodge; and Margaret, knowing Geoff was recently widowed, knew that he possibly had the skills required and also that he potentially had time on his hands.

Tanya Warme, Volunteers' Coordinator, says "It was great to witness Geoff finally being recognised in a public arena for his community volunteering and, the dedication he has given to MannaCare Doncaster Melaleuca Lodge residents for over 11 years."

Geoff has been providing pastoral care to our frail aged residents who cannot attend church services; the tradition being passed down to him by his father who was a Lay Anglican Minister. He is always kind, courteous and respectful of people from all religions spending a lot of his time visiting residents and talking to them individually to help them feel less socially isolated and depressed. The residents all look forward to his visits and show their trust in him by confiding in him because he listens and is non-judgemental.

Now that Norma has passed away, Geoff can be seen in the company of his new companion, a dog, (breed schnauzer) named 'Charlotte', whom he walks every night and takes everywhere. Leisure and Lifestyle Coordinator, Margaret Holland reveals, "Geoff cherishes his dog Charlotte, his faithful companion! And his positive approach to life has a ripple effect, lifting the spirits of those around him."



Still keeping active through tennis, football and golf, Geoff is very involved in the lives of his children and grandchildren as well as keeping in close contact with his nieces and nephews.

Geoff continues coming to MannaCare because he enjoys the company of elderly people saying, "It is a privilege to speak with them." Although it clashes with Probus meetings, MannaCare is the priority as "MannaCare is in need more than Probus and I miss it when I don't come here."