

MCAnews

Celebrating 20 years of service to the Manningham community



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Introducing Three New Managers

MCA is pleased to welcome three new managers to various services operated by the Association.

Following the success of MCA's submission in the last Commonwealth funding round for Community Aged Care Packages, **Valentina (Val) Lamevski** was appointed as Coordinator of the new service in March this year. Val obtained her Bachelor of Nursing (Psychiatric) in 1994 and has since completed a Graduate Diploma in Health Counseling, a Graduate Diploma in Grief and Loss Counseling and a Graduate Diploma in Human Resource Management, as well as other further education. She has worked in a variety of roles, most recently as Case Manager with community aged care packages over the last six years.

"It is exciting times here at Manningham Centre with the commencement of this new program. The program is aimed at providing people with ageing and complex care needs, the opportunity to remain in their own home by connecting them to services that best meet their needs. I have received a warm welcome from everyone at Manningham Centre, in particular at Doncaster Melaleuca Lodge where my office is based. I have worked in Aged Care in both hospital and community settings over the last seven years. My background is in Psychiatric Nursing but I am also an Accredited Grief and Loss Counselor and I am half way through my Masters in Human Resource Management at Monash University. I am committed to lifetime education and have enjoyed learning from peers, managers and clients throughout my career.

I enjoy traveling and will be off to the United States in June for a three week holiday organised prior to my commencement here at MCA. I will be spending time in New York, Los Angeles and Las Vegas. My aim is to see most parts of the world during my life time. I look forward to the challenges ahead, preparing and working towards Quality Reporting which all providers are required to complete by June 2008. The Quality Report will show how we are addressing the standards and related expectations of the program. I am committed to working together to reach our goals."



Val Lamevski, Coordinator, MCA Community Aged Care Packages

As a result of Federal Government funding under the National Respite for Carers Program (NRCP) for overnight respite and respite for employed carers, there has been a significant expansion of services at Grevillea House. Part of this expansion was the creation of a new position of Assistant Manager.

Introducing Three New Managers

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Following advertising and interviews, **Maria Xenofontos** was appointed to the position and commenced on April 3 this year.

"I have had a fantastic welcome to my new position. Everyone at the Centre, especially the staff, carers and clients at Grevillea House, has been very supportive and quickly made me feel part of the team. I have worked in Aged Care for the past 12 years with Fronditha Care Inc. Although most of this time was spent in residential aged care, I also gained a variety of experience in other areas. This included working as a Community Aged Care Packages Coordinator, organising a Volunteer Program and putting together a Community Aged Care Packages manual which included Policies and Procedures to meet the new requirements. Having decided it was time for a change I resigned in 2005 to recommence study and add to my Diploma in Community Services (Welfare Studies). Over those next 12 months I completed a Division 2 Nursing course which I thoroughly enjoyed. During the course I also decided to fit some travel into my agenda taking two months to travel overseas. I had a great time traveling around Greece, visiting the islands, meeting family members and spending time with my own grandparents whom I hadn't seen since I was a young girl.

I am a firm believer in providing the best care and services to clients, which includes being treated with dignity and respect. Staff, clients and family members at Grevillea House are like one big family. Everyone helps each other out, support is offered when required, and a shoulder to cry on (if needed) is always available! The new NRCP funded services have been operating for only a short period but the benefits are already clear. It has been very satisfying to see carers using overnight respite confidently and with peace of mind. Many of these carers have not accessed residential respite before at all. Feedback has been very positive. Carers

have expressed sentiments such as "slept for the first time uninterrupted" and "had time to be me". Another great aspect is hearing the clients ask when they can stay the night again, and wanting to book in a particular night as their friends will also be staying at what clients are calling the 'motel'. Carers do a fantastic job of looking after loved family members at home. I feel privileged to play my part in supporting them through assisting with the establishment and operation of these important new services.



Marina Xenofontos, Assistant Manager, Grevillea House

After 10 years of meritorious service, Karen Blaszak recently retired from her position as Manager, Doncaster Rehabilitation Services. **Bert Brown** was subsequently appointed as her replacement and commenced on June 7 this year. Amongst his formal qualifications, Bert holds a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work and a Graduate Diploma in Public Health. Following early employment as a Social Worker, he gained broad experience in working with, and managing, community health services in South Australia. These roles included Program Manager of community health services at Noarlunga Health Service and Chief Executive of Southern Community Health Service.

"Prior to moving to Victoria some years ago I managed the Adelaide Aquatic Centre which provided me with many opportunities to recognise and address the need for services to be inviting and accessible to all community members, irrespective of age or disability. The Aquatic centre, apart from catering for elite sports training, was also an important venue for the rehabilitation of people of all ages and backgrounds.

I was also responsible for ensuring that the establishment of the Health Consumers Alliance, a peak body for voicing community concerns with health issues, was funded in South Australia for three years. I have been working in Victoria, managing services for Mission Australia based in Frankston and Dandenong for the past two years. I look forward to the opportunity of supporting staff to continue providing valuable services to the Manningham community."

On a personal note, I have lived in Eltham for the past six years with my partner and two daughters.



Bert Brown, Manager, Doncaster Rehabilitation Services

What's happening around MCA?

ANNUAL PLAZA PARTY

The Plaza Party was held at Cassia House in late March. This occasion served to formally acknowledge the contribution staff and volunteers make to the services provided by MCA. Chairman of MCA, Bill Larkin, presented a number of special awards:

Volunteer Service Awards

5 years Richard Eisenbise, Irma Hickey, Elizabeth Naumann, Elaine Parsons, Susan Tyzzer

10 years Carole Mernagh, Lorraine Davies

Staff Award Michelle Dixon

Education Awards Swiddle Athaide, Darlene Balloch, Alex Bloodworth, Lisa Brady, Anna Ciampa, Kylee Coxall, Diane Crowley, Pam Dyson, Sylvia Edwards, Shantel Farmer, Sharon Gammon, Susan Kyrylos, Leanne Lewis, Jill McKenzie, Melissa Moore, Pamela Power, Vesna Trikilis, Sam Vick

Staff Service Awards

- 5 years Bernadette Bux, Cathy Chiu, Cassandra Cordukes, Kim Hannan, Turina Harnett, Andrea Heaney, Julia Laurie, Anna Lewis, Helen Mathews, Connie Olivieri, Mary Santos, Andrea Shand, Louise Tingate, Helen Zhou

- 10 years Mary Bell, Fiona Hart, Cindy Tse

- 15 years Paul Munn, Pamela Oakley, Richard Mason

MINISTERIAL VISIT

The State Minister for Ageing, Santo Santoro, visited MCA on Friday 26 May. He was taken on a brief tour of Grevillea House and the Banksia area of Cassia House before enjoying afternoon tea in the Plaza. He complimented MCA and Manningham Council on the quality of services provided at the Centre.



Senator Santo Santoro, Bill Whiticker - Vice Chairman of MCA and Cr Patricia Young - Mayor of the City of Manningham.

DONCASTER BOWLING CLUB

The ladies section of Doncaster Bowling Club has been a long term supporter of MCA. Members of the Club once again enthusiastically participated in a bowls day in Autumn and raised \$830. Five members are pictured presenting the cheque to Judy Lockwood in the Plaza.



Volunteer Service Award recipients (left to right): Carole Mernagh, Susan Tyzzer, Bill Larkin, Richard Eisenbise, Elaine Parsons

"Happiness is like a cat. If you try to coax it or call it, it will avoid you. It will never come. But if you pay no attention to it and go about your business, you'll find it rubbing up against your legs and jumping into your lap."

William Bennett, Former US Secretary for Education, 1943





What's happening around MCA?

STROKE SUPPORT GROUP

Doncaster Rehabilitation Services (DRS) has established a Stroke Support Group based on an identified need that Manningham residents living with a stroke require extra support. Leonie Brockman, an Occupational Therapist with DRS, was instrumental in driving this initiative, receiving assistance from the Stroke Association of Victoria and members of the Croydon Stroke Support Group. The group commenced in February 2006 and meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from one to three pm.

Leonie Brockman exercising with 2 members of the Stroke Support Group



Plaza Kiosk

The Plaza Kiosk at Cassia continues to be a popular street style café where residents, their families and friends may meet and enjoy a cappuccino and cake every Tuesday and Thursday between 10.30 am and 2.45 pm

The Kiosk is staffed by volunteers and in addition to being an enjoyable outing raises funds for the Centre. Charges are at bargain prices:

- Espresso coffee varieties \$2.00
- Iced Coffee & Milk Shakes \$2.50
- Sandwiches, biscuits and cakes of choice

Please join us for an outing to the Plaza on a Tuesday or Thursday.

Volunteers are rostered on duty am or pm according to their availability either weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

Volunteers are urgently required to continue our happy in-house service.

If you are able to help once a month when you are visiting your friend or family member, please contact Valda Bawden at the office on 9856 1207 (Tuesday to Thursday).

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TADAUST CONNECT

TADAust (Technical Aid to the Disabled Australia) Connect is a company whose aim is to improve independence and increase the quality of life for people with disabilities and the frail aged. TADAust is the national body that represents each of the State subdivisions.

TADAust Connect is the Internet Service Provider that enables people with disabilities, aged pensioners and veterans who hold pension cards to access the internet. The TADAust Connect dial up plan costs \$5.50 per week and includes unlimited time (four hours disconnect, 20 minutes idle), unlimited downloads and a free email account. There is a one off connection fee of \$15.50.

Contact TADAust on 1300 735 439.

[Source: VAHEC Bulletin, Issues 85 and 86]

“When the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem begins to resemble a nail.”

*Abraham Maslow
Psychologist, 1908 – 1970*