



MEDIA RELEASE

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New volunteers make a difference

Twelve new volunteers are looking forward to making a difference to patients with a terminal illness, after graduating from an eight week palliative care support training program at Bankstown Hospital.

South Western Sydney Area Health Service Palliative Care volunteer coordinator Dianne Nicholson said volunteers play an important role in providing short-term respite for carers and their families through the free service.

“Palliative care is coordinated physical, physiological, emotional and spiritual support that helps to relieve pain, symptoms and distress associated with a terminal illness,” Dianne said.

“Our team of volunteers assist clients by offering support and comfort such as gentle massage, aromatherapy, reading and memory book writing, while helping to relieve carers.

“Volunteers help clients feel in control of their treatment and quality of life as part of a specialist palliative care team including doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and social workers,” she said.

The Palliative Care Service now has 61 volunteers trained by the health service, with 24 practising in the Bankstown, Fairfield and Liverpool areas.

Palliative Care volunteer Tricia Parker, who has been involved with the service for nearly twelve years and trains volunteers in massage therapy, said being a volunteer brought immense personal satisfaction.

“It enriches me as a human being to be able to help people going through a difficult time in their lives,” Tricia said.

“Volunteers can help clients in many different ways, whether it be helping to ease worries of the mind through meditation or prompting discussions about sensitive topics such as funeral arrangements.”

The SWSAHS Community Palliative Care Volunteer Training Program was the first to be held at Bankstown in eight years due to the increased demand for volunteers in the area.

The Palliative Care Service is seeking caring volunteers aged 18-years-old or more. Male volunteers or those with a multicultural background are desperately needed.

For further information: contact Dianne Nicholson on 9616 8656

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Contact Katie Perry on 9828 6848 for more information or to arrange an interview