

# MiCare Magazine



*Meaningful  
Relationships*



# Welcome to volume 3 of our MiCare Magazine!

It seems that this year we will be facing even more challenges than we first anticipated. Despite all of these events, we are able to report some excellent news, that is that stage 1 of the new build at Avondrust is near completion. By the time you read this, we would have already moved into the new building and begun preparing for Stage 2 of the development.

With the Avondrust redevelopment, MiCare will launch the new smaller household model. This model will further support MiCare's commitment to the Eden approach. The design features will facilitate closer relationships between Elders, staff and families which is a key component of quality care.

Quality care, good governance which incorporates clinical governance, is a priority for us this year. I am happy to report that the Board have received training in the new aged care standards and have updated and developed a new Strategic Plan for the organisation. The four key areas are to:

- Empower good governance and sustainability
- Empower communities and intergenerational relationships
- Promote growth and development, and
- Building our workforce

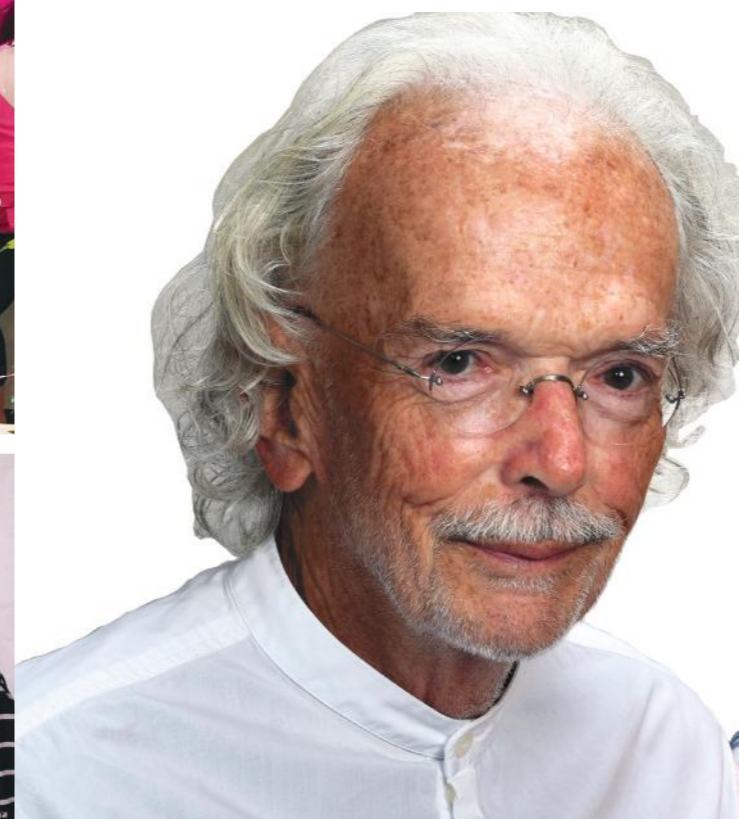
Ignatius Oostermeyer  
Chairman

We are very keen to consolidate the expansion of MiCare this year and this has turned more of our focus inwards. This doesn't mean that we are slowing down - far from it. What it does mean is that we continue to work on the projects that are planned but spending every spare moment on the things which help us to deliver services and programs to our people.

One of our priorities is 'building our workforce'. I am very proud of our staff, their dedication and commitment to Elders and clients. Truth be told, we could not provide the services we do without their incredible support. We are also very committed to the Eden principles and this includes encouraging staff to be in control of their work, to come up with initiatives which will help those we serve, and to take risks and know that when things go wrong, instead of blame, we will look at what went wrong and provide support, mentoring and education where needed.

It also means that relationships are the key to quality services and that the relationships are across all levels - Elders and Clients to staff but also Staff to Staff, Volunteers to Elders/Clients and Staff, families, communities, and anyone who plays a role in MiCare. This edition of the MiCare Magazine is full of stories about relationships. I hope you enjoy reading these as much as I have.

Petra Neeleman  
Executive Director



Front cover image is of our Program Development Manager, Angela Ng (left), with Avondrust Village resident, Jenny (right). Photo by Mars Photography.



# Working in aged care - Kate's story



Overbeek Lodge residents, Frank (left) and Margaretha (centre) with Nurse Practitioner, Kate (right).

As a Registered Nurse for 25 years, I can't believe how much my career has changed. I had always wanted to become a nurse as a young girl, but the reasons I was first drawn to nursing are very different to the aspects I love most today.

As a student nurse, I worked in an aged care home to save money, but I dreamt of moving into the fast paced side of acute health. At 20 years old I graduated from my course and started working in neurosurgery: a role I had originally thought as exciting. However, after 18 months I realised I missed the relationships with Elders that I experienced as a student. I began my return to aged care by taking a position as an Assistant Unit Manager in an Aged Care Rehabilitation Hospital.

I loved the positive side of ageing, and spent 8 years helping to restore independence and confidence in people as they recovered from illness or surgery. But there was still something missing – the strong bonds I had formed when providing that deep level of complete care.

I have been at MiCare for 10 years now, initially as a Care Coordinator and more recently as the Nurse Practitioner across our

"I enjoy providing support, education and a listening ear for our Elders and their family and friends."

residential sites. I work together with Registered Nurses and attending doctors, and find my insight and input is valued regarding Elders' care needs.

I enjoy providing support, education and a listening ear for our Elders and their family and friends. I also get to teach and mentor the care staff, and hopefully pass on my passion and enthusiasm for older people. It is an honour to care for the ageing members of our community, and I am the one that is truly blessed.

**Kate van Duuren**  
Nurse Practitioner

We encourage our residents to enjoy every day, to celebrate what they are capable of doing at their age, rather than worry about what they can no longer manage. Our staff work with the same residents all the time, so there are genuine relationships there, often developed over years. At MiCare, we feel strongly that our Elders should feel at home where they live. This is a place of calling each other by first names, of telling stories, of encouraging pets, plants, children and family to be part of the environment. Many of our staff members are multi-lingual, to communicate with our many migrant Elders.

To learn more about **MiCare Residential Aged Care Living** in Victoria and Queensland, please feel free to contact us. Listed below are reception numbers for all of our residential aged care homes in Victoria and Queensland:

**Avondrust Lodge - VIC** (03) 9788 9020  
1105 Frankston-Dandenong Road, Carrum Downs VIC 3201

**Margriet Manor - VIC** (03) 9728 7400  
722 Mt Dandenong Road, Kilsyth VIC 3137

**Overbeek Lodge - VIC** (03) 9728 7450  
736 Mt Dandenong Road, Kilsyth VIC 3137

**Prins Willem Alexander Lodge - QLD** (07) 3822 0800  
62 Collingwood Road, Birkdale QLD 4159

Call us on 1800 MICARE (1800 642 273), email [info@micare.com.au](mailto:info@micare.com.au) or visit [www.micare.com.au](http://www.micare.com.au)

There have been a lot of changes in the aged care industry since July 2019. The biggest change is the introduction of Aged Care Quality Standards by the Government, which helps to ensure that aged care providers across Australia perform services with their clients' best interests at heart. The eight new standards direct both Residential and Home Care programs to focus on Elders' total wellbeing by giving them as much freedom, independence, and choice as possible.

At MiCare, we are very supportive of the new standards, as these echo the practices that we have undertaken for many years. Put simply, we believe that all people should be valued and respected, no matter their stage of life. For this reason, all of our programs and staff are guided by an approach called 'person-centred'. Person-centred care is very different from the traditional 'medical' model of aged care, which only focuses on treating physical health. As person-centred care providers, we prioritise the joy of our clients and seek to improve their total wellbeing in as many ways as possible.

The Elders' decisions constantly help to shape many aspects of our services at MiCare. For example, in Residential Care we

invite residents to assist with menu planning, and in Home Care we ask clients for their feedback on new publications before printing. We have also asked Elders to assist with job interviews for new potential staff members. Sometimes, it is the smallest things that make a difference in person-centred care, such as following residents' wishes to watch the sun rise or relax in bed after breakfast. By connecting with people and listening to their stories and opinions, we empower them to make personal choices that lead to meaningful and enjoyable lives.

Whilst the new standards have resulted in some additional preparation and reporting for our Residential and Home Care programs, we now have even more information to provide better care and services to our residents and clients. We are delighted to say that 2 of our residential aged care sites have been through accreditation visits under the new standards and were successful in meeting the requirements. Person-centred care is so much more than a set of standards at MiCare: it is a 'way of being' which colours everything we do, and we have seen it make such a positive difference to our clients and their families.

**Karen McCauley**  
General Manager Quality, Risk & Compliance

## Alleviating loneliness & making friends



Image by Unsplash

As we go through life, it's important to remain connected with others for our mental wellbeing. Depression can sneak up on anyone, and can be caused by a number of reasons. Our bodies might not work as well as they used to, and our family and friends might move or pass away. Often depression can simply be caused by loneliness. A number of recent studies have shown that up to 50% of people over 70 are depressed because they feel lonely and isolated.

Having someone to chat to and share a moment with can make all the difference in enjoying a meaningful life. At MiCare, The Eden Domains of Wellbeing help us to better understand our feelings, and identify areas in our lives that are important and bring joy. For example, we need to feel we have meaning and purpose, and feel that we belong. Being connected with others allows us to experience a wonderful sense of wellbeing and happiness.

As we grow older, one way of remaining socially active is being part of a retirement village community, where the hum of life is all around. Our residents enjoy the company of friends and familiar familiar faces, but still

"At MiCare, The Eden Domains of Wellbeing help us to better understand our feelings, and identify areas in our lives that are important and bring joy."

remain independent and live their lives exactly how they want to. If some of this rings true for you or a dear one, please reach out to us for a chat. We would love to speak with you and welcome you to one of our friendly communities.

**Darren Schier**  
Retirement Living Manager (VIC)

If you would like to find out more about MiCare independent and retirement living please contact Darren!

0433 997 338

darren.schier@micare.com.au



## The new Aged Care Quality Standards

Avondrust Lodge Elder, Riet, at one of our Lifestyle events.





# Helping people to to maintain quality of life at home

Karen (pictured above) one of our Home Care Advisors for the East based in Victoria.

I have been working at MiCare as a Home Care Advisor since early 2018. One of my clients is Leon\*, who has been receiving Home Care assistance from MiCare since 2015. It has been a pleasure getting to know Leon, and I've been glad to meet his changing needs over the years with our flexible and accommodating services.

When Leon signed for up for Home Care Services in 2015, he required fairly low support. However, in 2018, a number of things happened in Leon's life that led to him needing extra help. Sadly, Leon's health worsened, and his wife (who helped care for him) passed away. Although very supportive, Leon's family also became less available to assist: a common reality for many families with older loved ones in Australia.

Following these events, I worked with Leon and his daughter to organise additional services. During this process it was important to consider Leon's 'wants' as well as his 'needs'. Leon is quite an independent man who enjoys his own free time and company. By respecting and balancing Leon's support requirements with his personal lifestyle choices, we have been able to arrange services that enable Leon to experience life in the best way possible.

Leon's Home Care Package funding has been used to provide cleaning, gardening, social and transport support, as well as support

with meals, shopping and Occupational Therapy. We also installed a Google Home unit that responds to voice and assists Leon with memory issues by reminding him about his daily appointments.

In addition, we arranged a driving assessment so Leon can continue to drive locally, which is important to retain independence and freedom. We have also used funding to reduce risks for Leon around the home. For example, we replaced Leon's gas stove with an induction cooktop, repaired electrical wiring, installed electric lift chairs, and set up a personal alarm that Leon can use if he needs help. All changes have been made in keeping with Leon's wishes, and this support has been invaluable to ensure that he can live safely and comfortably at home, as is his personal choice.

As a MiCare Home Care Advisor I have the honour of helping Leon and many others maintain their quality of life, and I hope to continue to do this for a long time to come.

\*Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals.

**Karen Ridley**  
Home Care Advisor

Peter Mounsey, the "Million Mile Man", is one of our treasured QLD Home Care clients with a lifetime of stories to share. At just 14 years old, Peter joined the Navy and scrubbed decks aboard the Australian ships in World War II. Though he loved being at sea, he witnessed horrific events during the war which were particularly confronting given his young age. However, Peter's early experiences certainly didn't hold him back from living a remarkable life.

As a late teen, Peter met his wife Lesley through social functions. The pair fell in love quickly, and at 30 years old, they became the first Australian couple to sail around the world. Aboard their 37ft yacht, the "Larapinta", Peter and Lesley travelled to England, where they worked for some time. After leaving London, the couple visited the West Indies, Antigua Island, the Galapagos Islands, Tahiti and Fiji before returning to the Sunshine Coast. The voyage took them 4 years in total, and earned them a great deal of respect in the sailing community.

Peter and Lesley's exciting journey continued upon returning home, as Lesley went on to become a talented potter, and Peter a successful horse endurance rider. Peter also continued to deliver yachts by sea, and estimates that he has travelled more than a

"...at 91, Peter is still seeking adventures as he has done throughout life."

million miles over the years.

In 2015, Lesley sadly passed away after years of ill-health, and Peter speaks of his love for her often. However, at 91, Peter is still seeking adventures as he has done throughout life. Recently he set an Australian speed record (91mph) on a 77 year old motorbike in South Australia. He hopes to go again in 2020 to see if he can reach 100mph.

Just as Peter considers himself incredibly lucky to have had such extraordinary life experiences, we also feel honoured to support such an inspiring and courageous individual.

**Myshell Hyde**  
PCA (QLD)



# Living an adventure! - Lesley & Peter's colourful story

Lesley (left) pictured with her husband, Peter, on their yacht on one of their many travels.

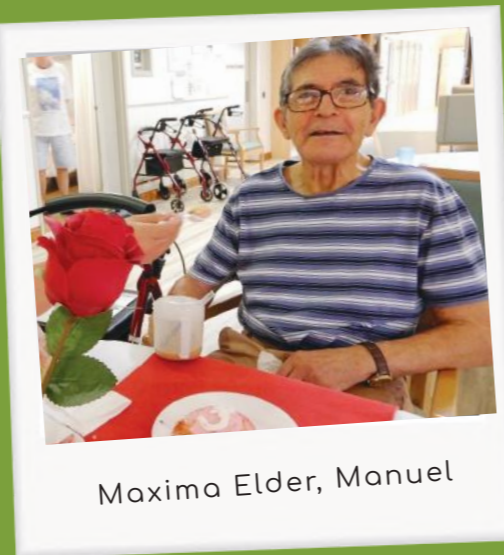
# Life at Prins Willem Alexander Lodge...

It has been an exciting start to the year at PWA, with Elders and staff organising lots of events and activities. Below are some of our highlights from 2020 so far!

## Valentine's Day Celebrations



Jonkers Elder, Norma

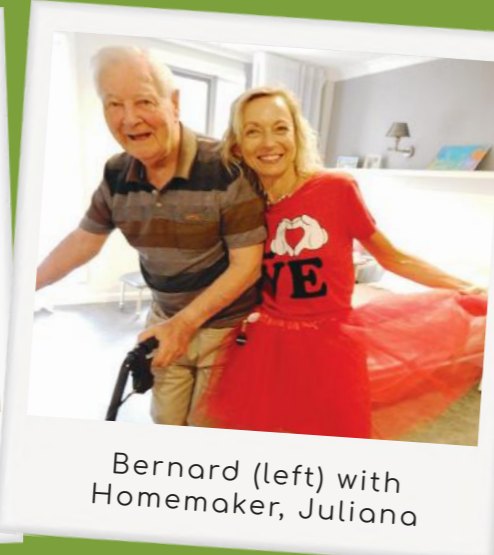


Maxima Elder, Manuel

On February 14th, we had a special Valentine's Day afternoon tea which was greatly enjoyed by the Elders and staff. Our residents Nel, Jann, and Jan whipped up some delicious homemade muffins to celebrate with the help of our fabulous volunteer, Kitty. It was a perfect summer's afternoon, sitting on our balcony sharing a glass of wine together. It doesn't get much better than this in Queensland!



Jan (left) with Volunteer, Kitty (right)



Bernard (left) with Homemaker, Juliana



Nel (left) with Jann (right)



(From left to right) Johanna, Marja, Hanny, Paula and Jenny

## Gospel Singing

Every Tuesday, a dedicated group comes to Juliana to sing gospel music with the Elders. The gospel group has gathered a large following, and many family and friends come to join in each week. We are grateful for this group to visit every week, providing the chance for some special memories for Elders and their loved ones.



(From left to right) Ali, Eva, Evelyn, Tom and Jenny

## Tulip Room



Cora



Joan

Many of our Elders enjoy getting involved in arts, crafts, and games. A rejuvenated Tulip room has brought much joy to those who like to create things! Several families have donated wool, paper, and even sewing machines that have been quickly put to use.

## Funky Fridays!

Every Friday, the Jonkers team goes to special lengths to decorate the dining hall. We have celebrated Fridays with various themes including different colours, hats, and the jungle. Our Funky Fridays always lead to a lot of laughs for both Elders and staff!



# Residential aged care living re-imagined



A drone image of the progress of the new build in November 2019.

We are all so excited about moving to the new building at Avondrust – both staff and residents. Apart from the building being state-of-the-art with new supportive technology which will assist with the care of our Elders, a number of important upgrades have been made which reflect MiCare’s person-centred care philosophies.

“In the new building, there are only 12 Elders per household, which creates a more homely, family atmosphere.”

**Kate Kelly**

General Manager Residential Services



In the new building, there are only 12 Elders per household, which creates a more homely, family atmosphere. Each resident has their own large bedroom and ensuite, and rooms have been designed to capture natural light which makes for a brighter and healthier environment. Residents’ rooms are near common areas, and each household has its own dedicated team, which enables closer relationships between Elders and staff. Each household features its own kitchen, dining room, lounge area and expansive balcony, so Elders can have as much or as little interaction with each other as they like.

During February and March, we are busy moving into our new home and the transition team is hard at work. Just like any other house move, there are lots of things we are bringing with us, but also other items that have served their purpose. It will take some time for us to settle in, and everyone is being very patient which I thank them for. When the move is completely over and we have settled, we will plan a housewarming party, which is something we are very much looking forward to.

If you would like to find out more about the **MiCare Avondrust Lodge re-development** in Carrum Downs, please contact Monique or visit our website!

- 0403 453 437
- monique.vandam@micare.com.au
- www.micare.com.au



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# Dignity of Risk

- the freedom to make our own choices



Kate (second from the left) with her mum, Joan (centre, on a donkey) in the mountains of Morocco.

At 81, my Mum Joan rode a donkey through the mountains of Morocco. But before she saddled up, others in the tour group suggested she shouldn't be riding: they said that she was too old and frail, and that she could fall off or have a heart attack.

Mum was a bit annoyed that others were trying to make decisions on her behalf. Although she was a little worried, she was very excited, and certainly able to make choices for herself. She ignored the others... and guess what? Nothing bad happened. In fact, the donkey ride turned out to be one of her favourite life experiences.

In residential aged care, we would call Mum's experience "Dignity of Risk". Dignity of Risk simply means that for an individual to enjoy their life, they must have the freedom to make their own decisions, even if there is some risk involved. Being able to make choices is essential to a person's self-worth and happiness, and as aged care providers, it is important that we value both the length and the quality of someone's life when providing care and services.

For a long time, people in residential care were discouraged and prevented from making decisions by doctors, aged care staff, and family members. Even though they had lived long lives and had made many great life choices in their younger years, others decided that they needed protection once they entered a residential home.

"At all stages of life, having the freedom to make decisions and take risks gives us a sense of hope, empowerment and joy."

Dignity of Risk has been recognised as a vital part of consumer directed care for some time in the aged care industry, and it is now a requirement of the new Aged Care Quality Standards. This means that aged care providers must demonstrate that they actively help residents to make choices and take risks to help them live the best lives they can. There are some cases where it may not be possible to follow residents' wishes, such

as when the person's decision would require the aged care company to provide an unacceptable standard of care. In these situations, aged care providers still respect residents' rights and opinions by helping them to better understand the risk, and looking for other solutions together.

"...aged care providers still respect residents' rights and opinions by helping them to better understand the risk, and looking for other solutions together."

By supporting Dignity of Risk and encouraging people to make choices, aged care providers strengthen residents' self-esteem and self-respect. At all stages of life, having the freedom to make decisions and take risks gives us a sense of hope, empowerment and joy. In the case of my Mum Joan, the risk she took with a donkey ride in Morocco brought her such happiness that she still talks about it to this day.

Kate Kelly  
General Manager Residential Services

If you would like to learn more about MiCare Residential Aged Care Living and Respite in Victoria and Queensland please feel free to contact us!

- 1800 MICARE (1800 642 273)
- info@micare.com.au
- www.micare.com.au



# Beautiful personalised doors for Elders



Margriet Manor Elders, Jane (left) and Eva (right) with Lifestyle Co-ordinator, Marianne (centre)  
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(From left to right, clockwise) rolls of decal to be installed, Caroline from True Doors, preparing a door for installation, John from True Doors placing the print on top of a door, and Margriet Manor Elders, Lyle (left) and Jane (right).

Recently I heard of a novel idea that I felt would add a special touch to our residential homes and bring joy to our Elders. A few people mentioned that Elders' rooms could have different door designs to provide a greater sense of personal space.

I looked into this further and found vinyl decals with real front door motifs that could be applied to existing room doors. Knowing these could make a real difference to residents' lives, we decided they were worth a try.

"Elders now recognise their own room more easily and enjoy a brighter, more homely living environment."

Waterlilie house. Elders and their families loved choosing their designs, and some Elders picked out a design they remembered from their childhood homes. The personalised doors have been a wonderful success. As they were being installed, there was a fantastic buzz around the home. Elders now recognise their own room more easily and enjoy a brighter, more homely living environment. The doors have also motivated Elders to tell stories about their past.

Seeing the difference the new doors made, we set to raise funds for decals in the other houses. We held a Christmas raffle with 12 handmade quilts donated as prizes by our Executive Director, Petra. The raffle was a great success and we are now able to install the decals for our Elders at Margriet Manor and Overbeek Lodge as well.

Marianne Van den Bronk  
Lifestyle Co-ordinator Margriet Manor

When we met with the Elders and their families to discuss the idea, they were excited to go ahead, so we started with



# Sharing Chinese culture with Elders



Community Engagement Officer, Vivian (pictured above) talking about Lunar New Year and Chinese cultural traditions to Elders at Overbeek Lodge, Kilsyth.

As a Chinese living in Australia, I find it a great opportunity to share our culture and traditions. This year I was asked to give a fun and interactive Lunar New Year presentation to the Elders at Overbeek Lodge. Lunar New Year is one of the most important traditional holidays not only in China, but also across the globe.

To celebrate the year of the Rat, Elders enjoyed a special morning tea with decorations, where they learnt more about the stories and meanings behind Lunar New Year traditions. Although many people already know that fire crackers, lion dancing and red clothes are symbols of Lunar New Year, few people know the story behind this tradition. According to ancient Chinese legend, people discovered that fire crackers and red items were magic keys to scaring away 'Nian', the angry monster that visited at the end of the lunar year. Thus, it became a tradition which is still celebrated today. Our Elders were also keen to find out about their Chinese Zodiac animals, and the lucky meanings behind them. Although these are just myths and legends, the residents enjoyed

"...the more we know each other and celebrate our differences, the better we appreciate our unique strengths."

learning more about Chinese culture and traditions.

Australia is becoming increasingly diverse with people from different backgrounds. "My experience has taught me that the more we know each other and celebrate our differences, the better we appreciate our unique strengths." says Debra, who is our Lifestyle Co-ordinator at Overbeek Lodge.

**Vivian Bai**  
Community Engagement Officer

# Adjusting to a new country



Chinese Social Support Group clients, Cheng (left) and Mary (right.)

My parents who are now in their 80s, and immigrated to Australia in 2017. Although they had visited Australia often, it was challenging to move away from all they knew in Malaysia. It has been a slow and steady process getting accustomed to a new country, but the MiCare Knox Chinese Social Group has really helped them to adjust to their new lives in Australia.

There is truly a sense of belonging in the community group my parents attend. My parents have said that the care workers at the Social Group are extremely caring, patient and helpful. The meetings are held in a church in Wantirna South, and it is a comfortable, bright and happy environment with great facilities. Although my parents did not know what to expect in the beginning, they have now made plenty of new friends and look forward to every Monday.

They laugh together, share stories of their lives and their pets, and encourage each other to eat well and live well. They also do group exercises, craft activities, and go out for lunches and excursions. My dad, who has never done any craft in his life, recently made a Christmas decoration in one of the group sessions, which my Mum has proudly hung on their door!

Being part of a community with others close

in age and who share similar cultural attributes is very important. The members of the group know how it feels to be older and from another country, so they understand each other on a deeper level and try to help each other. This is a fantastic initiative, and families should encourage their elderly parents to join as it will help them to be less isolated, connect with other people, and feel better overall.

**Meiling Tan**  
Social Support Group client daughter



Chinese Social Support Group clients (from left to right), Cheng, Mary and their other friends in the group, Lin, Im and Doris



MiCare's  
Menno van Ruyven  
Scholarship Fund  
- Sue's story

MiCare Menno van Ruyven Scholarship Fund award recipient, Susan 'Sue' Iepema with her certificate frame. [www.micare.com.au](http://www.micare.com.au) 20

The purpose of the **Menno van Ruyven Memorial Scholarship Fund** is to assist future leaders by contributing to the cost of furthering their education. To be awarded the scholarship, staff must make a significant improvement to community life at MiCare.

The Menno van Ruyven Memorial Scholarship Fund Award is open to employees of MiCare who are able to demonstrate achievement and commitment to improving migrant community life through:

- Leadership
- Programs to enhance lifestyle
- Community services
- Humanitarian services as it relates to MiCare
- Nursing, social work or other similar roles
- Dementia care
- Palliative care
- IT related to the delivery of services
- Financial and administrative management

Submissions must be received in hard copy and electronic format by 30th of September 2020. For more information and how to apply please contact us via email on [info@micare.com.au](mailto:info@micare.com.au).



One of our 2019 recipients was Susan 'Sue' Iepema, who works as our PCA Medication Endorsed at Avondrust Lodge. This is Sue's story:

I am so honoured to have received the Menno van Ruyven Memorial Scholarship Fund Award, as this has helped me to continue doing what I love.

In 1976, I permanently returned to Australia after living and working in Holland for an extended period. I first came to MiCare as an EN (Enrolled Nurse) in 1995, and adored the cosiness at Avondrust lodge. Every day I looked forward to caring for the resident Elders and listening to their life stories. I enjoyed learning about residents' cultural backgrounds, the languages they spoke, their past careers, their families, and their ups and downs in life.

A few years later, my career took a slightly different turn. In 2000, I started to move away from nursing and completed aromatherapy and massage courses. I kept visiting Avondrust lodge every week to help Elders feel more comfortable by easing their muscles and joints. I did return to nursing at MiCare as a Personal Care Assistant (PCA), and also completed an extra course that taught me to assist Elders with medication. However, there were many changes in the

aged care industry soon afterwards, and I found myself without any relevant qualifications.

"I enjoyed learning about residents' cultural backgrounds, the languages they spoke, their past careers, their families, and their ups and downs in life."

I decided to go out on my own and enrol in a Certificate IV in Nursing, but the course came with a large cost. I am so grateful to have received the MiCare Menno van Ruyven Scholarship Fund as this has allowed me to pay off most of the course fees. MiCare is a great company to work for, and I have so many wonderful and dedicated colleagues. I hope to continue caring for our Elders for as long as I can.

**Susan 'Sue' Iepema**  
PCA Medication Endorsed (Avondrust Lodge)



## Promoting equality & respect in the community



Participants (from left to right), Ed, Steven and Robert, in our Safer and Stronger Communities Family Violence Prevention Pilot project at our MiCare Sunshine office.



Project presenters (from left to right, centre) Caroline and Arati.

MiCare is excited to be delivering a project that will help to prevent violence and discrimination. Funded by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Safer and Stronger Communities Family Violence Prevention Pilot project assists us to develop better ways of promoting safe and respectful behaviours, both in the community and the workplace.

As part of the project, we recently surveyed our staff members about whether they felt equal and respected at work. The responses were very positive. Most employees felt that leaders were respectful towards staff regardless of gender, ethnicity, faith, ability, class, sexuality or age. Many employees also believed that leaders were taking action to improve gender equality in the workplace. We did identify some areas for improvement, and



"Many employees also believed that leaders were taking action to improve gender equality in the workplace. We did identify some areas for improvement..."

these are currently an area of focus. We also had 23 MiCare leaders attend extra training which gave them additional skills to support staff and clients who might be experiencing family violence.

The project is also supporting refugee and migrant communities through group gatherings in Melbourne's West. During these gatherings, members from the Ethiopian, South Sudanese, Cameroonian, and Somali communities come together to discuss new ways of addressing the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that lead to violence in the community. Some of the members have even brought their own traditional home cooked meals to share with others.

In addition, local services have been involved to help communities to develop more positive attitudes towards gender. Six community meetings have been held, with presentations from key partners including WEstJustice, Victoria Police, InTouch Multicultural Centre against Family Violence and Multicultural Centre for Women's Health. With the support of these services, communities are supported to promote equal and respectful relationships between women and men.

At MiCare, we believe that everyone should feel safe, respected, valued and equal. To the communities, partners, MiCare staff, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and local services, we thank you for your support and contribution to this project.

We work with eligible clients to provide a range of services, including:

- Casework, information, advice, advocacy, and referral to specialist service providers
- Community education through workshops, offering information and education on life in Australia
- Group work that involves educational, social and/or recreational activities
- Community development to work

If you would like to learn more about MiCare Community & Settlement Services in Victoria, please feel free to contact us!

1800 MICARE (1800 642 273)

info@micare.com.au

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"...members from the Ethiopian, South Sudanese, Cameroonian, and Somali communities come together to discuss new ways of addressing the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours."



Despina Haralambopoulos  
General Manager Community Services





## Supporting students of non-English speaking backgrounds

Laverton College students (from left to right) Tiese Sa, Snow White and Susan, at MiCare's Family Learning Clubs (FLCs).

MiCare's Family Learning Clubs (FLCs) provide support to students and their parents who are migrants or refugees that have recently arrived in Australia. Students from non-English speaking backgrounds are welcomed into a culturally safe and friendly environment where they can receive academic support. Dedicated volunteer tutors help students to complete their homework and studies, and improve their English language skills.

FLCs are currently running at Werribee Secondary College, Werribee Primary School, Laverton College and Caroline Springs Library and Learning Hub on a weekly basis for 2 hours after school. These clubs have shown to increase students' participation in class, as well as relationships with their friends, school staff, MiCare and other support organisations in the community.

The FLCs also run regular information sessions for parents, providing them with the knowledge and skills they need to confidently help their children and settle into the community. Previous sessions have included topics such as 'raising children in Australia' and 'career pathways'. This year, the FLCs plan to cover 'cyber safety', 'parenting in a new culture', 'understanding the Victorian education system' and 'digital literacy'. These opportunities help parents

to be more involved in their children's educational and social development, and become an active part of the broader community.

"Students from non-English speaking backgrounds are welcomed into a culturally safe and friendly environment where they can receive academic support."

In 2020, MiCare's FLCs are funded by the Australian Communities Foundation through the Centre for Multicultural Youth, Melton City Council, and the Department of Home Affairs. MiCare will continue to build on the work of these clubs to further assist refugee and migrant students to succeed at school in Australia.

**Jaelyn Molloy**  
Settlement Services Team Leader (Outer West)



## Assisting clients to find their dream career!

MiCare's Education Co-ordinator, Warren, at MiCare Oakleigh office.

At MiCare, our mission is to enable migrants to have comfortable, enjoyable, dignified and meaningful lives. One program that helps us to achieve this mission is the Skills for the Workforce (SFTW) program, which is particularly designed for people with diverse backgrounds with gaps in their education or employment history.

This fun and engaging three-week course helps people get back to work, study or volunteering through activities that empower them and build their employability.

Topics are tailored to the participants of each course, but often include:


- Career guidance, research and exploration
- Assessing and evaluating skills
- Setting goals and making plans for employment
- Writing resumes and application letters
- Learning and practising interview techniques
- Understanding OHS and fair work conditions

One of our recent participants, Jade, found a career that she loves after completing the

the course. At first Jade was unsure about her career direction, but after identifying her skills and strengths and receiving some career guidance, Jade decided she would like to work in the travel industry. Flash forward to today – Jade is currently working at Melbourne Airport as a Passenger Services Agent and travelling the world planning to start a travel blog.

**Warren Brewer**  
Education Co-ordinator

MiCare runs the Skills for the Workforce program throughout the year and if you (or someone you know) is interested in participating, please feel free to contact Warren!

 (03) 7001 2514

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Angela C

I moved to Australia from Columbia last year. The process of rebuilding one's life in a new country is never easy, but I found the volunteering program helped me to embrace my new home quicker.

When I first met Bonnie\*, I remember being drawn to her lovely, warm personality. Our conversations were formal to begin with, but as time passed by, we started to talk about our lives. As our talks grew more carefree and natural each weekend, we got comfortable as friends. We enjoyed talking about our younger years over cakes and tea, and discovered our personalities were quite similar. We also shared stories of sadder times, like missing our homes in our country of origin.

Over time I began to think to myself that this is a truly wonderful friendship in which we are able to confide in one another and share life stories of both happiness and sadness and everything in between. Bonnie is so witty, and has this amazing gift of being able to lift your mood just by smiling. I am truly grateful for this volunteer experience and proud of my friendship with Bonnie, as it has helped me to understand the saying "giving is always better than receiving"!

\*Name has been changed to protect the identity of client



Joe

At the end of 2018 I started to look for opportunities to fill my time in the lead up to my retirement. After hearing about MiCare from a friend, I got in touch and was accepted as a volunteer. Since my first day volunteering at MiCare, I have not looked back.

As part of the Friendly Visiting program, I began visiting Mary at her home every week. Along with the other residents and staff at the retirement village, I really enjoy Mary's company as she is such a vibrant and lively person. During our visits we would often visit a little cafe for a chat over tea and cake, and we also formed friendships with others that joined our catch ups.

On Tuesdays I started attending group get-togethers with Elders at MiCare's Avondrust Lodge. We sit together and tell stories and jokes, play games like rummykub and klaverjassen, have lunch, and go for walks. Lots of fun is had by all! Volunteering is such a rewarding thing. My wife passed away five years ago, but volunteering has really helped me to overcome feeling lonely. I love being able to see the Elders smile and have a nice time, and on my way home from these visits I always I feel happy knowing I've made a positive impact on somebody else's day.



Paloma

In April 2017 I moved to Melbourne from Spain, and after settling into my new home, I decided it was time to start giving back to the community. I always had an awareness of loneliness among aged people, and felt that I could help give the love and care they deserve by volunteering at MiCare.

Erin from MiCare connected me with Angela, a lovely lady in her eighties who had moved to Melbourne from Sicily at a young age. Having suffered two strokes, Angela had difficulty speaking, but she loved listening to stories and could understand without issues.

Being immigrants I think helped us to connect on a deeper level. I of course wished that Angela could speak back to me, as I knew her story was astonishing. My most special moment with Angela was during a visit right before Christmas. It was my last day before flying back to Spain for the holidays. Just as we were saying goodbye, I told her "Buon Natale" which means "Merry Christmas" in Italian. She said it back, and it was the first time I heard her voice.

Sadly, Angela passed away a few months after that day. I am very thankful to her and her daughter for opening their doors to me. I will value the moments I had with Angela forever.

# Stories from our volunteers



Angela O

People always ask volunteers like myself why we volunteer. When I first moved into Prins Willem Alexander Retirement (PWA) Village in Birkdale, I felt quite lonely. After I while, I realised that if I could help someone else overcome their loneliness, that would in turn help mine.

When I started to volunteer, the first thing I noticed was the number of amazing volunteers who work at PWA. Some have many years under their belt, and together they keep the PWA motto alive, "met elkaar for elkaar" in Dutch or "with each other for each other" in English. While we are all alone in a sense, it is good for the soul to know we always have the support of someone else.

Since I started volunteering with MiCare, I have felt blessed to be surrounded by the supportive team at PWA, and I have made some wonderful friends. Volunteering has saved me from loneliness, and helped me to focus on what I do have rather than what I don't have. My message to other volunteers is to keep giving and being a part of the ripple effect that happens when you help others.

# Get in touch with our MiCare family!

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## Thank you from the MiCare family!

Your support of MiCare and our mission is appreciated by those who need it most, such as clients within our social support groups, residents in our homes and to the people with our joint partner settlement projects.

None of our work would be possible without our incredible staff, volunteers, donors and supporters. Thank you for your ongoing dedication and support in helping MiCare improve the quality of life for the many migrants and refugees we support. Thank you for being a very important part of our growing MiCare family.

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) resources

To view important information and links, including translated information for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds regarding COVID-19, please visit [www.micare.com.au](http://www.micare.com.au)

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