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From the Editors

As we reach the end of a busy year, the CVS would like to use this special time of the year to express our sincere gratitude to our amazing and dedicated volunteers who have supported the CVS and its growth over the years. We are most thankful for the blessings of working with people who care about the community, the humanity and the wellness of the elderly. We thank YOU all for your ongoing commitments and infinite support of the CVS, not to mention the tender loving care you have provided to the elderly in residential aged care homes.

End-of-Year Get-together

The End-of-Year Get-together on 2nd December had provided a great opportunity for the CVS to thank YOU for the hard work you've done throughout the year. It is also an opportunity for you to meet other volunteers from both your homeland and countries around the world. We hope those who had attended the Get-together, had an enjoyable time. Please recap some of the highlights of the day on P.4 & 5.

Good News Stories

In this issue, the CVS has received a heart-warming story from Kavita Singh who has kindly shared her visiting journey with us. Kavita is one of the younger volunteers who commits whole-heartedly in her visiting role.

The CVS is very proud to see an ex-volunteer, Mr. Mohanad Al-Ruhaiee, who has initiated some charity work in his home country, by drawing from what he has learnt from the CVS and his visiting experience while he was in Sydney. We are also very grateful for his kind donation.

Our Condolences

It is with great sadness that the CVS has lost two of our valuable volunteers – Victor CHENG and Mai MIKKONEN in October 2017.

Victor joined the CVS in 1995. Over the past 22 years, Victor had been visiting numerous residents in various aged care facilities, providing friendship and companionship to the very needed. Many of our existing volunteers will

remember Victor very well, as a gentle and down-to-earth person. Anybody who has come cross his path – residents, facility staff and fellow volunteers alike – would be fascinated by his adventurous life stories, experiences and philosophy of life.

Mai and her husband joined the CVS in 2003. Since then, they have been very committed in visiting the Finnish people in the Estonian Aged Care home, despite the huge distance they have to travel. They thought it is very important for people to have the opportunity to listen and speak in their native language. “When we visit, we seem to have brightened their day and lifted their spirit – a good feeling for all!”

The CVS would like to express our sincere condolences to their families. THANK YOU both for giving such a great service to the CVS. They will be greatly missed.

2018 CVS Workshops

The 2018 workshops have been scheduled on the following dates. Please mark your diary, and not to miss the opportunity of learning something new and catching up with ‘old’ friends.

27 Mar 18	Tues	(i) Understanding Aboriginal culture and history (ii) LGBTI Awareness (iii) Elderly Abuse
19 May 18	Sat	Understanding Hepatitis B & C
23 Aug 18	Thurs	Pain Management (TBC)

Our Sincere wish

Christmas is once again approaching and we would like to take this opportunity to wish everybody happy holidays.

May the spirit of the Christmas fill your home with peace, joy and love. Wishing you and your loved ones peace, health, happiness and prosperity in 2018!

All the very best,
Valerie CHU & Jeannie TAM

Always time for a



The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others. - Mahatma Gandhi

And that is exactly what I decided to do, when I started searching for a more meaningful life back in 2014. Donating money was one thing but I wanted to be useful, get my hands dirty, as they say. I put my hand up for a few things including Habitat for Humanity, but did not have the necessary skills they required (I still have not heard from them!). Feeling inadequate, I wondered if my “gift of time” would be appreciated by anyone. Because we all know (but most have yet to realise), that the most valuable gift of all, is that of time. Time gone by will NEVER come again.

When one of the officials who assessed my application with Community Visitors Scheme called me to ask why I wanted to this, I told him I had a lot of time on the weekends (I was a full time employee and a student at Law at the time) and thought to put it to better use. I come from a background with extended families, where our elders are looked after by the younger generation, where they are never really alone. And it broke my heart to know that some of our elderly in Australia did not have that luxury of family or togetherness. And so my journey with Community Visitors Scheme began.

The short but comprehensive training as to what

to expect in my role as a visitor, the rules that I needed to abide by etc. were really helpful. I was also provided a file with details of my resident in it - Mr Satsangi. He was from India, the land of my ancestry, old enough to be my grandfather, and apparently pretty upset about the fact that a volunteer had been assigned to him; he did not want to feel like a charity case.

I was really excited for my first visit. Mr Satsangi promised Jeannie he would allow 5 mins to meet with me and then decide whether or not he would like to let me visit him. I must have made some impression because he let me visit him twice every week! His face and eyes would light up every single time!

He was hard of hearing and spoke with a little difficulty but that did not have too much bearing on the hour long conversations we held. He was always very happy to see me. I called him Dada ji (Grandfather) because of his age and true to the label I had given him, he saved me sweets and chocolates for my visits.

He used to ask for a cup of tea and then tell me it was for me. So I would sit there with him over dinner, sipping the cuppa I thought I made for him.

Dada ji was an avid reader and gave me ‘bucket list’ of the classics he had made for himself. He

cup of tea...and me

By Kavita Singh

had read 7 of the 10 books and asked me to find him the other 3 books from a library. He was serious about them being from the library. Because I did not hear the end of it when I purchased 2 of the 3 books and gifted them to him. He read the books within a few days and returned them. He was really not happy with me buying those books.

We have since signed him up for mobile library services so now he gets his books delivered to his room. And I don't get into trouble about it anymore.

We shared many stories, from his childhood, to him getting married and having beautiful children, to his travels and experiences. I met his family on some visits, all very lovely folks.

When I got married, the family invited us over for blessings and tea. Dada ji was there. It was a very special evening for us.

I showed Dada ji how to use his new mobile phone and told him of the power of the internet. We took many selfies together, too.

He used to play flute in his younger days and one fine day in early 2017, my husband and I walked into his room with him trying to practice his flute. Such beautiful music he made. I made a short video to share with his son who would have missed out on his Dad's flute playing for so many years.

He always wanted to go out for walks in the park but it was challenging as he got weaker by the day. One time, with the permission from both his family and the facility, we took him out for a prayer session at our non-denominational charitable organisation in Blacktown. He enjoyed that very much.

He read to us some of his favourite poems.

On the weekends, when we would visit him over lunch, he would so proudly announce to the rest of the residents that I was the volunteer assigned to him. We had indeed come a long way from that first day in 2014, when he did not want to feel like I was doing him a favour. Little did he know that

it was the other way around, he was doing me a favour!

Over the last few visits, we noticed his memory weakening, too. It's sad but I feel so fortunate to have shared the last 3 years with such an amazing person. It is truly a blessing to have met Mr Satsangi. Indeed, not all residents are as active and alert as he was when I met him but they are all very special.

I thank CVS for the opportunity to connect with Dada ji, to make a difference. I am always overwhelmed to see all the volunteers at the end of the year functions. Such beautiful souls, to CHOOSE to spend their valuable time with the less fortunate. Jeannie and Valerie have been fantastic support and of course, all the workshops run throughout the year are great, too.

It has indeed been a beautiful journey – thank you CVS!



Snapshots of the 2017 End-of-year Get-together

Can't you believe these 'Young-at-heart' volunteers have been with the CVS for **OVER 15 YEARS!** Some will reach their **SILVER ANNIVERSARY** in 2018. Isn't time flies?



A special treat of music, dance & traditional costumes



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS WHO RECEIVED THE SERVICE CERTIFICATES

10 Years



Double Delight! "Popping" a present home!



5 Years

Yum!



Such joy to meet old friends and new acquaintance!



1 Year

Humour THERAPY

Dear Santa

Dear Santa,
For this year, I am requesting a fat bank account and a small body.
P.S. Please do NOT mix them up, like you did last year.

A Well

A man bought a well from an American.
The next day while on his way to market, he met the American who told him, "Brother, I have sold the well to you, but I have not sold the water. If you use the water, you will have to pay for it."
The man replied, "In fact, I was planning to come to your place and ask you to empty the water. And if you don't do it, you will have to pay the rent for the water."

Can you hear me?

An old man went to the Doctor complaining that his wife could barely hear.
The Doctor suggested a test to find out the extent of the problem. "Stand behind her and ask her a question, and then slowly move up and see how far away you are when she first responds."
The old man excited to finally be working on a solution of the problem, runs home and sees his wife preparing dinner.
"Honey," the man asks standing around 20 feet away, "What's for dinner?"
After receiving no response, he tried it again 15 feet away, and again no response.
Then again, at 10 feet away and again no response.
Finally, he was 5 feet away, "Honey, what's for dinner?"
She replies, "For the fourth time, it's lasagne."

The problem with New Jeans

I was at the customer-service desk, returning a pair of jeans that was too tight.
"Was anything wrong with them?" the clerk asked.
"Yes," I said. "They hurt my feelings."

Have You Ever Been Insulted And Complimented At The Same Time?

It's amazing how a person can compliment and insult you at the same time. Recently, when I greeted my coworker, she said, "You look so gorgeous, I didn't recognize you."

You Can't Teach an Old Dog to Fly

A woman called our airline customer-service desk asking if she could take her dog on board.
"Sure," I said, "as long as you provide your own kennel." I further explained that the kennel needed to be large enough for the dog to stand up, sit down, turn around, and roll over."
The customer was flummoxed: "I'll never be able to teach him all of that by tomorrow!"

A Grave Encounter

After trick-or-treating, a teen takes a shortcut home through the cemetery. Halfway across, he's startled by a tapping noise coming from the misty shadows. Trembling with fear, he spots an old man with a hammer and chisel, chipping away at a headstone.
"I thought you were a ghost," says the relieved teen. "What are you doing working so late?"
"Oh, those idiots," grumbles the old man. "They misspelled my name!"



Who are our Visitors ? (December 2017 Statistics)

Language Group	No. of Active visitors	No. of Residents being visited	Language Group	No. of Active visitors	No. of Residents being visited
Arabic	11	26	Indonesian	2	3
Armenian	1	4	Japanese	2	3
Assyrian	1	5	Korean	4	5
Bulgarian	1	1	Latvian	1	1
Chinese - Cantonese	77	132	Lithuanian	1	1
Chinese - Mandarin	23	31	Macedonian	4	11
Chinese - Shanghai	4	4	Polish	5	19
Chinese - Teo-Chow	4	5	Portuguese	2	3
Croatian	6	6	Russian	8	9
Czech	2	3	Serbian	4	4
Dutch	1	1	Spanish	11	15
English	3	3	Swedish	1	1
Farsi	1	1	Tagalog	5	7
French	9	13	Tamil	11	17
German	6	6	Thai	1	1
Greek	1	1	Turkish	1	1
Hindi	6	7	Ukrainian	2	2
Hungarian	2	6	Vietnamese	10	15

HELP! HELP! Volunteers Needed!

Do you have any friends who can visit some of these lonely residents ?



Arabic	5	Auburn (2), Burwood, Kingswood, Seaforth	Korean	2	Lindfield
CH-Cantonese	7	Earlwood, Rooty Hill, Thornleigh (3), Taren Point, West Ryde	Latvian	1	Padstow
CH -Mandarin	7	Bexley, Pennant Hills (6)	Macedonian	3	Bexley, Bossley Park, North Parramatta
CH -Teo-Chow	1	Hurstville	Maltese	4	Lewisham, St Marys (2), South Hurstville
Croatian	1	Clemton Park	Portuguese	3	Castle Hill, Marrickville (2)
Dutch	1	Peakhurst	Russian	2	Bexley, Blakehurst
Farsi	6	Bexley, Hunters Hill, Lindfield, Seaforth (2), Surry Hills	Serbian	1	Chester Hill
Finnish	1	Botany	Spanish	2	Dural, Penrith
German	1	Peakhurst	Tagalog	1	Castle Hill
Hindi	1	Parramatta	Ukrainian	2	Lidcombe, Wahroonga
Hungarian	3	Dean Park	Vietnamese	5	Greenacre, Hunters Hill, Marrickville (3)
Japanese	3	Gladesville, Hornsby, Lindfield			

A NOTE OF THANKS

We would like to welcome our latest community visitors who have joined the Scheme since the last newsletter.



Dobriła ZIVADINOVIC	visiting	Fairmont Aged Care Home
Nouha ZOGHBI	visiting	The Holy Family of the Maronite Sisters Aged Care
Vandna V GIR	visiting	Brentwood ACF
Shin Shyang LOW	visiting	Estia Health Ryde
Eun Jung KIM	visiting	Bupa Greenacre
Yan Ling FENG	visiting	Banks Lodge

A special thank you is extended to these new visitors and our existing visitors, who work tirelessly on their own, making a difference in the lives of many lonely, older people. And a big thank you to those special ones who continue their difficult journey when their 'friend' passes away.

A BOAT HOLE

A man was asked to paint a boat.

He brought with him paint and brushed and began to paint the boat a bright red, as the owner asked him.

While painting, he noticed that there was a small hole in the hull, and quietly repaired it.

When finished painting, he received his money and left.

The next day, the owner of the boat came to the painter and presented him with a nice cheque, much higher than the payment for the painting.

The painter was surprised and said, "You've already paid me for painting the boat, sir."

"But this is not for the paint job. It's for having repaired the hole in the boat."

"Ah! But it was such a small service ... certainly it's not worth paying me such a high amount for something so insignificant."

"My dear friend, you do not understand. Let me tell you what happened.

When I asked you to paint the boat, I forgot to mention about the hole.

When the boat dried, my kids took the boat and went on a fishing trip.

They did not know that there was a hole. I was not at home at that time.

When I returned and noticed they had taken the boat, I was desperate because I remembered that the boat had a hole.

Imagine my relief and joy when I saw them returning from fishing.

Then I examined the boat and found that you had repaired the hole! You see, now, what you did? You saved the life of my children! I do not have enough money to pay your 'small' good deed."

So, no matter who, when or how, just continue to help, sustain, wipe tears, listen attentively and carefully repair all the 'leaks' you find, because you never know when one is in need of us or when God holds a pleasant surprise for us to be helpful and important to someone.

You may have repaired numerous 'boat holes' along the way ... of several people without realising how many lives you've saved.