

If you would like to contribute to The Bugle, please email [info@ucco.org.au](mailto:info@ucco.org.au) or ring (03) 9239 2500. We welcome any ideas or suggestions you may have.



*Beryl (centre) receives her award from UCCO Chief Executive, Scott Sheppard and Pastoral Support and Culture Advisor, Siew Kim Lim.*

## 25 years of UCCO

UNITINGCARE Community Options released its 2011/12 Annual Report in late October as part of a wider celebration of its achievements over the past 25 years.

Around 100 members of the community, staff (past and present), UnitingCare and Uniting Church representatives and business partners attended this popular annual event to help commemorate the highlights of another successful year.

One of many highlights for the day was the announcement of this year's winner of the Together-In-Service Presbytery Award – a special award that recognises outstanding achievement in helping to build a stronger link between the community and the Uniting Church.

This year's award winner was Beryl Wilshusen who, despite a series of life

challenges remains a committed and passionate supporter of those initiatives that assist people with aged care needs and those who provide care to them. She was the coordinator at the First Daycare Centre for 15 years, is a member of the UnitingCare Community Options Participant Committee and a long-term member of The Avenue Uniting Church in Blackburn.

The day featured presentations from UCCO Board Chair, Michael Lanyon (which included a small presentation to former Chair Dr Nancy Nicholas), as well as Chief Executive, Scott Sheppard and Board Treasurer, Horace Chai.

You can read more about the day and see who all of this year's award winners were on page 6.

## Christmas closure

The UCCO team will be taking a well deserved break this Christmas, meaning the office will be closed from Christmas Day until 9am Wednesday 2 January 2012.



Please talk to your Partnership Worker or Service Facilitator before then to ensure we accommodate your need during that time.

If you have an urgent need during this time, please call 1300 651 463 one-off changes to care plans or with emergency respite. If you have any questions or concerns, please call us before 24 December.



## A message from the Chief Executive's desk

If it's true that time flies when you are having fun, then we must have had an absolute ball this year because it's hard to believe that 12 months have passed since I last sat down and penned an end of year message for The Bugle.

The years certainly fly by when you are busy and this was illustrated well at our Annual Report to the Community in October. While this event allowed us to pause and reflect on our achievements in 2011/12, it also allowed us to look back on the past quarter of a century as we celebrated our 25th anniversary which you can read more about on page 8.

This organisation has experienced some remarkable growth since it began in 1987 and we have seen the number of people we assist each year grow from just 30 to nearly 4000.

In my view, we have been able to achieve this result because our values are real and experienced, our model of operation is sound, we are fiscally responsible and our staff – past and present – have been fully committed to delivering our mission. I congratulate and thank everyone who has made a contribution throughout our journey so far.

Speaking of celebrations, October also presented us with an opportunity to

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celebrate the vital role carers have in our community during Carers Week (see pg 3).

We were delighted to host two special events during this annual awareness week and I was genuinely touched and inspired by some of the stories that many of those attending took the time to share with me.

We are very fortunate that our participants are so willing to share their stories with us because they are powerful reminders of why our work is so important.

They also send a clear message to the community that, despite the obstacles that life throws up, the right level of assistance and understanding can help anyone continue to enjoy a good quality of life at home. With that in mind, I'm pleased to present two such stories on pages 12 and 15.

Finally, on behalf of all of us here at UCCO, I would like to wish you and your loved ones a happy and safe festive season. We look forward to seeing you and working with you all again in 2013.

**Scott Sheppard**  
Chief Executive

# Carers Week 2012



*Guests enjoy high tea at Rosebank Receptions.*

FUN, relaxation and pampering were high on the agenda at UCCO's Carer's Week (15-19 October) activities for 2012.

Carers Week is an annual, nationwide event designed to raise awareness of the important role carers have in our community and to provide all carers with a day away from their role for some well-deserved rest and relaxation.

More than 50 carers attended a special high tea event at Rosebank Receptions in Ringwood North on 16 October, where a selection of cakes, buns and other delicacies were on offer throughout the afternoon.

Those seeking a little extra pampering were also treated to a head and shoulder massage, while others took a more relaxed approach by touring the magnificent gardens surrounding the venue.

Andrea Coote, Victorian Parliamentary Secretary For Families and Community Services joined Jan Kronberg, Member for Eastern Metropolitan Region, at the event and took the time to speak with many of the attending guests.

Mrs Coote was so taken by the stories she heard, she mentioned the event in Parliament the following week, stating:

"Mrs Kronberg and I had an opportunity to speak to the carers, who for the first time in months, and in some instances years, were being pampered.....it was a wonderful way to recognise the carers in this area. I congratulate Scott Sheppard and UnitingCare."

Later in the week (18 October), a second UCCO activity was held at the Cranbourne Botanical Gardens.

Guests were collected from Ringwood and transported by bus to Cranbourne for a spectacular tour of the gardens which are home to around 100,000 plants and more than 30 different endangered species.

Following the tour, guests were treated to a sumptuous two course lunch – featuring native Australian ingredients - overlooking the gardens at the Boon Wurrung Cafe.

Both events were a fun and relaxed way to say thanks to those who fulfil such an important role in the community.

If you are a provide unpaid care to a family member or friend and would like to know more about what respite options are available, visit [www.ucco.org.au/get-assistance/carers/](http://www.ucco.org.au/get-assistance/carers/) or call 9239 2500.



*Out and about at Cranbourne Botanical Gardens.*

# UNITINGCARE COMMUNITY



## Coping with extreme weather

WITH summer now here, it's important to make sure you are prepared for extreme weather.

Having already had a few scorchers, remember that extended exposure to hot weather can lead to avoidable illnesses such as heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Keep cool by drinking plenty of water and staying out of direct sun. Sunscreen is also essential if you're going to be spending anytime outdoors. For more advice, visit: [www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/heatwave/know](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/heatwave/know)

The Department of Health and Ageing will also operate a Heat Health Alert from December 2012 until February 2013, which will notify the community about forecast heatwave conditions as they occur. To find out more, visit [www.health.vic.gov.au/chiefhealthofficer](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/chiefhealthofficer), or call the Department on 1300 761 874.

Unpredictable storms are also a common occurrence during our summer. If you want to stay in the know about potentially dangerous weather, keep an eye on the Bureau of Meteorology website at [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au). The State Emergency Service ([www.ses.vic.gov.au](http://www.ses.vic.gov.au)) website is another helpful resource, or you can call them directly on 132 500.

If you live in Melbourne's outer East, it is also a good idea to stay vigilant for potential bushfires. The Country Fire Authority website ([www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)) has an array of tips and advice on what to do in the event of a bushfire and how to reduce the risk of fire on your property. You can also call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667.

Above all, if you know someone who may need some help or is alone during an extreme weather event, please be sure to check in with them and make sure they are ok. Whether it be a phone call or a visit, this simple gesture could save a life!

## Progress for NDIS

As this edition of The Bugle was going to print, the Federal Government was introducing legislation to establish the National Disability Insurance Scheme into Parliament.

The bill, to be voted on next year, is designed to formalise the way in which such a scheme would be initiated and who (and under what circumstances) would be eligible for support.

In introducing the bill, Prime Minister Julia Gillard said the scheme would "...transform the lives of people with disability, their families and carers. For the first time they will have their needs met in a way that truly supports them to live with choice and dignity."

UnitingCare Community Options Chief Executive, Scott Sheppard, welcomed the bill but said it was imperative that full funding was locked in as soon as possible.

"Getting this far is a great government achievement but it will only truly succeed if the Commonwealth funds the full scheme," he said.

# OPTIONS NEWS AND VIEWS



## **Bike rides for a cause**

UCCO Chief Executive, Scott Shepard and Group Manager, Quality & Disability, Andrew Johnston have used pedal power to help raise a remarkable \$2720 for UCCO's Realising A Dream Program.

Scott and Andrew both took part in the 400km Tour de Heartland event - a bike ride which brings together a diverse group of people who share a passion for cycling and making a positive impact in the lives of those who face significant challenges. The bike ride was based out of sunny Bright, along the Great Alpine Way.

While fundraising was an important part of the ride, the team also used the opportunity to raise awareness of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, as well as raise some valuable funds along the way.

The money raised will help to assist our participants with purchasing equipment or services. The only requirement to be eligible for the Realising A Dream program is a genuine need, and that the item or service will contribute to their ability to realise a particular dream or goal.

To find out more about Realising a Dream visit [www.ucco.org.au/get-involved/donate/realising-dreams](http://www.ucco.org.au/get-involved/donate/realising-dreams)

While he was in the mood, Scott also took part in the November's Financial Review Corporate Cycling Challenge (FNCCC) as part of the the 'Every Australian Counts' Cycling Team.

Once again, the aim was awareness for the National Disability Insurance Scheme but, much to their delight, the team managed to finish first in the 'Mixed Team Enthusiast' category along the way!

## **Participant Worker Professional Development Program (PWPD)**

UCCO has commenced a series of regular staff workshops to ensure the organisation remains at the forefront of understanding the various conditions participants may face in their lives.

The first Participant Worker Professional Development workshop was held on the 31 October and focussed on 'hoarding behaviours'. The workshop proved a great forum for UCCO workers to share their own experiences of hoarding behaviour, as well as build on their knowledge of why it occurs and how to help current and future participants.

The workshops will encourage the sharing of information, practice and experience for anyone facing challenging behaviours. They will also focus on the priority areas of mental health and working with people from diverse backgrounds.

Internal and external professionals will be running the workshops, bringing a wealth of experience and knowledge to challenge our current ways of thinking and working, while enabling us to bring an ever higher quality of service and understanding to our work.

# The Peanuts perspective

If you love Peanuts, you'll be familiar with Snoopy, Charlie Brown, Linus, Lucy and friends. As Christmas is just around the corner, I decided to watch 'Charlie Brown and Linus' True Meaning of Christmas' on YouTube.

After several viewings, I am reminded of and amazed at the ingenuity of the late Charles Schultz in using animation to reveal our human condition. For this reflection, it's the nuances, challenges and stressors that are connected to festivities.....not unlike what we are about to face with Christmas and New Year literally a few weeks away.

To benefit those who do not have access to computers, here's an edited script for your enjoyment:

**Scene 1:** Charlie Brown, with all good intentions to celebrate Christmas, chooses and brings his tiny Christmas tree to the hall where his friends are rehearsing a play.

**Scene 2:** After inspecting the tree, Lucy snubs Charlie "you've been dumb before Charlie Brown but this time, you really did it". She turns away with everyone laughing.....

**Scene 3:** Left alone, Linus walks up to Charlie Brown and stays by his side. Charlie Brown expresses his frustration and disappointment saying "everything I do turns into a disaster ... is there anyone who can tell me what Christmas is all about?"



**Scene 4:** Linus replies in his unassuming fashion "Gosh Charlie Brown, I can tell you what Christmas is all about" and narrates the beautiful story of baby Jesus, born in a manger in Bethlehem and how the angels heralded His birth and the shepherds and foreign kings came to see the child who symbolizes peace and hope for humankind.

**Scene 5:** Encouraged, Charlie takes the tree home to decorate it and 'show them' that it's a good Christmas tree. As he walks out in the snow, he looks at the stars in the sky and ponders baby Jesus. "I will not let all the commercialism ruin my Christmas" he says.

**Scene 6:** He passes by Snoopy's kennel and notices a 1st prize for best decorated home and declares he will not let a commercial dog ruin Christmas either. He then takes a bauble from the kennel and places it on a tree but it bends right over. He panics and cries "Oh, I've killed it ... why does everything I touch get ruined".

**Scene 7:** What follows is heart-warming as Linus takes a look at the 'dead' tree and says, "it's not dead; it's quite a nice tree; maybe it needs a little love". He then takes his security blanket off (one he never lets go of) and wraps it around the base of the tree. The tree now stands taller and his 'friends' including Snoopy, adorn the tree with fairy lights and baubles from the kennel and it looked beautiful.

# on Christmas....

**Scene 8:** Charlie Brown returns to the scene to find out what's going on. He's surprised to see the transformation of his tree and everyone wishes him "Merry Christmas Charlie Brown" before singing 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing". (Source: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVGJgJ5cReg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVGJgJ5cReg))



So what's the learning in this?

Well, I hope you enjoyed it and that it provided a few insights into how different people respond to similar situations or challenges. It also shows that it is okay to seek help, support or clarification and that someone will be there to help.

There's really no right, wrong or better way in this - just the need to adopt two very important values of Linus' – attitude and gratitude. Linus rarely talks but takes a good attitude towards most circumstances. He did not judge Charlie like Lucy did and knew when Charlie needed his support. He was pastoral and openly shared the story of hope and new beginnings. He showed gratitude – for friendship and, via example to the group, showed how they could transform without commercialism, a tiny tree to significance.

Here are some fun things and hints on how you can keep the Christmas blues and blahs at bay:

- If you are organising a Christmas meal, consider inviting someone you know, who may be alone to join you.
- If you are alone and know there are others who are alone, you could initiate a 'bring a dish to share' event and enjoy a meal together.
- If gift giving is involved, there are wonderful gifts you could buy for \$2-\$10.
- If you are still alone and wish to have a Christmas meal, please ask your partnership worker, your local Council or listen to Light FM 96.3 for a list of churches/NGOs who will be hosting free Christmas meals.
- If you are grieving, consider joining a smaller group of 1-3 and be up front with them.
- There are lots of activities going on from now until mid-January which should be advertised in your local newspaper eg: lighting of a Christmas tree event or Carols by Candlelight.
- Stay connected to someone – always. Make new friends, make amends with old, join interest groups, regardless of age, there's always one that's right for you.
- Choose your attitude and exercise gratitude. When you are down, ask for support – many are more than happy to be there for you. If you are depressed, call Beyond Blue or your doctor.
- Eat, drink (water), sleep well.
- Take care of your spirit – laughter, relaxation, meditation, pastoral support are all good for the soul.

I wish you well and may Jesus the peace child watch over you and keep you safe during this Christmas period and into the New Year.

**- By UCCO Pastoral Support and Culture Advisor, Siew Kim Lim**

# UCCO's Annual Report to



*The panel reflects on 2011/12. (L-R) Anna DiPietrantonio, Wina Kung and Despina Kavnoudias.*

UCCO's rich history was a strong theme throughout the 2012 Annual Report to the Community as the organisation took some time to reflect on its first 25 years.

Looking at the organisation today, it's hard to believe that just a quarter of a century ago, it was a tiny, part-time operation assisting just 30 older people with dementia. Today, UnitingCare Community Options employs nearly 150 staff and assists almost 4000 people needing aged care, disability or carer support throughout Melbourne's east and south.

With this milestone in mind, this year's Annual Report to the Community at Kingston Links Golf Club in Rowville was as much a celebration of the achievements of the past 25 years as it was about the highlights of 2011/12.

Both Board Chair, Michael Lanyon and Chief Executive, Scott Sheppard, reflected on the organisation's journey over the years as part of their presentations and acknowledged the way in which all UCCO staff – past and present – had contributed to its growth.

This year, reports on each of UCCO's three key divisions were presented via a panel

conversational method of presenting the achievements of the 2011/12 year, as well as an opportunity to screen a video of Beryl Wilshusen (produced for the Age Well campaign) sharing her story.

People and Culture Manager, Cassandra Hatton, then summarised the highlights of 2011/12 for UCCO's internal teams, before Participant Committee Chair, Padma Saripalli, took to the stage to review the Committee's work throughout the year and present a video about Committee member, Matt Simpson.

After a short break (and delicious afternoon tea provided by 13CABS), it was time for the announcement of the annual awards which kicked off by recognising some of UCCO's long service staff members via the 5, 10 and 15 year services awards (sponsored by OMNI-CARE).



*Cassandra Hatton addresses the audience.*

The Staff Achievement Awards - nominated by participants and selected by a panel made up of UCCO senior management, Board and Participant Committee members – followed and were a great way to formally recognise those staff members who had made an outstanding contribution towards helping UCCO deliver its vision of 'a good life for all' throughout the year.

# the Community 2012



*UCCO Board Chair, Michael Lanyon, reflects on the 2011/12 year.*

Next was the announcement of the Community Acknowledgement Awards (sponsored by Guardian Network) which recognise some of the remarkable work done throughout the year by UCCO's service providers. This year's winners were physiotherapist, Nina Allen and Ates Aksac from Guardian Network.

After the presentation of the Together in Presbytery Award (see front page), it was time for some closing remarks before everyone retired to the Champions Room for a special cocktail event to celebrate UCCO's 25th anniversary.

Those who stayed on enjoyed a drink and some hot snacks as they chatted to new and old colleagues and relived the past 25 years via a display of historic photos, publications and signage.

The day was the perfect opportunity to take stock of where we have come from as an organisation and to take a short breath before leaping into the next era.

Here's to another 25 years of success!

A copy of the 2011/12 UnitingCare Community Options Annual Report can be downloaded at: [www.ucco.org.au/about-us/publications](http://www.ucco.org.au/about-us/publications)

Staff Achievement Awards (sponsored by EziWay Salary Packaging):

- Glenys Hughes
- Kasia Dubrow
- Catherine Rihak
- Kathryn Seeger
- Joyce Liang
- Laura Handstock
- Alex Mills
- Madeleine Eke
- Daniel Thambiratnam



*Award winners (Top L-R) Alex Mills, Kasia Dubrow, Joyce Liang and Glenys Hughes. (Below L-R) Laura Handstock, Daniel Thambiratnam, Madeleine Eke and Kathryn Seeger.*



# NEWS & VIEWS FROM THE



*New Committee members (L-R) Zarina Van Cuylenberg, Iris Dawson, Bernadette Clancy and Colleen Clancy.*

## **2012 in review**

IT has been a big year for the Participant Committee and, for some a period of great change, with some members moving on and several new participants joining the team.

An important function of the Committee is to ensure that UCCO's processes are easy to understand and meet the needs of its participants, so various members spent plenty of time this year reviewing forms and suggesting improvements. The Committee also participated in an audit by the Department of Human Services and provided some important perspective to help UCCO prepare several project submissions around improving accommodation options for the community.

Committee members also played an important role in supporting the ongoing promotion of the organisation by contributing regular stories and/or personal experiences/issues to The Bugle.

The Committee also got involved in the campaign for a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) by not only attending the national rally in Federation

Square but also allowing their filmed messages of support for the campaign to be added to the campaign website.

Committee member, Beryl Wilshusen, also allowed her story to be filmed as part of the Age Well campaign which actively lobbied the Federal Government to introduce some major reforms to the aged care sector.

Regular Committee-run forums continued to provide opportunities for participants to learn more about the issues that affect them. The "I Do it My Way" forum focussed on self-directed care and provided some valuable information on what self-direct care means and how it will affect participants into the future.

There was plenty of feedback collected on the day and will go a long way towards ensuring UCCO understands and acts on the concerns and knowledge gaps that many participants had on the day. The organisation has taken this feedback on board and has already committed to ongoing regular communication to help keep everyone informed.

Our members are also actively involved in UCCO's internal events and this year took up the invitation to speak to UCCO staff at its Agency Day.



*Committee member, Matt Simpson at the 'I Do It MY Way' Forum.*

# PARTICIPANT COMMITTEE



*Afternoon tea at the Forum.*

Each new committee member introduced themselves to the group and briefly told their story which had a profound impact on everyone in the room. Participant Committee members continued to be represented at UCCO's team and annual quality review meetings.

The year ahead presents some great opportunities for the Participant Committee and they have already been invited to have input into a new staffing structure that will significantly shape the way the Committee interacts with the wider organisation into the future.

The group will also play a crucial role in UCCO's Growth Strategy over the coming months. As the organisation seeks to branch out and assist more people in the community, the feedback and insights provided by the Participant Committee will be an integral part of our efforts to remain relevant to the changing needs of all participants.

Finally, it is with great sadness the Participant Committee says farewell to Barbara Blakey – UCCO's Community Development Officer Participant Committee liaison. Barbara has taken up a new role as Research Officer at UnitingCare Community Options and we wish her well in her new position.

The Committee is looking forward to the new year in anticipation and we wish all participants and their families a safe and merry Christmas and a very Happy New year.

**- Padma Saripalli, Committee Chair**



*Padma summarises the year at UCCO's Annual Report to the Community.*

## Want to help?

The Participant Committee performs a vital role in providing direct, ongoing feedback about the experience of the people we support. The Committee consists of older people, people with disabilities, and carers, all of whom receive services from us.

- Are there any topics or issues you would like the committee to address?
- Can you occasionally help the committee in its work to benefit all UCCO participants?

If so, please talk to your Partnership Worker, or contact us on:

Email: [parcom@ucco.org.au](mailto:parcom@ucco.org.au)

Telephone: 1300 651 463

# REALISING A DREAM



*Tim in the pool in Sydney (photo: WinkiPoP Media).*

WE all have dreams but for some, getting access to the support required to make those dreams become reality can remain just out of reach.

Since 2008, the UnitingCare Community Options Realising a Dream fund has been making a real and lasting difference to the lives of many participants who are striving to reach a personal goal.

The fund provides one-off grants to help participants purchase a range of services or pieces of equipment they might need. The only requirement is a genuine need and that the item or service will contribute to their ability to realise a particular dream or goal.

One recent recipient is 16-year-old Tim Disken – an UCCO participant since 2000. Although Tim has Cerebral Palsy, hydrocephalus and a VP shunt, he loves sport and has long held dreams of competing at the highest level.

After trying his hand at several different sports, Tim was introduced to swimming as part of his physical therapy and soon fell in love with the sport. As his hours of training increased, it became clear Tim had an

invitation to compete at the 2012 National Schools Swimming Competition in Sydney.

It was a great, but costly opportunity that his ever supportive Mum (Jenny) and Dad would struggle to deliver on their own.

But, with the assistance of UCCO Partnership Worker, Peri Penry-Williams, Jenny was able to access Realising a Dream funding to help ease the burden of the registration fees and travel/accommodation costs to make Tim's dream come true.

"UCCO has enabled me to do more than any normal kids would have done," Tim explained. "Through this, I realised my passion for being a part of a team, something I've rarely been able to do."

It was a great experience for Tim, whose talents were keenly observed by the number of scouts for the Swimming Australia youth squad.

As a result, Tim was invited to train at a two-week Australian Institute of Sport camp in Canberra and he has now set his sights on competing at the 2016 Paralympics in Rio!

"Without UCCO, life would be very different," said Jenny. "The help has been invaluable and makes a big difference to Tim's life."

This experience has also helped bring out Tim's leadership potential, and is now planning an educational career supporting kids with a disability.

"The whole experience was so inclusive.....it boosted my confidence dramatically."

To find out more about our Realising Dreams fund, call 9239 2500 or visit:

[www.ucco.org.au/get-involved/donate/realising-dreams/](http://www.ucco.org.au/get-involved/donate/realising-dreams/)

# OPENING DOORS



TWO recent graduation ceremonies have helped wrap up another busy year for the Opening Doors program.

The Opening Doors program runs in the South East and Inner East of Melbourne and empowers budding community leaders to develop new programs that address social isolation in their local area.

The South East Opening Doors group was first cab off the rank with a colourful ceremony at Cranbourne's Balla Balla Community Centre Hall, where 15 of the program's participants were presented with their certificate of completion by Patron Cr. Geoff Ablett.

After some participants were also invited to speak briefly about their experiences with the Opening Doors program and what they have been able to achieve, the ceremony concluded with a display of all the community programs the participants had prepared through their involvement. Some of the 2012 projects include a community newspaper for three isolated rural towns, a celebration of Cook Islander Seniors strengths and a confectionary cooking group for people who are vision impaired.

During the ceremony, the audience was also treated to a performance by the local Cook Islander community, as well as a fabulous afternoon tea prepared by the participants themselves and their families.

A few weeks later, the Inner East graduation ceremony was held at the

Manningham City Council building in Doncaster. Past graduates, community members, council members, friends and family looked on as each of the group's participants accepted their certificate of completion from Cr. Jennifer Yang, Deputy Mayor-elect of the City of Manningham and Greg Nichols, Monashlink CEO & White Ribbon Ambassador.

After the presentations, two participants shared their personal stories with the assembled crowd and spoke of how the Opening Doors program had given them the confidence to become true community leaders.

Some of the 2012 Inner East projects include a letter-writing club for the elderly or socially isolated, a chronic illness and disability support group and several projects engaging cultural groups around the areas of autism and inter-generational communication.

Both the South East and Inner East programs will run again in 2013. For information about the 2013 South East program, contact Anand Shome at [ashome@gmail.com](mailto:ashome@gmail.com) or 0422 726 483.

For information about the 2013 Inner East Opening Doors program, contact Alex Mills at [alex.mills@ucco.org.au](mailto:alex.mills@ucco.org.au) or 0419 892 998.



*The classes of 2012 - (top) the Inner East group and (above) the South East group.*

# Spotlight On.....

The UCCO Reception team.....



*The Reception team (L-R): Padma, Deb and Madeleine.*

YOU'VE heard their voices, now it's time to put a face to those who run the show at Reception.

If you've ever called us or dropped into the office, chances are you've been greeted by Madeleine, Deb or Padma. These three lovely ladies make up our reception team are the front face, heart and soul of where things happen and are always there to greet you, point you in the right direction, answer your questions or put you in touch with your participant worker.

It's a critical role that demands a sound knowledge of the organisation, an understanding of who's who in the UCCO zoo, all whilst juggling a remarkable volume of calls. The Reception team has been known to manage up to 4,000 calls per month and received an incredible 43,000 calls during the past financial year! The team also manages data entry, archiving, ordering of supplies, opening and distributing mail and the management of taxi vouchers.

Reception provides the little bits and pieces that form our organisation, keeping it well-oiled and powering ahead to achieve a

good life for older people, people with disabilities and carers.

Our reception team uphold their beliefs that everyone must always be treated the same, as well as always being friendly and courteous.

"We all look forward to speaking with callers – some of which we've developed a strong rapport with through our regular chats," says Madeleine. "It's important to me to work for an organisation that can make a difference in people's lives."

Madeleine, Deb and Padma all agree that their job gives them a strong sense of giving back to the community. Padma in particular has enjoyed the new opportunities her role has opened up for her.

"It has given me the chance to have fun, meet new people and have new experiences," she says.

Through their actions, the team's love for their work is obvious to all with one partnership worker recently writing to the team to express their gratitude for their efforts. "Thank you so much for going above and beyond your role to assist a particular participant to feel heard and have their needs addressed" they wrote - a true example of the effort that goes into their job each day.

Above all, the reception team are committed to the vision of UCCO. "Working in reception means we're the link between the callers in our community needing help, and our staff who can provide that assistance," Deb says.

So next time you pick up the phone to call us or drop in for a visit, look out for our Reception team and be sure to greet them with a smile.

# The power of positive ageing



HELPING Participants to remain living happily and confidently at home is an important goal for UCCO.

One of our participants of nearly two years, Peggy Cresp, is a fine example of this; a breast cancer survivor and advocate, who highlights the importance of staying positive, despite the obstacles that life can throw our way.

Peggy grew up in Eltham, where her love for volunteering started at aged 12, she regularly helped an elderly lady after school and on weekends around her house. She married her husband in 1945 when she was 19, where they had three children together.

After the death of her husband in 1995, Peggy volunteered in the outback for the School of the Air where she aided primary school children in isolated areas in their studies. This led her to Mildura, Broken Hill and Toppoburra.

It was in Mildura where Breast Screen bought up the first mammogram screening; Peggy was tested and immediately flown to Melbourne where she had a lumpectomy. Peggy was told she had an invasive ductal carcinoma, she was 72.

Six weeks of radiotherapy later, Peggy made the decision, which she still stands by, to "Just look ahead."

Post cancer, Peggy went on to become a determined and active supporter for breast cancer, where she was one of the first members of the Breast Cancer Network of Australia, treasurer for the Breast Cancer Action Group and committee member for the Northern District Enhancement Program for Breast Cancer, to name a few.

Peggy acknowledges her secret to longevity is primarily being able to still live in her home. Being at home has enabled Peggy to keep her independence, maintain her friendship with her neighbour Doris and stay happy in her familiar setting nearby where she grew up.

Having peace of mind has helped Peggy age positively. First and foremost she is organised, leading Peggy to having all her finances, paper work and any future decisions already taken care of. "I looked into the future and made sure I got everything sorted, so my family doesn't need to worry."

Recently, Peggy had a small break at Doncaster Maleluca Lodge Hostel in the respite facility. We assisted Peggy with her application for funding to be able to stay there. Peggy speaks highly of the ongoing help she receives from UCCO, in particular with her grocery shopping and her taxi vouchers which enable her to attend meetings. "My partnership worker Joyce keeps a check on me, and I keep a check on her!"

Peggy was and continues to be an inspiration for women and their families who are affected by breast cancer. Peggy can't stress the importance of regular mammograms enough, "Helping people makes me happy" Peggy believes. She still has annual check-ups at Peter Mac.

Peggy's motto for life is "don't be selfish, help people when you can, and always keep a sense of humour!"

# The Bugle

Issue 4, December 2012

## ABOUT US

UNITINGCARE Community Options is a community services organisation, dedicated to assisting people to live good lives in their own homes and communities. We have been supporting older people, people with disabilities and the unpaid carers that support them since 1987. Each year, we support around 4000 people throughout Melbourne's east and south.

Our vision is to achieve 'a good life for all' regardless of their abilities. We aim to support people in achieving the goals they have and living the life they hope for. If you know anyone who might benefit from our support, please ask them to contact us.

## FEEDBACK

We're always looking for ways to improve our service so please let us know if you have any feedback you'd like to share with us. If you have an issue or complaint, please raise the matter with your Partnership Worker who will raise the complaint with their Manager if they are unable to help. Issues that remain unresolved will be dealt with by Senior Management. You can also ask for support from an external advocate. See your Participant Information Pack for more information.

## CONTACTING US

### Direct2Care

Freecall: 1300 121 121

### Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre

Disability: 1800 052 222

Ageing: 1800 059 059

### Head Office

Ground Floor, Building 5  
Brandon Office Park  
530-540 Springvale Road  
Glen Waverley VIC 3150

Tel.: (03) 9239 2500

Fax: (03) 9239 2522

### Website

[www.ucco.org.au](http://www.ucco.org.au)

### Interpreters Available On Request

ΔΙΑΘΕΤΟΝΤΑΙ ΔΙΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΣ  
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For assistance, please call the Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450.