

# The Constellation

South East Palliative Care's Newsletter

## VOLUNTEERS CHANGE OUR WORLD



The theme for this year's National Volunteer Week, Volunteers Change Our World, reflects the impact of the critical work volunteers provide within the community, and at SEPC there is no exception. Our volunteers contribute to the core purpose of SEPC's existence and also assist in establishing partnerships with other service and community domains to further our work.

## CASEY COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER AWARDS

City of Casey presented its Community Volunteer Awards with SEPC having 11 nominations consisting of our loyal and committed volunteers: Gwen Clough, Wendy Crisp, Jo Fullwood, Natalie Irvine, Elsie Kooloos, Liz Overdyk, Lyn Turnbull, Betty Williams, Anthea Menzel, Jeanette McCleod and Gabby Morrow (see picture above). We congratulate all nominees and provide them with our encouragement to continue their fantastic efforts.

## VOLUNTEER GRADUATION AWARDS

Following an extensive training program, SEPC welcomed new volunteers at their Graduation Awards during Volunteer Week. Two experienced volunteers; Betty Williams and Natalie Irvine presented some advice and encouragement to the new recruits, sharing stories of their experiences.

*"The camaraderie between the volunteers is one of support and fun, as it is this camaraderie that is the*

*mechanism of creating the strength required for the work and therefore enjoyment and satisfaction".*

We publicly congratulate and welcome the newly recruited volunteers with our support and wish them well in their work.



**Front Row:** Pam Swirski, Stephen Bradshaw (Co-ordinator of Volunteers), Hung Thi Thai, and Heather Dundas

**Back Row:** Michele Wilmann, Pula Rogers, Wendy McRae, Lynne Finne-Larsen, Gill Vissenga, Theresa O'Loughlin.

**Absent:** Jarrod Beaumont and Hiromi Kawahara

## UNIVERSITY AWARDS

In 2007, South East Palliative Care in conjunction with Monash University offered students enrolled in any health discipline on the Monash Peninsula campus to apply their skills and knowledge base on the topic of palliative care in two project categories. This partnership is aimed at encouraging greater understanding and discussion of palliative care within the tertiary sector and promoting research.

South East Palliative Care presented Ms Kylie Wesley, a 2<sup>nd</sup> year Honours student of Bachelor of Physiotherapy, The South East Palliative Care Service Essay Prize 2007. Kylie undertook a review of the literature to examine the Effects of Physical Therapy Services for Cancer Patients in Palliative Care Settings.

Ms Janet Wettenhall, enrolled in a Master of Nursing, was awarded The South East Palliative Care Service Study Scholarship 2007. Janet's research proposal was titled: 'Time spent with families in a Palliative Care

Unit: The impact on nurses' stress & workload'. Congratulations to both Kylie & Janet for their insights into palliative care.



**Pictured above:** Professor Margaret O'Connor (Monash Uni), Kylie Wesley, Dr Susan Lee (Monash Uni), Mark Cockayne SEPC CEO), Janet Wettenhall.

## BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

The South East Palliative Care Bereavement Support Group gathers to meet the needs of people experiencing bereavement due to the loss of their spouse in the last 12 months. Monthly meetings occur on the third Tuesday of the month.

This group responds to a person whose contact with death and grief impacts upon their social capacity and support systems. This group intervention is a valuable space for those who feel they "now live in a different world and don't know how to".

The main aims of the group are to provide social support ("I feel comfortable with others that are in the same boat"); prevent isolation ("this is the only outing I attend since the death of my husband"); normalize the grief experience; foster individual resilience; and enable social inclusion within the greater community. The group is a powerful source of validation, empathy and companionship and allows for communication amongst people within different time frames of loss. The effectiveness of the shared conversation in the group can be comprehended through the following words spoken by participants.

*I miss my partner so much; I feel my grief is like a broken heart - Eating by myself is so lonely; coming to lunch with others is lovely.*

If you are interested in participating in this group, please contact Jannine Miers, Counsellor, at our office on ☎ 5991 1300.

## CARER EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

Carer Education and Support is a chance for carers to meet, hear practical information, have questions answered by our staff in an informal setting, and allow carers to discuss their individual challenges with other carers. The sessions will cover topics including: practical issues related to caring; respite; financial services; managing symptoms better; support through grief and bereavement.

This program of support and education was informed by a recent research project undertaken over the past 2 years in partnership with Melbourne University's Centre for Palliative Care. If you are interested in attending, please contact Lucy Flood at our offices on ☎ 5991 1300.

## BERWICK OPPORTUNITY SHOP

For many years the Berwick Opportunity Shop has provided valuable support to SEPC, and again this year we were given a cheque for \$13,000 to provide increased nursing, medical and allied health support to people at home.

The Berwick Opportunity Shop relies on donations of goods from the local community, and has many passionate volunteers running their store. If you can assist them with items that you no longer want, and support services such as us in the process, they can be found at: **3a Clyde Road, Berwick 3806** ☎ 9707 1745

## MORE RESPONSIVE SERVICES

In line with a needs based model of care, SEPC created a nurse intake team in late 2006. Lots of work has taken place since this time –all leading to an improved understanding of our role, and ability to prioritise services to people with complex needs.

The outcomes of all this work have been extremely positive, with tangible improvements in our responsiveness to all referrals received. 96% of all referrals are contacted within 24 hours; 56% of all people are admitted to the service within 48 hours of their first contact – this compares to 11% one year ago!