

## Social Support Program Spring Newsletter | Oct 2022

It seems the difficulties of the past two years are finally behind us and what a better way to look to the future and celebrate great things to come than the blooming flowers and streaming sunlight. As we come into the season of Spring it is a symbol of growth, rebirth and an opportunity to appreciate the beauty that surrounds us and how change can have positive impacts on our lives and our community at large.

Let's take this time to reach out to those we love, our friends and our families who have weathered the storms of the past two years with us and share a smile with them as the weather turns warm. Let's all enjoy the cool spring air and pick flowers in the bright sunlight simply because we are able to be outside.

This spring let's all appreciate our health, our relationships, our strength for getting through another winter and rejoice in a new, beautiful day.

Let's track back and see what our wonderful clients were engaged in during the months of June, July, and August.

Dear All,

*It has been a long and cold winter with rain and the covid and flu all in one. I hope you are recovering from this and will soon be in Spring that should bring us much better weather. We would love to see all of you back at the groups enjoying the company of your mates and also getting some benefit out of all the activities that the staff take a lot of trouble to plan.*

*The garden group in particular are looking for clients who enjoy gardening and who will benefit from all the activities done in this group. The clients also get to take home produce that grows out there and at the same time can learn and share their knowledge of great recipes of their own.*

*The Creative Minds group is about to commence every alternate Friday at the SMRC from September and our creative mind Vino will guide you through this. Your creative minds will come to light, and you will surprise yourself.*

*I commend all of you for all the participation in your activity and outing groups for contributing to the activities and having a good time.*

*The SMRC focusses on your wellbeing and we as coordinator are willing to work with you through anything that you might need. Now for some words of wisdom.*

*"Value those who add value to your life." (unknown)*

*"When you truly care for someone, their mistakes never change your feelings because it's the mind that gets angry but the heart still cares." (unknown)*

*Take Care and Keep Safe.*

*MaryAnn DeSa*

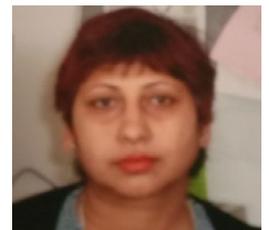


Senior Coordinator,  
Social Support Programs

**Southern Migrant and  
Refugee Centre**

39 Clow St, Dandenong Vic 3175  
03 9767 1900

[smrc@smrc.org.au](mailto:smrc@smrc.org.au)



*Our wonderful staff is the reason we are able to achieve so much at SMRC.  
Their dedication and commitment to our clients is exemplary. Thank you to all of you!*

## MONDAY MULTICULTURAL GROUP

The Queen's birthday event was fit for royalty! The fancy event was celebrated with lots of preparations from our clients, and everybody dressed up for the occasion. Taking photos seated on the 'Throne' wearing the crown and walking on the red carpet created a fun atmosphere! Our clients were also treated to a special meal. The feedback was that it was a day that everybody enjoyed very much. It was a great opportunity to showcase the creative side of the clients too. Overall, it was a successful collective effort by our clients, staff, and our volunteers. The day ended with some dance moves! Our clients were ready to move their feet at the drop of a hat!

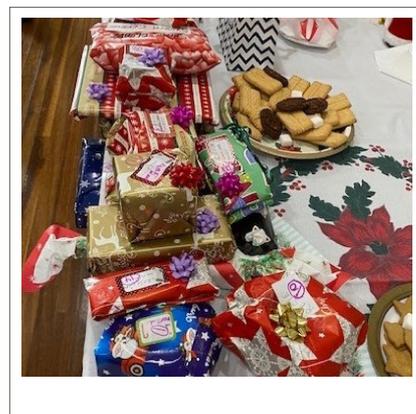
Dancing lightened up the group and always brought a smile to their faces.

Outing days at the end of each month are days most of our clients looked forward to, even during winter. On a sunny outing day in winter, clients enjoyed morning tea at Burrinja Park and lunch at Ferntree Gully hotel. They also spent a day strolling in Lynbrook Park before heading to Lynbrook hotel. RSL was another popular place to lunch.

Christmas in July was another time to enjoy life and it was meticulously planned with clients' input, and preparations began with cards. Clients were happy to display their creative side by making colorful cards. The day arrived to celebrate Christmas in July! Red and green was the theme, and everybody dressed up! Our wonderful clients Sara and Elizabeth were instrumental in decorating the place and organizing gifts, finger food and Kris Kringle. A special Christmas lunch was prepared by our fantastic volunteers. The Christmas spirit was there in every nook and cranny. Christmas carols echoed in the building. It was an enjoyable day for all the clients.

When we meet once a week, we never forgot to exercise our body and our brain to keep healthy!

The Cultural day celebration was a day for our clients to exchange the enthralling uniqueness of each one's culture. It was fascinating to listen to their presentations, and this brought everybody closer.



*"Tough times never last, but tough people do" - Robert H. Schuller*



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY MARIA!

Maria was a Monday Group client who celebrated her 100 birthday milestone in June! Maria's daughter Natalina was very happy to share this photo with us!

## WE ARE LISTENING...

"The SMRC social outings mum attended on Monday, Wednesday Friday and Saturday every week were so important to mum and she looked forward to them every day. Since she had dementia, she thought she was going to school and sat by the window waiting eagerly for her transport.

The SMRC outings also gave us a breather especially because we knew she was in good hands, and we had a few hours to attend to other work." I have forgotten to mention for making mum feel so special and cared for. She was so optimistic and never thought she couldn't do anything. Hyacinth and I miss her dreadfully."

*With love, Anne and Hyacinth.*

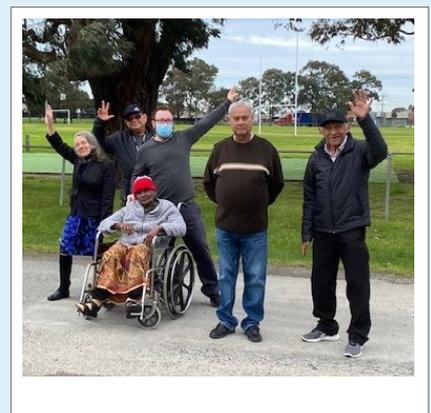
## MIDWEEK RESPITE GROUP

Our clients were happy to find out how dexterous they were by attempting origami. Some were very happy with the outcome. Step by step and with assistance, some of our clients created beautiful origami butterflies. Some opted to watch the others doing it. The Wednesday morning exercise session uplifted our clients' spirits and made them feel chirpy and active for the rest of the day. Our clients also had their favourite jigsaw puzzles and colouring books. This time of the day was always surrounded by silence, with clients deep in concentration. Music always had a soothing effect and brought calmness to our clients. The highlight was listening to Andre Bocelli which all of them loved. When it comes to Karaoke our clients were pros! Some clients were happy to join in singing and the others loved listening to the music and watching the others sing.

Arm-chair travelling led to a discussion about traveling in the past, a time to reminisce for our clients.

Bingo was a time to check our brain processing speed, alertness, and our memory! Everyone's concentration was remarkable and responded to the numbers called. Lunch at Prince Mark Hotel, Knox tavern, Noble Park RSL were also all enjoyable outings for our clients. Before heading off they had morning tea at the Centre. The feedback was they all enjoyed the outings. Great time to socialize and everyone enjoyed each other's company.

We hardly had any sunny days, and when the sun peeped out, we grabbed that opportunity to be outside and do exercises. July, a month to celebrate Christmas! Our clients engaged in making Christmas cards and were quite proud of the final product. Being part of the Christmas in July celebration was special. The place was decorated to create the Christmas mood, the carols were sung by the clients and for some it was a time to reminisce.



## FRIDAY MULTICULTURAL GROUP

Our 'Doveton hub' as it is affectionately known, is the Friday gathering place. Upon arrival, we had our natter with morning tea followed by table games including dominos and word search. Painting was an activity some clients took to and were happy to do free hand artwork or looking at the object. They were pretty pleased with the outcome! Mieke also proudly posed for a photo. Bingo is a very popular game in all our groups.

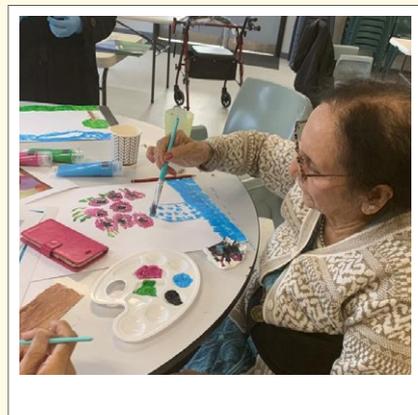
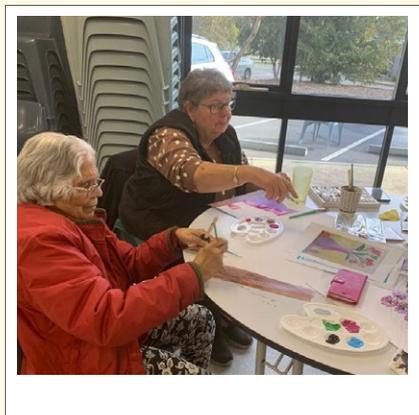
On special request by our clients a session on Nutrition was organised. Clients actively participated in the session and had questions for the speaker, and they were happy to share their opinions. The feedback was that it was very good.

Outings, that took place at the end of each month were clients' choices. Lunching at Village Green, the Sandown Park hotel, and Albion Hotel were all great outings.

Music and dancing had a common likeness across our multicultural and midweek respite groups. Our multicultural clients danced to their cultural dancing steps and music. Clients enjoyed line dancing, macarena, and dancing away to the Indian and Arabic music! Our client Reyes was happy to teach some dance steps to the others who were eager to learn. Everybody loved the day! They requested to have a similar session again.

We all needed a day of pampering, relaxation, massages, dancing, and socializing. Some clients were happy to get their nails painted choosing the colour they prefer. Some listened to the relaxing music, and some enjoyed a head and hand massage. The memory games were enjoyed by all, including guessing the price on shopping lists, and naming the items in the mystery box. This evoked enjoyment and was brain stimulating. The Arabic clients enjoyed Arabic riddles and quizzes. As a group they solved the problems and requested for more of those.

One lady initiated knitting and a few other ladies were eager to join in. We observed the beginning of a 'knitting club'! Mieke was willing to teach others.



## FUN AND CREATIVE GROUPS FOR COMMUNITY CONNECTION!

**Chinese, HCP, Polish, Cambodian, Spanish & Filipino Groups** – Goodbye Winter – Hello Spring!

In June, we celebrated the Queen's birthday, with a special morning tea. Some bought their own special cups from home, some turned up in their traditional costumes. We had an interesting discussion on the Queen and the royal family. Some reflected on royal families from their own country. We also celebrated some of our ladies turning 80 & 90.

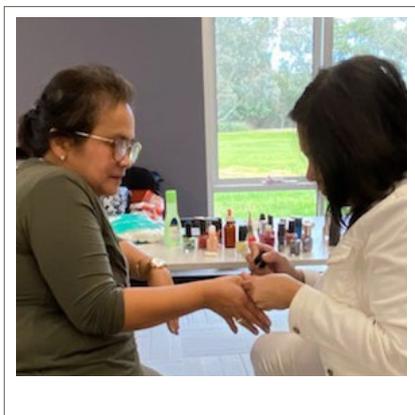
The Chinese group celebrated the end of winter with a concert, inviting another Monday group to join them. There was singing, dancing, and a magician who performed some beautiful tricks. Clients felt happy and relaxed. Those who were there voiced how much they enjoyed the show, and would like a repeat performance in the future.

Clients continue to be challenged with crossword puzzles and selected videos for stimulation and thoughts. Most of the clients love looking at amazing gardens from around the world, there is always a quiz at the end.

We have many fun and interesting days including teaching the clients line dancing. Karaoke sessions are also very popular, as it's been requested every week – We even had SMRC's got talent! Hmm – "amazing"! Pamper day is always a big hit. For a change, our clients pampered the staff with hand massages, and painted their nails.

Some of our staff have gone on a well-earned break. They work very hard, well beyond their call of duty – thank you all!

A big thank you to all our volunteers, you are our backbone. – Your caring nature to our clients is so humbling to see – no words can describe your dedication.



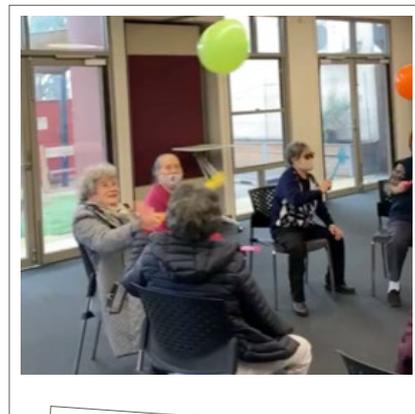
*"Be yourself, because an original is worth more than a copy"*

**Vietnamese Social Support Group** – Our Vietnamese clients start every month going on an outing. Lunching at Village green was a choice and before lunch clients’ choice was to shop at Brandon Park shopping Centre. Another time the outing was to DFO Moorabbin, where the clients had the opportunity to shop and browse and to eat at the food court. Our clients loved a shopping spree, this time was to Savers before going to lunch at Vegieria a few doors next to Savers in Heatherton.

Our Vietnamese clients had a special liking for physical games. The tossing game was popular- tossing the bean bags into 3 different targets, also playing quoits, and balloon swatter. These games brought a fun-loving atmosphere and a good laugh. Clients enjoyed playing bingo as they are familiar with the game in Vietnam which they call ‘lotto’. Our clients can get very competitive at times when they play Guess the word and naughts and crosses. Mini Golf was another popular game among our clients.

‘Memory Tray’ was a game that tested clients’ memory while having fun. Remembering the items was a challenge and the game became competitive.

Unfortunately, the organised information session on diabetes had to be postponed as the speaker was not available. This session will be held soon.



**Romanian outing group – Every 3rd Thursday of the month.** At the start of winter, in June the clients decided to go to the Manhattan Hotel for lunch. As usual, the clients met at the church and did the morning prayer before going out for lunch. The clients were happy to meet up after two months. In July and August, the clients gathered in the church as usual and after morning prayers and tea on both occasions, headed to Dandenong RSL for lunch.



**Turkish Outing – 4th Thursday of the month.** In June the clients decided to go to a Turkish restaurant in Mentone. They were happy with the food and the ambience.

The outing in July was a unanimous decision to go for lunch at the Greek restaurant in Oakleigh, Orexi. Before lunch they were eager to go on a shopping spree. Ikea was on the agenda for the next outing in August and in accordance with the schedule clients enjoyed the shopping before heading to kebab house in Clayton.



## NEWS FROM THE HIVE...

It's Springtime and that means there's lots to do at the Hive. It's still too cold to plant most of our new season fruit and vegies outside but we've been using our hothouse to get our seedlings up and running. Our clients have all been helping to plant seeds into punnets. We've got tomatoes, capsicums, eggplant, chilies, cucumbers, zucchini, pumpkins and okra started from seeds that were mostly saved last season. We are now nurturing our babies in the hothouse to ensure that we have strong plants to transplant into the garden beds when the weather warms up in October and November. We make sure that we have enough to give to clients for their own gardens or to grow in pots at home.

It's been a long, cold winter and we're so proud that our regular clients have continued to come to the Hive. Having access to the Braeside Park Visitors Centre has enabled us to host groups and keep warm and dry. We've been cooking up some feasts at the Visitor's Centre using lots of fresh produce. We've also been doing garden related art projects and playing games that keep bodies and minds active. We always make the most of clear skies though and get outside into the garden where possible.

Our fruit trees that were only planted a year or two ago are bursting into blossom. We've shown clients tips on pruning and on keeping the trees healthy and abundant. The almond and apricot trees are covered in fruiting flowers and the plums, nectarines, peaches, cherries, apples and pears are about to erupt into beautiful blossom. Fingers crossed that we get lots of delicious fruit to add to our harvest this season.

We are doing a zoom presentation in October for Moira Connect which is an organization that provides online support for people living with chronic health and mental health conditions. This "Connect" series of presentations is focusing on sustainability. Our session will be run from the Hive so that participants can see what we're doing and learn about how gardening can be a positive inclusion into anyone's life.

We're also looking forward to a visit by a group of coordinators and clients from HeadSpace. They will be coming to the Hive for a walk and talk and a brief workshop on sowing seeds for the garden. HeadSpace are hoping to set up a garden similar to the Hive and are interested to see what we've achieved. We'll be encouraging our visitors to get hands on with seed sowing and to take something home that they can continue to grow and hopefully use.

We are hoping to attract many more clients to the Hive now that the worst of winter has passed. We've been out chatting to groups and have a flyer and newsletter that has been distributed. It really is the best time to get into gardening so we'd appreciate if everyone could encourage people to join the Hive or just to pop in and have a look.





## Creative Minds



**Let your thoughts run free, create and enjoy!**

An art and craft class where you can create fun and functional things, let your imagination take you to a whole new world.

For further information contact:  
Vino 0417 547 110  
Southern Migrant & Refugee Centre,  
39 Clow St, Dandenong VIC 3175  
ph: (03) 9767 1900  
email: [smrc@smrc.org.au](mailto:smrc@smrc.org.au)  
[www.smrc.org.au](http://www.smrc.org.au)



**Art program with art gallery visits:**  
**Venue** – Southern Migrant & Refugee Centre  
**Address** – 39 Clow Street, Dandenong  
**Time** – Fridays 2 – 4 p.m. Fortnightly.  
**Cost** – \$7.50  
All Materials Provided  
Finished Artwork to Take Home  
Light Refreshments

### Creative Minds –

We are happy to announce the group sessions are scheduled to start on 2nd September held at SMRC office. This will be held fortnightly, and we have some clients who are already enrolled.



Thank you

Heartfelt thanks to our wonderful volunteers!

"Selfless action is a source of strength"

– Mahatma Gandhi –



## SMILE AWHILE!!!

Let's bring out the funny side.

A new teacher was trying to make use of her psychology courses.

She started her class by saying –

"Everyone who thinks they're stupid stand up!" After a few seconds, little Larry stood up.

The teacher said, "Do you think you're stupid, Larry?"

"No, ma'am, but I hate to see you standing there all by yourself!"



I hope everyone is enjoying the newsletter. I would love to hear your comments and suggestions so please email me at [vinod@smrc.org.au](mailto:vinod@smrc.org.au)  
Vino.

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