

Social Support Program Winter Newsletter | July 2022

WINTER

Well, winter has hit us with the ferocity of a snowstorm, the cold certainly hasn't held back! This winter seems to have us caught in its icy grip, with rain, hail and even snow if you can believe it! The colder weather tends to have a dampening affect on our moods however, now more than ever it's important to reach out to family and friends, warming us from the inside out. Hence, winter is a chance for us to reflect on the beginning of the year and look forward to what is coming next with the emergence of spring.

As a community we have endured the trails of the past two years and this winter period gives us a chance to reflect on how far we have come and where we are going next. Take this time to relax, rug up, get cozy and look forward to the next six months.

Let's find out how we spent our autumn months, March, April, and May with our wonderful clients.

*"Winter is the time for comfort,
for good food and warmth,
for the touch of a friendly hand
and for a talk beside the fire:
it is time for home."*

Edith Sitwell



Dear All

We have had great resilience within our team and that includes the members of our groups. We have gone from difficult times to managing changes in the way we manage our groups. As we all know we have groups that include people who speak different languages and yet we all get along and intermingle with each other. I hope you will all keep well as the Autumn and now Winter is getting quite severe. Please take care of yourselves and keep warm.

All your coordinators have updated me with the wonderful activities you do in the groups, and we are hoping to keep up the spirit always.

I will be visiting the groups in the coming months to say hello.

Words to always remember...

FAMILY

Isn't always blood.

It's the people in your life who want you in theirs;

The ones who accept you for who you are.

The ones who would do anything to see you smile

And who love you.

No matter what.

We are like family when you are in your groups.

All working well together and having an enjoyable day out from your regular routine. We want you to enjoy the day and if you have any suggestions, I am always there to help. Take care and I will come and visit you in your groups soon.

Yours Sincerely,



MaryAnn DeSa
Senior Coordinator,
Social Support Programs

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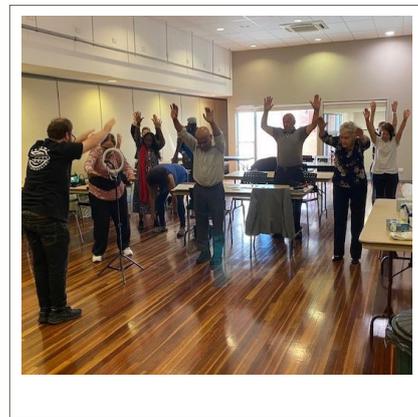
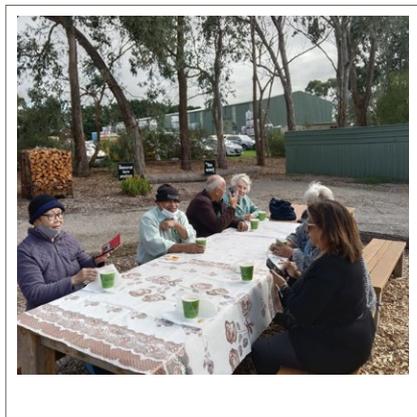


"Family and friends are hidden treasures, seek them out and enjoy their riches."

MONDAY MULTICULTURAL GROUP

Seeing familiar faces in a familiar environment made us realize how much, and what, we have missed. Some of our clients were a bit hesitant to resume but as the weeks rolled by the attendance increased. Among the familiar faces there were a few new faces to our delight. We were back and comfortable with our activities and enjoyed socializing. Brain stimulating activities -quizzes and memory games were some activities we enthusiastically engaged in. The outings were always looked forward to. 'Outings' sounded very much a thing of the past but we revived it once again!

Morning tea at Springvale library and lunch at Springvale RSL, and on another occasion at Village Green. The outing to Honey farm was great as the clients had the opportunity to purchase good honey! April was a month where we didn't have weekly socializing as much as we wanted as many public holidays fell on Mondays. Crafting flowers for ANZAC day, washcloth bunnies for Easter were some fun activities we enjoyed. High Tea was also a great way to remember our mothers! The dainty finger food in tiered serving trays, a fancy high tea party with proper teapots and teacups was an event our clients very much appreciated. We made sure we had fun when we meet at the hub! Little games and competitions such as chair dancing, kept everyone amused while it created a fun-loving atmosphere.



"You don't stop laughing when you grow old, you grow old when you stop laughing"

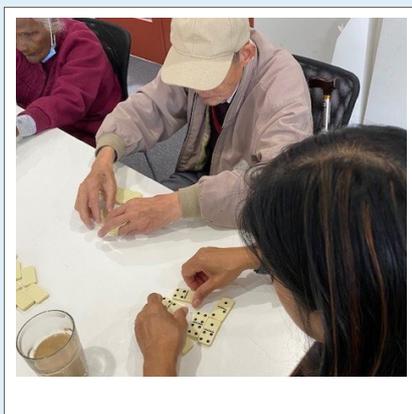
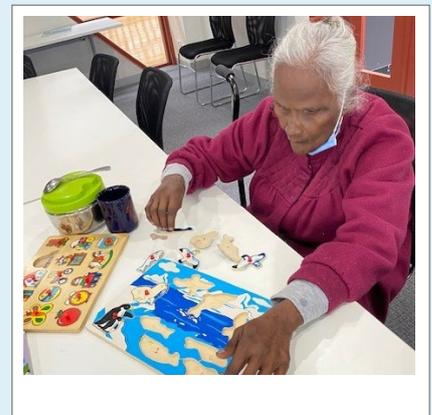
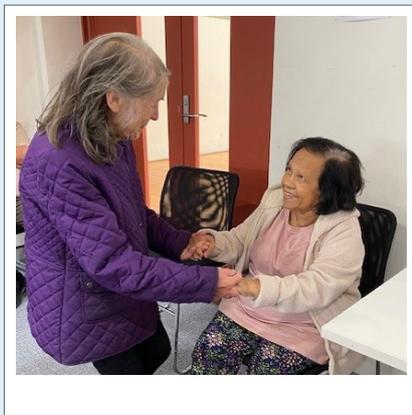
MIDWEEK RESPITE GROUP

Our wonderful midweek respite group clients were happy to be back in familiar surroundings and to see friendly faces. Our clients' engagement was more effective during face-to-face sessions than during online sessions. The online sessions were conducted with exercises, wordle, staff made crosswords, and virtual tours to keep their minds alert. It was a proud moment for our Than to pose for a life-enriching photo with his wonderful creation done during a group session. He had not lost the touch; his supple fingers created a wonderful piece of art. The outings to Dandenong RSL, Food Star, and Chelsea Heights were stimuluses to socialize after many months. During an outing clients had a coffee break at the "Hive" which is the community garden, and reminisced about gardening while enjoying the produce and blooming flowers.

A new lady to the group was delightful! With no inhibitions, she didn't take much time to let her hair down! She was happy to meet another lady from her own background and felt at ease. They struck a good friendship. The clients loved listening to music and these two ladies entertained the others by taking to the dance floor. Another way to relax was meditation music which clients loved. We proved that we still have the moves! The Nutbush music track was an excellent opportunity to move and to learn some new steps.

We remembered the fallen soldiers by colouring poppy flowers and reminisced about stories of war times. The topic 'Mother' to remember our mothers was well received by everyone. One client was happy to share with others that her mother lived up to 105! Some remembered to bring a photo of their mother and reminisced about them with a twinkle in their eyes. The passing away of our wonderful client Jin Chen was a sad day for everybody. We remembered him by having a dedicated time of reflection observed by everyone. Group discussion about Thailand aided by videos was a great time to share a client's recent visit to Thailand.

Sometimes our clients loved listening to opera music over lunch. We always had an afternoon session consisting of an activity of our clients' choice, drawing and bowling were popular.



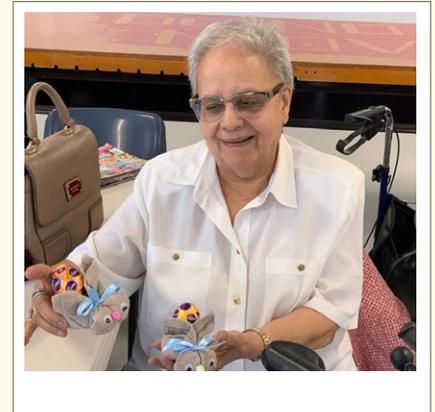
"You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give." -Winston Churchill

FRIDAY MULTICULTURAL GROUP

Celebrating 'Shrove Tuesday', Pancake Day, led to an interesting discussion about various ways of making pancakes in different cultures. Everyone enthusiastically contributed to the presentation and discussion about pancakes around the world. Some clients shared their recipes with others. Unfortunately, this was a session held online and we lost the opportunity to savour a few pancakes! Fondly addressed as our 'Doveton Group', members were happy to be back! The outings were a treat after a lengthy period of 'virtual hibernation' even before winter! Outings to Ferntree Gully Hotel, Springvale R.S.L., Food Star, a stroll on the Frankston pier were apt times to socialize while enjoying fresh air and the surroundings.

During Easter time the creative side of our clients were showcased! Clients were happy to make Easter bunnies out of washcloth and Easter eggs. Popular physical games were ten pin bowling, ball games, basketball, not forgetting brain games including naughts and crosses, bingo, guess the word, and word games that kept the brains active. All Fridays consisted of exercises and chair dancing for forty-five minutes.

We never forget our "Mother's Day" celebration. Clients engaged in making tissue flowers as well as sharing a special memory about their mother with the group and a special lunch to celebrate the day. A little gift to everyone made it extra special. All our events and sessions were developed keeping in mind to promote multiculturalism among our clients. This would invariably enhance the understanding and acceptance of each other.



"Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter" – Mark Twain

FUN AND CREATIVE GROUPS FOR COMMUNITY CONNECTION!

Chinese, HCP, Polish, Cambodian, Spanish & Filipino Groups –6 months almost gone!

In March, we had to say goodbye to our Polish Social group. The group was finding it difficult to function after 2 years of covid lockdown. Some were getting very frail and had to be admitted into nursing homes while others were afraid to venture out in case, they catch covid.

Other groups are still going strong- outings are so much fun, they have visited places of interest, gardens, parks and many walks around Lysterfield Lake.

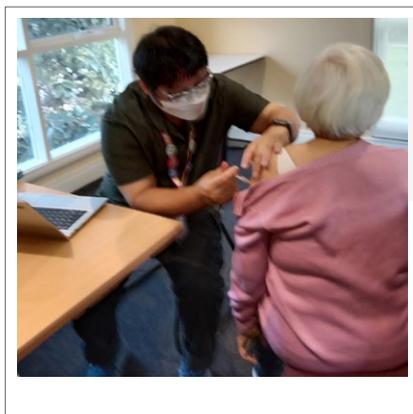
The Cambodian group celebrated their new year with lots of singing, dancing and entertainment, and special dishes were cooked. Blessings in a form of spraying water was very interesting to watch. All participants, took part, most shared what happens in Cambodia during the New Year.

The egg and spoon race activity was done for Easter. For Anzac Day, participants were able to share many things close to their heart – mostly reminiscing.

Month of May is Mother's Day – this was celebrated with outings to restaurants or out for a BBQ. Very special for all.

Enliven, and nurses from Monash visited Chinese, Cambodian & Filipino groups for an information session on Covid. They offered the flu and Covid vaccination to those who are interested in taking their 4th booster. Some participants took up the offer.

A big thank you to all our volunteers, you are the backbone. – Your caring nature, and always going that extra mile for our clients – no words can describe your dedication, THANK YOU ALL.



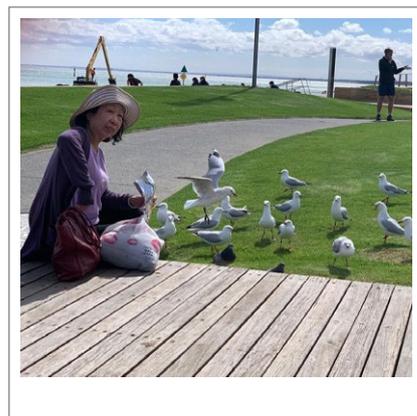
THANK YOU!

*A big Thank You
to our wonderful
VOLUNTEERS!!*

"An old horse knows the way"

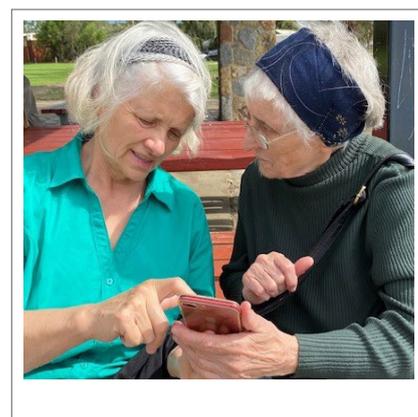
Vietnamese Group – After staying for months at home and joining via, conference calls and viber our Vietnamese clients finally managed to meetup for the first time for the year in the second week of March! They were very pleased to see each other. Weekly, the clients met at the usual hub in Springvale! Weekly chair-based exercises were conducted for forty-five minutes. On one occasion a client was happy to lead a 'Chi exercise' session for good health. Each week the clients enjoyed physical activities such as basketball and bowling. Chair volleyball was a fun game and a good way to exercise.

Brain stimulating games such as guess the word game, memory games, matching picture cards and bingo were popular. Clients mentioned that in Vietnam 'bingo' is called "lotto". This is a very popular game among the clients. It wasn't difficult for our clients to play Scattogaries and letter games forming words both in Vietnamese and English. Going out was always fun. We enjoyed Frankston Pier and a walk on the beach, sitting and relaxing whilst watching the bold but friendly flock of seagulls. We ended up in a restaurant of our clients' choice. Easter bunnies were the creative choice during Easter craft. The outcome was great with washcloth and wooden beads! Not chocolate!, but clients were treated to chocolates! Sandown Park hotel was a place our lovely clients wanted to go to celebrate Mother's Day.



Romanian outing group – Every 3rd Thursday of the month. After a lapse of few months, clients were happy to meet at the Church and have a Christian meeting. After church the clients were happy to take a stroll down Banjo Park near Lynbrook hotel. This gave them the time to socialize and enjoy the environment. The day ended after having lunch at the Lynbrook Hotel. The clients were happy to start going out again once a month and enjoy each other's company and having lunch in a place of their choice.

In April the outing didn't take place as predicted. One volunteer who is the mastermind in gathering clients was a close contact of covid and the other contracted covid. Without the volunteers the clients couldn't access church premises. Hence the clients did not want to go ahead with the planned outing though the staff member was ready to take them out after meeting outside the church premisses. The clients were happy to interact via conference calls, and individually. The month of May wasn't fruitful either as much as we wanted it to be. There was a tragedy in the Romanian community. The groups unanimous decision was not to have the outing as they felt it was not a time to rejoice. Also, some had not recovered from Covid and flu. Well, again clients were happy to have a natter via conference calls.



NEWS FROM THE HIVE...

Every season has its different feel of wonder and magic in the garden. As the days grow shorter and the weather grows colder, we have cleared the last of the summer harvest, and now we have planted all the Winter crops like Broccoli, Cauliflower, Cabbage, Kale, Broad beans, Snow Peas, Fennel, Onions, Silver beet, Garlic and Coriander. Believe it or not Coriander grows better in these Winter months...and who doesn't love Coriander! It's also very exciting to plant the garlic, one of our longest crops, that we will harvest around November. Every culture seems to incorporate Garlic into their cuisine. This year we have encountered several different pests and diseases in our garden, which has been beneficial for our clients as it turns into a series of workshops to learn how to combat them in their own gardens. We diagnosed and treated leaf miner, gall wasp and nutrient deficiency on our Dwarf Lemon Meyer tree. Dealt with the rat challenge eating brassicas that clients had sown by covering them up in a creative way with netting. There is always something to learn in the garden! We also learnt how to propagate and pot up Strawberry runners which are growing profusely from our beautiful Strawberry plants. Everyone is happy! We get to keep our strawberry plants nice and neat, and clients get to take plants to grow yummy big strawberries at home.

We are fortunate to have the warm, comfortable refuge of the Visitors Centre at Braeside Park where we can shelter from any extreme weather and still enjoy each other's company. A place to eat, drink and chat, learn how to cook a favourite dish, enough room to exercise, turn up the music and dance if we want, or enjoy Thai Chi with wonderful instruction from a fellow client.

We introduced some craft ideas at the garden. Our first mosaic is a stepping stone with a bee that we will use in our sensory garden at The Hive! Truly an eye-catching little bee, hopefully the first of many. We haven't limited ourselves to the beauty of our own garden, but also had various outings to take in other garden related activities. There is so much colour and breathtaking views to go searching for and endless possibilities of places to go. Check out our beautiful 'Hive angels' at Garden World!

This is truly a wonderful community. During May I celebrated my birthday on holidays only to have this wonderful snap sent to me on the day of the gang cheering me on! But it's no surprise because always love to celebrate a birthday or any other special day!

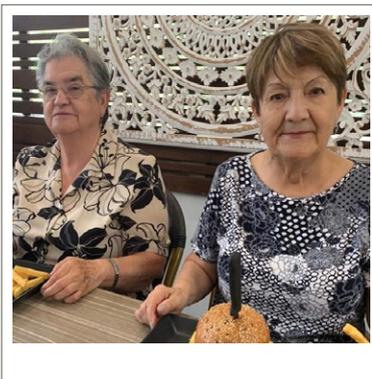
If you would like to be a part of the garden at The Hive contact Elly on 0407 050 878.
Happy gardening everyone!



Turkish outing group Every 4th Thursday of the month – Since it was the fourth Thursday, we had time to get ready for the outing after the face-to-face sessions resumed. Our Turkish clients were eager to meetup. As usual the clients gathered at SMRC for morning tea. The gathering had a lovely vibe, everyone was waiting to have a chinwag! After morning tea, it was a time to do shopping! All women love it! Glen Waverly shopping centre was the unanimous decision. Well, lunching at Village Green was a great way to end the day. In April, as usual clients gathered at SMRC for morning tea and sharing little anecdotes. This time the numbers were down as some were fasting. The clients enjoyed a meal at the Manhattan Hotel. In May, morning tea didn't happen at SMRC. Our ladies were too eager to do shoe shopping and didn't want to get late to go on their shopping spree! Contented ladies finished the day with a good lunch!



Spanish Fortnightly Outing



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:
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39 Clow St, Dandenong VIC 3175
ph: (03) 9767 1900
email: smrc@smrc.org.au
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 in the process of finalizing dates, bookings, and promotional material. The flyer is ready now. The sessions will be held fortnightly on a Friday at SMRC from 2.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.

The group sessions will be planned with clients to enhance their feelings of self-worth, release their inner creativity, and create a sense of control over life while socializing with others.

SMILE AWHILE!!!



Since youngsters of today have their Texting Codes (LOL, OMG, TTYL etc)

The Oldies decided not to be outdone by these kids, and now have developed our own codes too:

- ATD** – At the doctors
- BFF** – Best Friend's funeral
- BTW** – Bring the wheelchair
- BYOT** – Bring your own teeth
- FWIW** – Forgot where I was
- GGPBL** – Gotta Go, pacemaker battery is low
- GHA** – Got Heartburn Again
- TFT** – Texting from toilet

Share this with your friends!!



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
Vino.

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