

Social Support Program Summer Newsletter | Feb 2023

What an unusual summer we have had over the past two months! With wild winds and rainy days, it definitely hasn't been the summer we expected. However, as we begin this new year of 2023, not only is the weather warming but so are our attitudes to this new chapter of our lives. The beginning of a new year feels like a chance to undertake new challenges and achieve new goals and what better weather to do it in!

Looking back, it's difficult to fathom what we, as a community, went through over the past three years, it feels like a lifetime ago. But, now at the beginning of 2023, it feels like we have wiped the slate clean and have the opportunity to leave the past behind us and look to a bright year ahead. So, take this new year as your opportunity to delve into some exciting new adventures and make the most of this lovely weather while it lasts!

During the months of September, October, and November we have been busy with an eventful three months for our delightful clients. Approaching the last few months of a year we strive to have plans for holidays, parties, and for family time.

Our social support team represented SMRC at the Seniors Services Expo -Kingston Council. This was an opportunity to meet various service providers as well as promote our social support programs.



Hi Everyone

We are now in Summer but some days still feels like winter and all of you kept on coming to your groups. To see you week after week, gives us great pleasure to serve you well.

I would like to thank all my Coordinators, Program Staff and Volunteers for the wonderful work put into making the groups an interesting and happy place to come. This year hasn't been easy for anyone but all continued to work hard and to maintain the happiness and interaction in the office and in the groups.

I would also like to thank all the members of the groups who attended every week. It gives us great pleasure to be able to plan and engage you with the various activities in your respective groups.

We hope that you enjoyed the year and look forward to seeing you in 2023.

A Doctor once said –

“There is no happiness in medicine

And there is no medicine like happiness”

For simple chemistry in life

Maintain your PH (peace and happiness)

Lots of Love



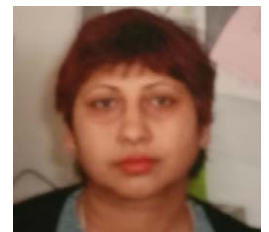
MaryAnn DeSa

Senior Coordinator,
Social Support Programs

**Southern Migrant and
Refugee Centre**

39 Clow St, Dandenong Vic 3175
03 9767 1900

smrc@smrc.org.au



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!

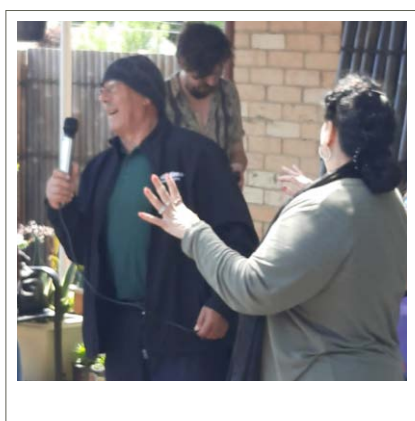
MONDAY MULTICULTURAL GROUP

Reaching the end of a year puts one into the right mindset to relax and enjoy! We always celebrated special days in a month, throughout the year. Father's Day was a day to reminisce about fathers and to engage in Father's Day activities. Some clients reminisced about their childhood and their fathers. Engaging in a word search about Father's Day was fun. As usual we did our program planning for the next three months. The death of Queen Elizabeth the 2nd was a topic everyone wanted to talk about. As a mark of respect to Queen Elizabeth, clients were happy to get involved in a quiz about the Royal family. It was interesting to see the great knowledge everybody had when it came to the 'Royal Family'.

Acknowledging our seniors gave our clients a morale boost. We celebrated the Seniors Week by joining the Ageing positively festival celebration, and "Dancing and Singing in the Garden" at the Australian Filipino Community Services. Some clients dressed up in their cultural costume. The weather was in our favor! The fun event was held to the amusement of the clients with music, dancing, a BBQ and a magic show.

Another special day in Melbourne was the Melbourne Cup! Decorating hats, quizzes, word search, and a dress up day! Also, we couldn't forget Halloween! What fun and laughter it brought to see some clients dressed up for the occasion!

Our clients also loved to acquire more knowledge about topics that interest them. "Strokes" was a topic everyone wanted to know more about. A guest speaker was invited to deliver a session on "Strokes". This informative session was well received by the clients and they requested for more of this kind. Our outings to parks and to a restaurant were always held on the last Monday of the month.



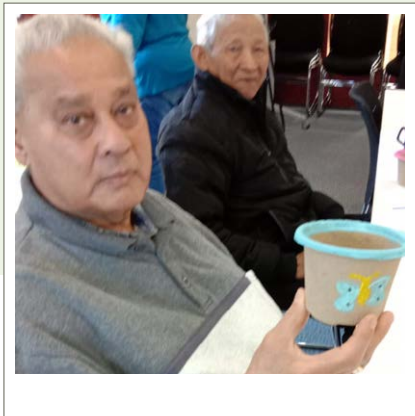
"Nothing is impossible. The word itself says 'I'm possible!'" – Audrey Hepburn

MIDWEEK RESPITE GROUP

Our lovely Midweek clients didn't mind physical and mental challenges, but we always made sure that they do not get overwhelmed. Their creative side surfaced when painting 'your own flowerpot'. Some clients were eager to plant flower plants next time when they meet, and to take them home for their loved ones. On a sunny day after wintry months which looked like an end of a hibernation period, the clients were happy to walk around the oval breathing the fresh air and found themselves energized! On a beautiful day, we found a time in the morning to be out in the sun and sip a cup of tea, at the Dandenong Park. Another time we went to Dandy Park and walked for almost an hour enjoying the sunshine and a tete-a-tete. After a long cold winter weather this was an escape.

Our Elizabeth was so happy that she kept dancing in the park! We tried our best to get out during a pleasant sunny day to soak in the inviting sunrays.

Our clients loved going out for lunch. Some places that they enjoyed were Prince Mark Hotel, Manhattan Hotel, Dandenong RSL. In November, we took advantage of the balmy weather on the outing day and headed to the Chelsea beach for a stroll before lunching at the hotel. During Seniors Week, our clients loved talking about age and memories. It was always a delight to see our clients and their moves! Dancing to their choice of genre enthused them to get up and dance without any inhibition. The last Wednesday of the month outing was always a treat to our wonderful clients.



FRIDAY MULTICULTURAL GROUP

Each Friday morning upon arrival clients had their morning tea and settled for a tabletop game. Popular tabletop games for our wonderful ‘Doveton’ clients were rummy, dominos, and chess. This became a ritual for some and was a much-awaited weekly socializing time.

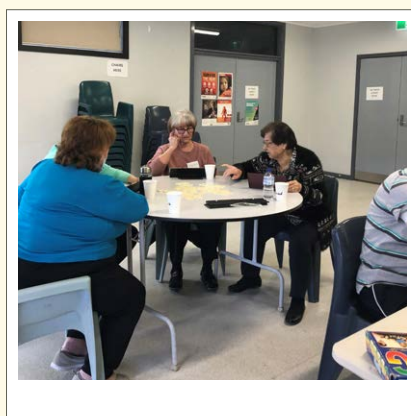
Some clients were happy to make cards in honour of their fathers. The beautiful cards took shape of a tuxedo with a red bowtie. We committed a day to exercising the brain as well as the body. Memory game played with clients was not only a brain stimulant but a fun activity too. Since we had some beautiful weather during these three months, our clients requested to do a couple of laps round the car park instead of the usual chair-based exercises. In honour of our Olivia’s 85th birthday, her daughter Sandra treated our clients with a fabulous cake and sweetmeats.

The last Friday in each month is our outing day and the scheduled places were the Vale hotel and the Springvale RSL. It was easy to do their food choices before heading to the restaurant as the group was getting bigger! This made it easy to order and cut down the waiting time.

We picked the right day for a sausage sizzle! We took advantage of the balmy weather, an outing to the park and a sausage sizzle was a much-awaited time for all of us. Some clients got on to the exercise machines in the park and had a whale of a time!

Another special day to celebrate was Melbourne Cup! The clients were happy to get involved in Melbourne Cup related quizzes, and word searches.

A guest speaker and an Arabic interpreter were organised for an information session on Advanced Care Plan. This was well received by the clients and they had many questions for the speaker. The clients felt they were empowered with more information about their ‘Will’ and ‘Attorneys’.



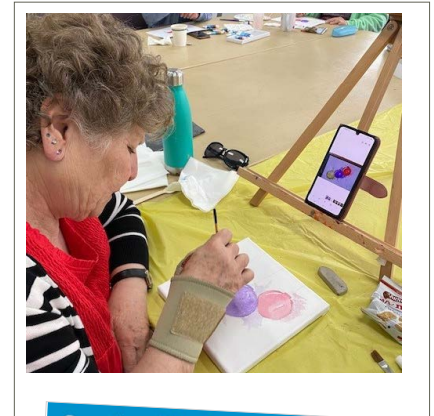
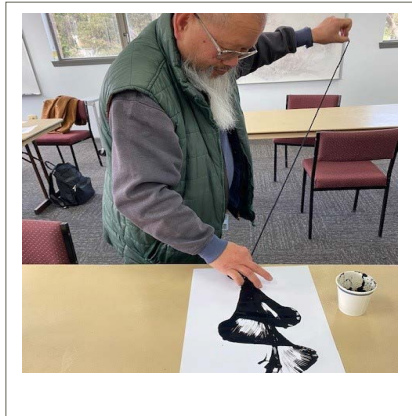
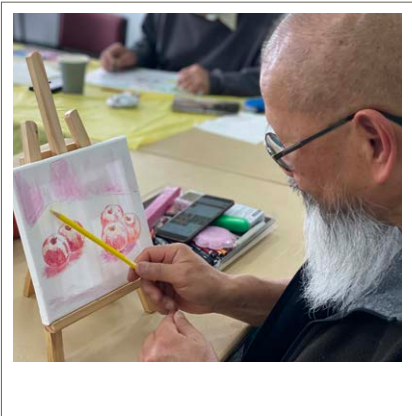
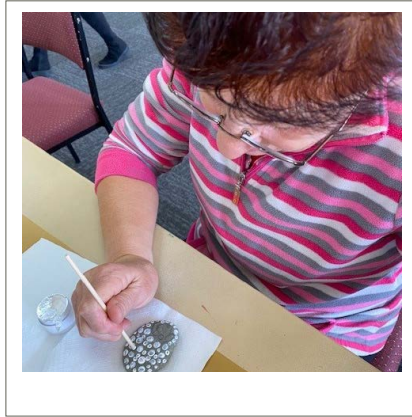
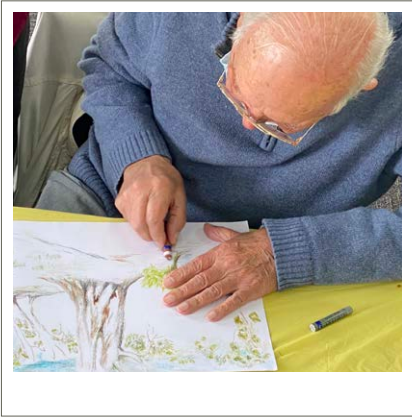
“You do not find the happy life. You make it” – Camilla Kimball

CREATIVE MINDS

Much to our delight we started Creative Minds as scheduled and the six clients who were registered participated. We always loved the feedback especially at the start of a new program. The very creative clients were happy to continue and will attend the group fortnightly. The very first day, the clients were greeted and this was followed by a discussion to find out their ideas and interests. The clients were happy to do a creative art design using acrylic paint and a string.

Next time when we met the imaginative clients engaged in still life art. They enjoyed painting flowers. They were shown techniques of drawing tulips and using colour combinations. The wonderful clients gave their individual ideas for the next session when they meet.

Rock art was another style they took to. It was amazing to see the abundant creativity these delightful clients possess. The mediums they were mostly interested in were water colours, acrylic paint and pastels.



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.

Art program with art gallery visits:
Venue – Southern Migrant & Refugee Centre
Address – 35 Clow Street, Dandenong
Time – Fridays 2 – 4 p.m. Fortnightly.
Cost – \$7.50

All Materials Provided
 Finished Artwork to Take Home
 Light Refreshments

For further information contact:
 Vline 0417 847 191
 Southern Migrant & Refugee Centre,
 35 Clow St, Dandenong VIC 3175
 ph: (03) 8797 1800
 email: smrc@smrc.org.au
 www.smrc.org.au

Southern Migrant & Refugee Centre

"Wake up determined, go to bed satisfied"– Dwayne Johnson

Vietnamese Social Support Group – It was the first Thursday of the month and the outing. The clients' decided their preferences when it came to a restaurant. Food Star Frankston was a favourite with our Vietnamese clients. Once, the clients took advantage of the glorious weather! The clients decided to go to the Frankston Pier before heading to Food Star. On the way to the pier, clients stopped at a Seven Eleven for morning tea and enjoyed the scenery while having a stroll around the beach. On another outing day, the clients had an opportunity to browse and shop and socialize at Brandon Park. The lunch at Brandon Park shopping centre was a time for everybody to have a natter while enjoying lunch. Another time our clients shopped at the Parkmore shopping centre followed by lunch at Keysborough hotel.

The special activities each day varied from mind boggling memory games, and recalling items in the basket, to physical games. An amazing effort by everybody.

Chair soccer was always a hit with the Vietnamese group. Having groups made the game more interesting as it became more challenging. Our wonderful Vietnamese clients not only loved physical games, they had a knack for creativity too. Each one weaved a placemat with precision which was a great achievement. They never forgot to exercise the brain too. Sometimes clients unanimously decided to vary from the program schedule, in such an instance the clients were happy to play balloon volleyball instead of having a pampering session.



Romanian outing group – Every 3rd Thursday of the month.

Our once-a-month meeting on the third Thursday of the month, group was happy to attend the tulip festival in Silvan. The tickets were purchased last year for the festival and the group couldn't attend. For our luck, the tickets were valid for this year! Bourek was the popular lunch for the outing. As seniors and pensioners, our clients needed to know more about Centrelink. Our clients were quite satisfied with the morning session that was organized with a guest speaker on pension and other related topics. The clients were happy to lunch at the Dandenong RSL later that day. On another meeting day the clients met at the usual Church premises and celebrated a client's birthdays before heading to the RSL for lunch.



Turkish Outing – 4th Thursday of the month. Our clients eagerly waited for the fourth Thursday of the month to come. We did our prior consultations and planning for each outing. This day was a shopping day for the clients too. They loved their shopping spree! The clients Shopped at Brendon Park shopping center before having lunch at Village Green. Another time, they enjoyed shopping and lunching at Lynbrook hotel. Village Green became a hit with the clients as they opted to lunch there again!



"Keep your face always toward the sunshine, and shadows will fall behind you." – Walt Whitman

NEWS FROM THE HIVE...

It's been a cold wet lead up to Summer this year but the garden doesn't seem to mind. Rain is always the best way to water the garden and our fruit and vegie plants are loving it, especially now that the days are finally warming up.

We've really made the most of our hothouse this year and spring was mostly taken up by raising seedlings. Our clients have become experts at sowing seeds and "pricking out" plants into pots which are then grown into strong, healthy plants to put into the garden beds when the conditions are right.

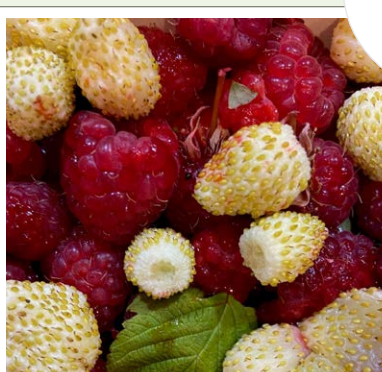
The hothouse protected our babies from those unseasonal cold blasts that we had right into November. Most of the plants are now settled into the garden beds where they are thriving. Our clients have taken lots of plants home to grow in their own gardens and to share with family and friends. We love sharing the joy of gardening and eating freshly grown, healthy food!!

We excel at sharing food at the Hive and we have definitely had some feasts in the last few months. We love it when clients use our fresh produce to create delicious, often culturally inspired dishes for us to share. There's always freshly picked salads and we love using our abundant parsley to make tabouli. Nisha shared with us her way of making tabouli, which then went on to be a regular item as we have a wonderful supply of parsley!

Did you know that Parsley contains large amounts of Vitamin K which has been linked to bone health and can help to support bone density. Vitamin K is also extremely important for healthy blood clotting. Parsley is also rich in Vitamin C and other antioxidants that can help reduce the risk of diabetes, cancer and heart disease.

Our other favorite healthy summer snacks are our berries. Lou has been sharing her knowledge of raspberry pruning with clients to help them get the best possible harvest from Raspberry canes. Our patch at the Hive is thriving and has been providing us with delicious, sweet raspberries since early November. We've also had an abundance of strawberries, and the tayberries have been nothing less than scrumptious. This year we even had a crop of our white strawberries, smaller than the regular red variety but equally delicious.

Most of our fruit trees are now in their third season and are bursting with fruit. Nothing better than a home-grown Apricot! It is amazing to see how many apples can be produced on our small, espaliered trees. Knowing when and how to prune is the key to success with espaliered trees and Lou will be continuing to share the techniques with clients once the trees have fruited and summer pruning starts.



FUN AND CREATIVE GROUPS FOR COMMUNITY CONNECTION!

Chinese, HCP, Polish, Cambodian, Spanish & Filipino Groups - Hello Summer!

Our groups have been very active these couple of months, dancing, Karaoke, and visiting places of interest. Our photos say it all!

A big thank you to all our staff and volunteers - Your caring nature to our clients is next to none! no words can describe your dedication.

To the families, who have supported us - big hugs!

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas, a safe and healthy New Year! See you in 2023!



SMILE AWHILE!!!

What does a house wear?
Address!

I told my physical therapist I broke my arm in two places.
He told me to stop going to those places.

What do lawyers wear to court?
Lawsuits



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.

Southern Migrant & Refugee Centre,
39 Clow Street Dandenong 3175
ph: 9767 1900

smrc@smrc.org.au
www.smrc.org.au



Southern Migrant & Refugee Centre
Integrity Compassion Accountability Respect Excellence