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A Newsletter for multicultural older people produced by the  
Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria, jointly supported by  
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# Our Golden Years

## Editor's Note

The arrival of Spring brings flowers, fresh air and new energy. It is easier to increase our activity as the days get warmer. This issue of Our Golden Years shows how forming friendships in culturally diverse physical fitness groups can put a spring in your step. Another story is about a lovely wallhanging of flowers created by people who speak many different languages.

The 2009 Victorian Seniors Festival runs Sunday 4 October to Sunday 11 October. The festival opening day will be at Federation Square in Melbourne on Sunday 4 October. Watch out for marquees, chairs and tables with lots of events and information.

On 9 October the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria will present the Multicultural Concert as part of the Seniors Festival. Program highlights include beautiful costumes, wonderful songs and dances from all over the world. We invite you to come along and enjoy the program.

Sincerely  
Dr Irene Bouzo,  
Editor



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## ECCV presents a Free Multicultural Concert

The Multicultural Concert is on 9 October 2009 from 2pm to 3.30pm at the Lower Town Hall in Swanston Street, Melbourne. Doors open at 1.15pm. Groups organising to bring a bus please phone the ticket line 1800 136 762 to make arrangements. The concert is part of the Victorian Seniors Festival on 4 to 11 October 2009. Visitors can relax with a free tea and coffee in the Festival Hub, Lower Town Hall open daily from 4 to 11 October 10am to 4.30pm. In addition 79 local councils will present programs, many including cultural diversity. Public transport is free for over 65s throughout Melbourne during the Seniors Festival.

2009 Victorian  
Seniors Festival

Be inspired!  
4-11 October



**Some of artists at the  
Multicultural Concert will be:**





## Croatian Fitness Group



The Croatian Senior Citizens of Footscray are participating in a new project aimed at encouraging older people to take part in a strength training exercise program. The participants have been meeting every Friday morning for a 45 minute session at the West Footscray Neighbourhood House.

According to the ECCV's Project Coordinator, Kate Ling, cost and access are often two major obstacles to ethnic seniors becoming

involved in regular exercise. The 12 week Multicultural Multiactive Seniors (MMS) Project involves a fitness instructor who runs the sessions and includes strength based exercises that have been especially designed to meet the group's specific needs. The Croatian group is quite fortunate as the fitness instructor is Croatian speaking, a luxury that many groups do not have.



The MMS project is a partnership between the ECCV and the YMCA and is funded by the Office of Senior Victorians in the Department of Planning and Community Development.

For further information about the MMS project's Croatian groups sessions, contact Lily Silic from the Australian Croatian Community Services on (03) 9689 5811.

## Keeping your brain healthy with age

As we get older, changes can occur in our thinking and memory. Sometimes this can be quite severe and affects our ability to do everyday tasks. This is called dementia. While dementia is more common as people age, dementia is not a normal part of ageing.



Dementia can not yet be cured or prevented, but research has identified a number of factors that can reduce the risk of developing dementia and may even delay the onset.

To help reduce your risk of dementia you need to:

- Keep your brain active
- Eat healthily
- Be physically active
- Manage blood pressure, blood cholesterol, blood sugar and weight
- Get involved in social activities
- Avoid tobacco smoke, drink alcohol in moderation and manage sleep problems
- Protect your head from serious injury

Doing all of these things can't guarantee that you will not develop dementia, but they may help reduce your risk and they are also good for general health and wellbeing.

To find out more about keeping your brain healthy with age visit [www.alzheimers.org.au](http://www.alzheimers.org.au) or phone the National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500. The Helpline can also be contacted through the Telephone Interpreting Service on 131 450.



## Flowers of Friendship – Jewish Care Victoria



*Clementine Posterma –Volunteer and Abe Seigel*

Endless plain beige walls were calling out for some colour. They provided the perfect blank canvas for creative expression. Just what was to be depicted remained the challenge.

Once the flower theme was chosen, the tiny seed planted in the minds of our Diversional Therapy clients, soon grew and blossomed into a wonderful bouquet. Each panel of our wall hanging is unique, some designed and created by our clients, others created with a little help and guidance. Paints and fabrics were used in various ways to create each picture, capturing the personality of the individual.



*Flowers of Friendship wall hanging*

When it came to naming our wall hanging, it became evident from all the suggestions made, that these pieces of art had a common thread. These works demonstrated the “coming together” of people.

So many of us have come from other places, yet just like a beautiful bouquet is made up of different flowers, a group of friends can consist of people from different backgrounds .

It doesn't matter that we don't all speak the same language or agree on all issues, we can all form a unit. That is exactly what has happened at our Services for Older People Active Living Centre.

We have a group of people who meet regularly including clients, staff and volunteers, and together we provide each other with a real sense of purpose and meet each others' needs. So after many months of hard work and dedication, one beige wall has been transformed and our “Flowers of Friendship” has been unveiled.

### **Helen Menashe**

*Diversional Therapy  
Jewish Care Victoria*



1100 new cases  
in Australia  
every week

**Dementia...**  
*facing the epidemic*



**Dementia Awareness Week**  
15 to 25 September 2009





## Getting physical at Golden Gals n Pals



*Dave and Laurel lead the way with exercises at Golden Gals n Pals*

The weekly Friday Planned Activity Group, Golden Gals n Pals at Gateway recently started conducting their own chair based light exercise program, with the assistance of trained volunteers Dave and Laurel. The benefit of participating in regular physical activities supports functional capacity and improves quality of life. Gateway client, Kitty aged 89 next month says she can't do some of the exercises, but she does do what she can. Kitty also says she has never had such a good time since starting the group; she enjoys it and looks forward to it. "The people are different, the place is nice and clean, you couldn't have a better place," she said.

Earlier this year Gateway celebrated Cultural Diversity Week in March with an array of cultural foods. Clients and volunteers taste buds were tantalised and senses awakened with the wonderful aromas of culturally diverse foods. Big Catch Fishing program enjoyed a lovely Polish meal, with kransky sausages and sauerkraut. The Woodwork Club had Turkish pides filled with cheese and mince for morning tea.



The Flexi Friends program enjoyed Turkish koftes (meat balls). Hydro Hotshots shared a variety of Greek and Italian foods and the Golden Gals 'n Pals program had a special Congolese feast, prepared by Martine Mwamba and her family. They wore traditional dress and brought along their children who were a delight and kept everybody entertained.

If you would like to share your culture through the Gateway programs, we welcome suggestions.

Fatima Unal  
Gateway Social Support Options  
Coordinator of Volunteers  
ph: 9399 3511 [www.gatewaysupport.org.au](http://www.gatewaysupport.org.au)