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*A Newsletter for multicultural older people produced by the
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Our Golden Years

Editor's Note

Hello Everyone

In this, our last issue for 2009, my colleague Helen tells us about the wonderful time she had at the Victorian Seniors Festival Multicultural Concert. Helen Dubberley has been the Health and Community Care (HACC) Project Officer at ECCV. She has been coordinating a Supported Access Pilot program to develop services to help seniors from culturally diverse backgrounds navigate their way through the complex aged care services. That pilot is an important step in improving HACC aged care programs and policies for non-English speaking older people. Helen is leaving ECCV at the end of this year. We wish her all the best for the future.

ECCV commends the Migrant Resource Centre North West for assisting new and emerging communities with their aged and disability needs as well as the longer established multicultural seniors.

The article on Paintings of Friendship is an inspiring example of overcoming social isolation at the Polish Planned Activity Group.

On behalf of ECCV I wish you all the best for the New Year.

Sincerely
Dr Irene Bouzo
Editor



happy new year

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Multicultural Concert 2009 Victorian Seniors Festival

What a wonderful celebration of the rich multicultural mix of Victoria's community was the Multicultural Concert presented by Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) at the Melbourne Town Hall during the October 2009 Victorian Seniors Festival!

Opened by Italian-Greek musical comic duo MCs Marcello and Anthea to what felt like a full house, hats were doffed to the exciting and vibrant music of Scotland, Bolivia, China, West Africa, Gypsy Spain, Hungary and Greece. We heard a Mandarin choir intersperse its songs with gentle comedy about the migrant experience. African drums inspired



Greek Rembetika



Kavisha Mazella

acrobatic movement by willowy African Dancers across the entire stage. The essential accordion, violin and bass tugging at every Eastern European heartstring and Greek Rembetika was brought to mind by the passionate voice of Kavisha Mazella. Personally I would have loved more Flamenco dancing and Bolivian Pipes but then I would also have loved to dance in the aisles for the entire afternoon.

Congratulations to the organisers at the Department of Planning and Community Development and Multicultural Arts Victoria for a wonderful event.

Helen Dubberley
HACC Project Officer
ECCV

Gypsy Crim



Asanti Dance Theatre





Paintings of Friendship Polish Community Council of Victoria

The concept of the Paintings of Friendship was borne from the bonds of friendship that bring together the participants of the Planned Activity Groups (PAGs) run by the Polish Community Council of Victoria.

Each of the participants painted a flower on a common canvas, all of which were then linked with stems to create an integrated whole.

The PAG participants are typically elderly and socially isolated. The aim of our programme is to restore activity and social interaction to the lives of those participants.



Mrs Roza Andruch painting flowers

Observing our participants we discovered a need to extend the benefits of the PAG programme beyond the organised meetings, which occur only weekly. We were keen to ensure that the friendships built up as a result of the PAG programme could develop and benefit the participants outside of the group meetings.

These colourful, lively paintings from which warmth and joy emanate like the goodwill of friendship are re-printed here. The participants now keep in touch during the week; they share their joys and sorrows and help each other out.

They speak on the telephone and those who can, meet for a cup of tea and conversation. Upon leaving our weekly PAG meetings, they say to each other “see you during the week”, “I’ll call you tomorrow for a chat.”

So why did our PAG participants choose the flower as a symbol of friendship; because: “Friendship is the most delicate flower that blooms from mutual human contacts.” (Zenta Maurina Raudive)



Flowers painted by Polish Community Council of Vic PAG

The Polish PAGs are held in Box Hill, Brunswick, Oakleigh and Rowville. The Polish Community Council of Victoria also runs programmes in Social Support and Community Aged Care Packages. For further information, please contact the PCCV on (03) 9269 8277.

The PCCV PAGs are funded by the Department of Human Services under the HACC Programme.

Barbara Antas
PCCV PAG Coordinator



Migrant Resource Centre North West Inc. Aged & Disability Service

The Migrant Resource Centre North West's Aged and Disability Service works with people from ethnic backgrounds who are elderly, frail, with disabilities, their families and carers. This service provides a number of Planned Activity Groups. Staff run weekly groups for people who are isolated or who want to be connected with their own communities to increase social support and interaction. Among these groups are the German, Turkish, Bosnian, Indian/Sri Lankan, African Men's, African Women's, Coptic and Laotian.



The Migrant Resource Centre also runs a program that works with new and emerging communities in identifying HACC (Health and Community Care) needs and assists communities in accessing services. This program does a lot of advocating for people who are elderly and frail and was recently successful in gaining funding from the Department of Human Services for a Somali Speaking Women's group.

For more information on Aged and Disability services, contact the Aged & Disability Team Leader, Gaisha Laida on 9367 6044 or 0425 180 022.

Where to find information

It is important to know where to go for support. To help older people live well and stay at home longer here are some phone numbers to keep handy.

Direct2Care provides one-to-one advice on aged care services and support phone 1300 121 121

Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service (DBMAS) Vic - helping Australians with dementia and their carers: phone 1800 699 799 for a 24 hour Freecall. If you need an interpreter please call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 and ask them to telephone DMBAS on 1800 699 799

For further information on depression contact beyondblue by phoning 1300 224 636

Seniors Rights Victoria at COTA is a free confidential service for information referral and support relating to elder abuse. Phone 1300 368 821 10.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday

