

Case study: Sharing stories of inclusion

Eva Tilley Memorial Home

Eva Tilley Memorial Home is a long-standing part of the Balwyn North community. Through a diverse and welcoming volunteer program, the organisation creates meaningful opportunities for residents to connect with people of all ages and backgrounds. By offering thoughtful support and flexibility, inclusive volunteering provides benefits for everyone involved.

A community connected through volunteering

Eva Tilley Memorial Home is an independent, not-for-profit residential aged care provider with deep roots in the Balwyn North community. Established by the Camberwell Benevolent Society, the home was created to provide a supported residence for local elders. For more than 60 years, volunteers have passionately contributed their time, skills and presence through activities that help maintain residents' interests and wellbeing.

The presence of volunteers at Eva Tilley allows residents to experience a broader community. Without a diverse volunteer group, some residents' only interaction would be with staff and other residents. Many rarely have the opportunity to spend time with children and young people. Collaborations with other organisations through the volunteer program help make this possible.

Each week, Eva Tilley hosts approximately 20 volunteers. Roles range from 1:1 companionship visits to sharing special interest activities such as church services, cultural activities, cooking, outings, current affairs discussions, intergenerational programs, games and puzzles, and arts and crafts.

Volunteers are diverse in age, culture and abilities. and include local community members, residents' family members, school students and tertiary students on placement. Eva Tilley supports volunteers by offering flexible roles and tailoring tasks to meet their individual needs.

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Volunteer Spotlight: Jazzy

Jazzy is a young adult with disability who expressed interest with volunteering at Eva Tilley, after meeting the Volunteer Coordinator at the annual Boroondara Volunteer Expo. As part of the onboarding process, she attended a meeting onsite to look around, meet some of the staff and discuss what her volunteering could look like.

Together, they identified activities that interested Jazzy and that she could do with residents. She began volunteering one day each week. Staff supported Jazzy to complete the required paperwork, explaining what the different forms were for and why they were needed. She was also offered the option of having her support worker attend the first few sessions. This wasn't required, and instead she was paired with a supportive member of the activities team,

It took some time to find a rhythm and understand what worked best for both Jazzy and the organisation. As an organisation whose purpose is centred around care, it was important that Jazzy felt comfortable in her role, confident in her interactions with staff and residents, and able to speak up and be heard if something wasn't working.

Now, each Thursday Jazzy assists residents with active games and the knitting/craft group. Once a month, she also accompanies residents on a lunch outing.

Benefits

The benefits of this inclusive approach are felt by everyone involved. Jazzy regularly talks about how much she enjoys her days at Eva Tilley. Her enthusiasm creates a joyful atmosphere for residents, and many look forward to spending time with her.

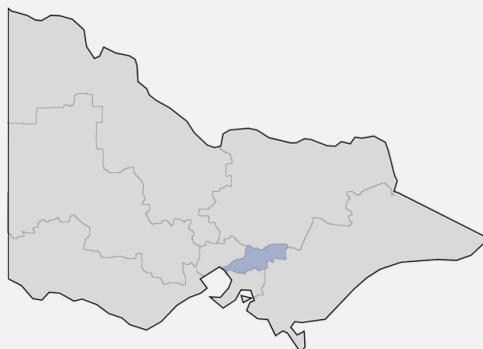
At times, Jazzy needs assistance with some of the craft activities. This creates opportunities for residents to step in and support her, giving them a meaningful role and a sense of fulfillment in still having something to contribute.

Over time, some residents have developed close bonds with Jazzy and seek her out to spend time together. Jazzy is reliable, outgoing and always smiling – making her a great asset to Eva Tilley’s volunteer team.

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<https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/leading-volunteers/vma-2022-2026/>



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Volunteering Victoria acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to Elders past and present.