

Autumn

2018

Hamilton Base Hospital
Grange Residential Care Service
The Birches
Frances Hewett Community Centre
National Centre for Farmer Health
Coleraine District Health Service
Merino Community Health Centre
Penshurst District Health Service



Talking Health

Community mentors support youth holiday program

Learning how to brew great coffee, painting artworks to sell as gift cards and résumé writing, were just some of the fantastic activities teens enjoyed in the latest WDHS School Holiday Program.

New WDHS Youth Coordinator, Tracey McDonnell, says the program is looking to celebrate community resources to support young people to be the 'greatest versions of themselves'.

Participants not only developed practical skills, but felt more confident to approach places of employment.

"I had one mum text me after the job ready and barista activity to say her daughter had completed her résumé and was heading off to the local milk bar to look for work," Tracey said.

"In the April School Holiday Program we explored opportunities for local businesses and craftspeople to mentor and train young people, to give them the confidence and skills to put their unique stamp on the world.

Another wonderful aspect of the School Holiday Program, is that it gives young people the chance to socialise with kids from other schools.

Bruach Colliton teaching young people barista skills as part of the WDHS School Holiday Program



We tapped into the talents of local artist Bec Cameron, whose 'Little Entrepreneurs' activity allowed kids to transform botanical creations into gift cards. Ten participants also enjoyed learning hands-on barista and job-ready skills from local café owner, Bruach Colliton.

"During the surfing activity in Port Fairy, it was such a pleasure to see everyone in the water having fun. These activities remind young people how to play and help knit the community together, ultimately strengthening the health of our kids and the community," Tracey said.

The WDHS School Holiday Program is made possible thanks to the ongoing support of Geoff Handbury and the Handbury Foundation.

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Top image: International Women's Day guest speakers, Ella Lithgow and Nadia Tucker

From the CE

Improving Customer Experience

For a number of years now, I have been capturing patient video stories at WDHS and sharing these with staff, to learn more about what is important to our customers and deliver on our strategic objective of achieving 'customer service excellence'.

The task for me as Chief Executive, has been a fascinating one. Getting behind the camera and listening as patients, new mums, sons, daughters and partners share their experiences, often of a time when they felt particularly vulnerable, has been a genuine privilege and provided some valuable insights.

One of the recurring themes in these video stories has been the importance of great communication. Healthcare providers deliver vital services and yes, it is essential that we have excellent systems and processes in place to ensure the effectiveness, safety and quality of our service.

But what is also important to our customers, in an often complex and unfamiliar healthcare environment, is communication. Does the patient and their family have a clear understanding of what is going on? What are the next steps? Do they feel when we communicated with them that we cared? That we drove compassionate care? Do they feel the care was connected?

Customer service is critical to great patient experiences and in July last year we employed Customer Service Project Officer, Paige Cross, to support improved communication and care at WDHS. From January this year, Paige has been rolling out Customer Service Excellence Training to employees across the Health Service.

WDHS is also working to improve the customer experience by continuing to look at opportunities to upgrade facilities and equipment. Our new Cancer and Dialysis Centre is due for completion in late July and will provide a greatly improved environment for the delivery of cancer treatment and dialysis.

Work is set to begin soon on our much anticipated Birches refurbishment, based on local and international best practice aged care and dementia models.

We are also making progress on bringing our Master Plan to fruition. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) recently commissioned



Katherine Armstrong, DON - Aged Care Services - Hamilton and Peshurst, CE Rohan Fitzgerald and Builder, Craig Collins look over the plans for the Birches redevelopment

a feasibility study into the planning and design of a new emergency, intensive care and radiology department at WDHS.

Over recent months we have received a funding boost for much needed asset replacements at Hamilton Base Hospital. We have installed new chillers to ensure that our hospital environment is kept cool in the warmer months. The DHHS has also provided funding for new boilers, which provide steam to run important equipment and for sterilisation purposes. We also received funding to replace our nurse call system, which allows patients to communicate with clinical staff on the wards. The total cost of these works was approximately \$1.2 million.

WDHS is a vibrant, energetic and progressive organisation that continues to evolve in a dynamic healthcare environment to support our vision of 'creating healthier communities'.

I recognise that we may not always meet our customers' expectations, however I know from first-hand experience, that our devoted team of clinical and support services staff are committed to providing 'customer service excellence'.

The recent Gazette fire is just one example of our staff's willingness to go above and beyond. I am proud of the courage, compassion and love our staff demonstrated on that day and I know those same values are revealed across WDHS on a daily basis.

Rohan Fitzgerald
Chief Executive

Coffee kindness

We are loving our new Barista Service at Hamilton Base Hospital. Come and enjoy a hot drink in the Cafeteria from 8.30am to 3pm Monday to Friday.

Coffee (or hot drink) loyalty and 'kindness cards' are also now available. Purchase a 'kindness card' to say thank you, or in support of someone in need, to the value of a hot drink!



New Barista, Kate Barber with Group Manager - Support Services, John Hedley

Hugh and Jen set to retire

WDHS Board Members, Hugh Macdonald and Jen Hutton are retiring in June, after many years guiding the organisation and supporting WDHS events and committees. Hugh and Jen have a combined 29 years of Board service between them, with Jen joining in 2002 and Hugh in 2005.

Hugh was appointed Board President in 2015 and has strategically steered the organisation over recent years, to deliver on its vision of 'Creating Healthier Communities'.

Both Hugh and Jen have devoted enormous amounts of energy to the organisation and been instrumental in delivering on projects including the Coleraine Health Service precinct, the establishment of the National Centre for Farmer Health, Grange Redevelopment and Penshurst facility upgrades. They have also dedicated themselves to Health Service fundraising, leading and supporting many events and initiatives, with a joint highlight being the Watermark Charity House, which raised over \$600,000.

We are incredibly grateful for Hugh and Jen's significant contributions to the Health Service over many years and wish them well for the future.



Hamilton a 'bucket list' destination for students loving the country lifestyle

Deakin students, Sally Byrne and Sampath Gurusinghe are city dwellers who can't get enough of the country, both having chosen three placements at Hamilton Hospital during their Bachelor of Nursing Degrees.

Sally says she's now spent a total of seven weeks on placement in Hamilton and is planning to relocate here in the coming months.

"We live in Melbourne and my family is in Adelaide, so it makes great sense to move to this area. Funnily enough, my husband and I actually got engaged in Hamilton many years ago. It's a beautiful town, it's affordable and there's great quality of life.

I love the hospital and it might seem odd, but I feel really proud of it. There is a great culture here, everyone is so welcoming and friendly.

From a learning perspective, I keep coming back because you get to do a huge range of things, from community nursing, to theatre and general nursing. In the city hospitals you usually stay on the same ward for the duration of your placement," Sally said.

These are sentiments shared by Sam, who has also chosen to do three of his placements at Hamilton Hospital.

"Hamilton has quite a wide range of service offerings for a regional hospital.

The clinical educators are very knowledgeable and approachable and everyone is very welcoming.

The countryside also reminds me of my home in Sri Lanka, with the mountains and rural feel," he said.

Sam and Sally are also great examples of the importance of following your dreams, both having worked in other areas before settling on their nursing careers.

For 20 years, Sally was State Manager for Sheridan Bed Linen and although she enjoyed her job, she always wanted to be a nurse.

"I was adopted, but intriguingly, my birth mother's family have nurses going back several generations. At 46 I decided it was time to follow my passion. I'm really grateful for the experience and the opportunity, I feel like it's my second chance," she said.

Sam came to Melbourne from Sri Lanka 15 years ago to study Human Resources. Deciding HR wasn't for him, he began studying nursing and worked as an enrolled nurse for a while, before stepping up to registered nursing.

"It's been challenging going back to university after 10 years, but it's been worth it. I'm almost finished and looking forward to being a fully-fledged registered nurse," Sam said.

Asked if he would also like to make Hamilton his home someday, Sam says he will definitely think about it.

"I'd really love to - it's on my bucket list!" he said.

Local Registered Nurse, Cath Fenton, with Deakin students Sally Byrne and Sampath Gurusinghe, enjoying their placements in Hamilton





Danny Hunt (left) heading off on a training ride with several members of the 2018 Hamilton Base Bikers Murray to Moyne team

Cycling to a healthier lifestyle

WDHS plumber, Danny Hunt decided it was time for a change and is living proof that ‘you can turn your life around at any age’. After working long hours in his job at Alcoa and operating a race car suspension business, Danny packed up and moved to Hamilton last year and hasn’t looked back.

“I decided there was more to life and made some critical life choices. I sold my business, changed jobs and with the help of my partner, made a commitment to eat and live healthier. I’ve lost 24kg and feel so much fitter and happier.

It’s exciting, I can do things that I used to do when I was much younger – I can be that person again,” Danny said.

Goal setting has been important for Danny and one of the goals he set himself was to join the Hamilton Base Bikers on their mission to ride the Murray to Moyne in April this year.

“That’s been a great motivator, I started training in October, just riding by myself. I went from feeling really unfit and not even being able to ride 5kms. I then started riding with a few different guys, who encouraged me to get involved in the local cycling club.

The goal I set myself was to get to 85kg by the M2M and I reached it the week of the event and rode over 250kms.

Diet has also improved Danny’s cycling because he says the food he’s consuming gives him more consistent energy release.

“Working long hours and living on my own, I ate a lot of fast food, soft drinks and energy drinks. That’s all changed now and I feel a lot more fulfilled and sustained.

Danny says with any change, you’ve got to really want to do it and have to acknowledge that it’s not going to be easy.

“I’ve learnt a lot over the past few months about food, gut health and even drinking water. I’ve gone from drinking maybe a glass of water a day, to a couple of litres a day.

Setting a goal is really important, it gives you something to reach for and aspire to. People need to understand that weight fluctuates and that can be disheartening, but you’ve just got to stick at it.

It’s never too late, you can’t change what’s happened, but at any point you can say ‘I want to change this’. Keep trying new things, find the things that work for you and keep you motivated,” he said.

Danny has now signed up for coaching to improve his racing and is competing in inter-club meets in Mt Gambier and Melbourne. He also hopes to do several 100km charity rides later in the year.

Cancer and dialysis centre update

Work is progressing on our new Cancer and Dialysis Centre, due for completion in July / August 2018. Plastering of the consulting suites in the existing building is almost complete, with the steel framework for the new clinical area extension due to take shape over the coming weeks.



Guarding against flu – the importance of getting the jab

Last year's flu outbreak across Australia, saw the highest rates of infection in many years and WDHS Chief Executive, Rohan Fitzgerald is urging people of all ages to get the jab.

"Getting a timely flu shot is important for everyone, not only those who are considered 'at risk'. The more people who are vaccinated in the community, the less likely the flu will spread.

You don't always know you are carrying the virus, symptoms might not be obvious initially, so the best possible way to protect yourself and others is to get the jab," he said.

Approximately 8,500 Victorian children under five contracted the virus last year, more than eight times the number in 2016. Across the state, there were just over 48,000 laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza in 2017, up from 12,785 the previous year.

The seasonal flu vaccine protects against the influenza viruses that

research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season, which is why it is so important to ensure that you update your flu vaccination each year.

WDHS Regional Infection Control Consultant, Lesley Stewart says the flu vaccine is available now through GPs, community health clinics and at some pharmacies and workplaces.

"The vaccine is free for 'at risk' groups, including pregnant mums, people over 65, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in higher risk age groups and for those with pre-existing medical conditions including asthma, diabetes, lung or heart disease," Lesley said.

Regional health services, including WDHS have also increased staff vaccination targets and implemented a range of new measures in preparation for the 2018 flu season.

For more information about flu vaccination visit wdhs.net/flu vaccine

CE Rohan, 'all smiles' and sporting a new t-shirt as he receives his flu shot from Regional Infection Control Consultant, Lesley Stewart



New specialists

Dr Eve Shepherd Director of Anaesthetics

Dr Eve Shepherd will take up the role of WDHS Director of Anaesthetics, in early August.

Dr Shepherd's 16 year career as a Clinical Anaesthetist has been spent predominantly working abroad. She graduated in Medicine at Charles University, in the Czech Republic in 1998.

Dr Shepherd has since worked in the UK as a Consultant Anaesthetist and in 2017 moved to Australia, where she has been working at the Fiona Stanley Hospital in Perth.

Eve looks forward to relocating to Hamilton with her family in the near future.

Dr Clare Myers Obstetrician Gynaecologist

Dr Myers commences her role at WDHS in July, partnering with Hamilton Medical Group as a Specialist Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, with a keen interest in Laparoscopic Gynaecology.

Dr Myers grew up in Dunkeld, studying Medicine at Monash University and graduating in 2000 with Honours. She also completed specialist obstetrician / gynaecological training at the Royal Women's Hospital, with a further sub specialisation in advanced gynaecological laparoscopic surgery, at Monash.

Dr Myers set up the Laparoscopic Gynaecology Unit at Western Health and throughout her career has been involved in mentoring medical students and specialist trainees.

Clare currently has public appointments at Western Health, the Royal Women's Hospital and Monash and works privately at the Epworth. She also regularly travels to the Kimberley region in Western Australia for locum work.

Advance care plans - having the conversation

The old saying goes that ‘nothing in life is certain, but death and taxes’, however despite the inevitability of it, many people are not adequately prepared for dying.

Most people are reluctant to speak openly about the things that are important to them in their final weeks, days and hours.

WDHS Palliative Care Consultant, Erika Fisher, says it is so important to have conversations with loved ones early and to write these down.

“Your health might deteriorate quickly, or a sudden injury or illness could affect your ability to make decisions, either temporarily or permanently.

It’s so important to have meaningful conversations, before it gets to a critical point. There is so much comfort for families in knowing that they are carrying out someone’s wishes, rather than guessing what a loved one might want.

Death can be quite peaceful and beautiful when it’s expected and a person’s wishes are known.

But when there’s a sudden deterioration in health, from a traumatic accident, stroke, or even early onset dementia, situations can be heartbreaking. Family members can really struggle to make decisions in the absence of any clear direction or understanding,” Erika says.

Advance care planning is a process for making and writing down future health care wishes in advance.

This process has the following components:

Medical Treatment Decision Maker

A legal document for appointing a substitute decision maker, with the power to make decisions about medical treatment on your behalf.

Advance Care Directive (two elements, which come into play when you lose the capacity to make your own decisions regarding your healthcare)

Values Directive - allows you to record your values and preferences for medical treatment, to guide your Medical Treatment Decision Maker.

Instructional Directive - allows you to make a legally binding statement directed to your health practitioners, in which you consent to, or refuse, specific future medical care.

Support Person

Allows you to appoint someone to assist you to make, communicate and give effect to your medical treatment decisions. The support person can access health information on your behalf.

Research shows that Advance Care Plans reduce anxiety and families with a plan, are more likely to be happy with the end of life care provided.

This is certainly true for Alisha Purcell and her brother Damien, who sadly lost their mum, Jan recently.



Alisha Purcell says knowing her mum had made her choices gave her family peace in her final days

Alisha says the Advance Care Plan gave her mum control to manage at least some aspects of her journey, much of which she felt powerless in.

“The planning allowed mum to make choices, based on what was important to her and gave her authority in the decision making process.

For us, knowing mum had made her choices, meant we could focus on spending quality time with her in her last few weeks. We didn’t have to worry about making decisions, everything was in place and we could just be ‘in the moment’.

Working through the plan also provided an opportunity for us to prepare for her death, as we discussed openly what was going to happen,” Alisha said.

For more information on Advance Care Planning visit:
www.wdhs.net/advance-care-plans

Recent events and fundraisers



The HBH Ladies Auxiliary High Tea raised \$1,000 for the new Cancer and Dialysis Centre.



In February over 150 people turned out in their finest to enjoy Cocktails in the Courtyard, raising just over \$7,000 for the new Cancer and Dialysis Centre.



120 people ‘pressed for progress’ with guest speakers Nadia Tucker and student Ella Lithgow, to celebrate International Women’s Day.



Residents thoroughly enjoyed their first ever ‘Grange Garden Party’ in the Hamilton Botanic Gardens.

Charlie Watt Volunteer of the Month



November
— Don Adamson
Penshurst

Don has volunteered at Penshurst for over 9 years as a Social Support Group Driver and also helps out wherever he can at the Penshurst Campus.



December
— Joan Ladd
Hamilton

Joan has been volunteering at WDHS for 7 years on the Hospital Comforts Trolley. She is also President of the North Hamilton Base Hospital Ladies Auxiliary and can often be seen selling raffle tickets in the Hospital Reception.



January
— Graeme
Wombwell
Coleraine

Graeme has been a Coleraine Community Transport Volunteer for over 10 Years and has also been a great support to his wife Thelma, who coordinates the Coleraine Program. Graeme is very community minded and is a great supporter of the Coleraine Hospital.



February
— Jan Nicholson
Hamilton / Penshurst

Jan has been volunteering with WDHS for over 10 years, both at Penshurst and Hamilton. She recently took on the role of Hospital Theatre Buddy and also assists in the Cancer Consulting Suites and in District Nursing, compiling information packs for service users.

NCFH photo comp - focus on farming

The National Centre for Farmer Health is once again running its popular photo competition, with the theme this year 'Farmer Health in a Changing World'.

Farming, as both an industry and a way of life, is changing rapidly— with shifting weather patterns, new production methods, farm safety improvement opportunities and changing farming structures. What hasn't changed is the importance of farming in Australia and the need to share, inspire and educate other Australians about this.

As the NCFH celebrates its 10th Anniversary, we invite you to share your vision of all that is changing in agriculture and farming—the challenges and the opportunities.

Entries are now being accepted in seven categories, including a new photo and healthy recipe category. There are open, secondary student and primary student photography categories and great cash prizes, for those who capture that special farm moment.

The photography competition 'Farmer Health in a Changing World' is part of the National Centre for Farmer Health Conference 'Good health, wellbeing and safety: Making a difference to farmers' lives' taking place from September 12 – 14.



NCFH Online Communications Coordinator, Sam Kaspers

Finalists' photos will be displayed at the Conference, with winners announced at the Conference Reception on September 12.

Entries should be submitted online and close on Sunday July 22. For more details please visit www.ncfh.org



The Western Bulldogs visited WDHS in March, catching up with one of their biggest local fans, Jesse Godwin on the Medical Ward.



School and kindergarten children danced in a conga line during our Christmas Community Art Project celebrations.



At the WDHS / SGSC White Ribbon Lunch in November, attendees were asked to contribute ideas and affirmations to end family violence. These were tied to a Maple tree, now planted at Hamilton Base Hospital, to demonstrate our commitment to ending violence.



WDHS Physio, Stefan Burnell and PPH Reception Team Leader, Kirsty Willaton raised over \$2,500 for the World's Greatest Shave.



Woolies staff and Grade 6 students from Gray Street Primary School present a cheque to WDHS for the vital cardiac monitor for ICU

Community funds new cardiac monitor for ICU

The WDHS Intensive Care Unit (ICU) has a new mobile cardiac monitor, thanks to Woolworth's Hamilton and Gray Street Primary School students.

Over several months, 'Woolies' staff worked tirelessly to raise over \$12,000, holding regular BBQ's, wood and grocery raffles, a disco and placing collection tins throughout the store.

The final \$2,261 required for the monitor was raised in collaboration with Grade 6 students from Gray Street Primary School.

The students organised a sausage sizzle at their disco, manned the BBQ outside Woolworths and held a raffle, as part of their 'Inquiry Based Learning Program'.

The mobile cardiac monitor allows staff to observe a patient's heart rhythm, pulse and blood oxygen levels, while they are transferred from ICU to other areas of the hospital for treatment or assessment.

A huge thank you to Woolworths, Gray Street Primary School and to all those who supported this great cause.

Employee of the Month



November
– Kirsty Willaton
PPH Administration
Team Leader



December
– Jane Robertson
General Administration -
Coleraine



January
– Cindy Coon
Administration



February
– Amy Flavell
Clinical Nurse Specialist



March
– Jill Jackson
Food & Domestic Services
Assistant

NDIS overcoming obstacles to support people with a disability

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) rolled out across the region in October last year and WDHS is currently delivering a range of services and therapeutic supports under the scheme.

There has been much discussion about the NDIS in recent months, but the scheme is providing great hope for one local family.

Sue Hillier's twin daughters, Jenna and Kara, were diagnosed with autism at two years of age. Jenna and Kara are now 26 and are accessing a range of services under the NDIS.

Sue says although the paperwork and assessment can seem a little overwhelming, the NDIS is giving her family great hope for the future.

"I'm really excited about the scheme for our girls.

I'd have to say, as a parent of children with a disability, we hit and had to climb over many brick walls trying to access services over the years. Now, I feel like a gate has opened in that wall and it's such a relief," she said.

Jenna and Kara are currently accessing therapeutic supports including Occupational Therapy, Dietetics and Physio at WDHS.

"Due to the level of care the girls need, I can only work part time. So we couldn't afford to access these services before, it just wasn't possible. It's opened up a whole range of options for us, which is really exciting.

I feel much more confident now, that my girls will be taken care of into the future," Sue said.

WDHS is currently providing the following NDIS supports and services:

Therapeutic supports -

- Counselling
- Dietetics
- Exercise Physiology
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Podiatry
- Rehabilitation Counselling
- Speech and Language Pathology
- Social Work

Services -

- Assessment for personal mobility equipment (wheelchairs, walkers, home modifications, etc)
- Assessment for assistive equipment for recreation (equipment to assist individuals to engage in sport and other recreational activities)
- Community nursing care
- Assessment for communication and information equipment (eg devices to improve speech / communication)

To register for the NDIS please call 1800 800 110 or visit www.ndis.gov.au
To access WDHS registered services or supports call 5551 8087