

United



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St Stephen's Hospital | St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital



Wednesday, 26 September 2018

Help was a phone call away

This message was lodged on our Blue Care website last week. While slightly shortened its essence proudly remains.

"I want to let you know that one of your (*Customer Service Centre*) operators saved my life.

"The last two years of my life have been spent driving between Buderim and Brisbane to care for my mother, who regularly injures herself through falls but refuses to leave the house she shared with my father who passed away 15 years ago. Over this time, I've dealt with Blue Care and My Aged Care with increasing frustration. I've felt like I'm forever walking in circles. I wanted to try a different company but my mother wanted the same nurses that had cared for my father. I felt like I was not only failing her but also my own family because I was neglecting my husband and my sons. I was completely overwhelmed and at the end of my tether.

"I was racing down the highway again and needed to call Blue Care for more help for my mother. I was angry and was feeling like it was all too hard. I just wanted it all to go away.

"By some stroke of luck I got to speak with the kindest and most helpful person I've dealt with. She must have wondered who this hysterical woman was. Somehow she knew I was driving and this was dangerous. She told me to pull over as soon as it was safe. She told me to take my time. I felt like I mattered. When I pulled over, I unloaded two years' worth of frustration and anger. I knew it wasn't her fault and she didn't deserve it and I apologized. She told me she understood. She calmed me down with her gentle compassion. After I told her everything she explained the help available for my mother and how to get it. She was the first person to do this. She didn't use big words or fancy terms, she just told me what I needed to know. I couldn't believe it could be so easy. She asked me to let her sort it out.

"Then she asked me what I wanted. I broke down in tears - I couldn't remember the last time anyone asked me. I said I just want my sons to be happy and have a good life. I couldn't believe what she said next - "Of course you do, I'm a mother too and I'm sure that's what your mother wants for you too." I knew it was true and finally someone was going to help. It felt like a weight lifted off me.

"My mother now has someone checking in on her to make sure she's taking her medicine and also taking her out once a week.

She is eating better and hasn't had any more falls. I haven't had to leave work either to rush to Brisbane and I've been able to be at home with my sons and husband who need me.

"Thank you, Blue Care. (*Please let the operator*) know she not only helped my mother but she probably saved me from being in a car accident and she has helped my sons have a mother again.

"For the first time in years I can sleep. I have a life again. I don't resent my mother anymore. Thank you, I am forever grateful. Aged care homes have been in the news a lot lately but I know that with people like her working for you, Blue Care have nothing to worry about and now I don't either."

The call was answered by Jacqueline Brighton, one of our Blue Care Customer Service Centre team. Thank you, Jacqueline.

Rainbow Pride

Last weekend, we were represented for the first time at Queensland's largest annual LGBTI themed event, Brisbane's Pride Festival. On Saturday UnitingCare hosted a stall at the Fair Day, held in New Farm Park.

Nearly 60 employees volunteered their time from across the business to promote the inclusivity of our services and brands, sharing our Child and Family Foster and Kinship Care Program, Lifeline counselling services, our hospitals and Blue Care.

Our new Lifeline pop-up retail shop was a huge hit as well as rainbow wristbands which we made and gave away.

There were games of 'Operation' to promote our hospitals, and a creation space to make rainbow badges promoting foster and kinship care.

The day had fantastic energy!

Thanks to everyone involved. So many teams and services united to make our stand possible. Special thanks to the Ally team who played a huge role in bringing the stand together.

It was a huge success engaging with the public and promoting our services to potential customers; a very positive step in our diversity and inclusion journey for UnitingCare!

Click on the images below to view.



Community caring in Central Queensland

Farmers in Central Queensland have been doing it tough so Blue Care Central Queensland General Manager Heather Henderson invited her services to raise money to help them out; challenge accepted!

The team at Mackay Community Hub threw a car wash and sausage sizzle.

“The support was amazing. We are a mobile workforce but employees, family members and children had a fun day, and Channel 7 covered us,” said Assistant Integrated Service Manager Jon Doherty.

Clients from the community brought their cars down to be washed, reaching a total of over 65 cars. They also washed the full fleet of cars, with each employee sponsoring two cars.

Local Members of Parliament, Julianne Gilbert and George Christiansen, showed up to support the cause and have their cars washed.

“Together, we raised \$1700 - a great effort for such a worthy cause. We donated all the funds to “Buy a Bale” to support struggling farmers in our region,” said Jon.



Connection a long way from home

Blue Care-auspiced Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre West Moreton (CRCCWM) has teamed up with Cultural Appropriate Care (CAC) to establish a social group for members of the Burmese community, specifically the Karen and Karina speaking people, who speak limited English.

The group supports people who have left Myanmar, to care for ageing loved ones.

Monthly group gatherings take place in local parks, gardens and coffee shops, encouraging people to enjoy their local community.

The first gathering in August had eight participants and two support staff attend.

The group enjoyed the park, chatted and played dominoes - a game they hadn't played before. The day also presented the opportunity to practice some English.

Eight months of collaboration created the group and seeing people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have a great time together, really drove home the purpose of projects such as this.



Ekka on Annerley

The Ekka, Queensland's annual agricultural show, popped up in Brisbane's southside in August when our Disability Leadership Unit at Annerley hosted their own fun day of animal and food based competitions.

The pet competition saw a 'best in show' performance by Michelle's dog Toby, while Lorna Bush's dog, Buddy, received 'most talented'.

Technology played a part when Nicole Beckensall's smartphone footage of her African Cichlid fish, Pockets, swimming backwards wowed observers to gain 'runner up best in show'.

A new category of 'best superpower' was awarded to Tim Booth for his juggling performance, while Rosy Kos' dog Mosaic was runner-up.

The exciting day continued with a tasty Ekka-style pot-luck lunch then the food entries were sampled.

While this year's bake-off had a dessert emphasis, Nancy Taylor's curried egg savoury dish bucked the trend by receiving the 'best flavour' trophy.

Nicole Gallagher was awarded ‘best effort’ for her caramel coconut slice and Michelle Whelan’s Ekka-shaped biscuit cake was a popular winner in the ‘most creative’ category.

Ekka on Annerley has highlighted our *Working Together* shared value in recent years, bringing employees from different parts of UnitingCare together, along with some of the people we support. It celebrates the pleasure of sharing our creativity over food and the joy that our pets bring us in building a more vibrant community.

The event was coordinated by Ekka on Annerley co-founders, Rosy Kos and Graham Hambleton.



Judges Graham Hambleton, Claire Halle and Penny Parker with food competition entries.

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