



Volunteer of the Year

Every now and then a beacon of light appears to brighten our day. For our clients and their families, it can be a visit from one of our palliative care family support volunteers.

Karuna is one of a rare group of charities whose community of volunteers includes a number of people who have contributed over 25 years of service. Recently we had the opportunity to reflect upon the remarkable commitment of Una Hilditch.

One of Karuna's silver anniversary volunteers, Una was named Volunteer of the Year at the recent Palliative Care Queensland Awards held in Brisbane.

It was by chance that Una began volunteering for Karuna. "Sometimes life just takes you down a path that you didn't even know existed and you took the first step" Una says.

Karuna trains and champions our palliative care support volunteers to work closely alongside our nurses. This includes regular visits to clients and families at home, providing companionship, practical assistance and respite to carers. Una herself has spent many nights offering care and support to clients over the years, remarkably whilst maintaining her full time day job as a manager of the Peter Sheppard shoe store in Brisbane city.

Una believes her many years of volunteering for Karuna taught her compassion and empathy and she is proud to have given many people dignity in death.

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From the CEO's Desk

The Queensland population is estimated to grow from 7.9 million to 10.1 million by 2055. Combined with the expectation that people will live longer and die older, community-based palliative care should be at the forefront of healthcare thought leadership conversations. Further, planning for palliative care services must also take into account the varying needs of the sociodemographic and clinical groups of clients.

Supporting our community through compassionate care has always been Karuna's mission and given the changing landscape of our region, I believe our services are needed more than ever.

I agree with Palliative Care QLD's statement that dying well takes planning and community support and that community palliative care has never been more critical.

Support for Karuna and home-based care is strong and we are grateful for the unique combination of long term supporters such as Una Hilditch whose story I hope will inspire you, and the enthusiasm for activities that enhance and support holistic palliative care, like our biographies program.

In this autumn newsletter we also profile Dr Ralph McConaghy the Medical Director of the Wesley Hospital's Palliative Care Service and his long term association with Karuna and significant contribution to Queensland's palliative care sector.

Whilst the success of the 2018 Christmas Market left us in high spirits, 2019 sees Karuna embracing new opportunities to meet the growing needs of our community.

We will also continue our commitment to community engagement which includes renewed efforts to increase awareness of Karuna and the care we offer. This also means furthering our reach into broader regions, with the upgrade of infrastructure and processes that support our strategic goals.

Tracey Porst Karuna CEO



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"Of course Una was already a winner with us, so it was wonderful to see her acknowledged by the broader community for her outstanding achievement" says Karuna CEO, Tracey Porst.

Una has shared many unique and extraordinary moments with clients and believes one of the greatest sources of comfort she can offer is to just be able to sit and listen quietly, offering no advice or answers to life's big questions.

Karuna Volunteers

Volunteers have always played a significant role in Karuna's success. Over the past 12 months volunteers have given over 10,000 hours directly contributing to Karuna's work. This includes administration and support in the office, gardens and as advocates for our work through appearances at community events.

If you would like to join our community of volunteers or have a special 'super power' that you think can help, please let us know how.

Please phone 07 3632 8300 or email volunteering@karuna.org.au to register your interest.

Get fit, have fun and raise funds

Is one of your New Year's resolutions to get fit? Maybe you should consider participating in the 2019 Bridge to Brisbane in August and join Team Karuna!

In 2018 Karuna debuted at Bridge to Brisbane (B2B) with an impressive 50 member team and this year we want to beat that to bring in even more vitally needed funds.

If you would like to help Karuna be bigger and better at B2B this year and join the team please contact verena@karuna.org.au.

Another way to get involved is to sponsor the Team Karuna competitor shirts and caps and have your company name and logo pounding the pavement along with thousands of other runners! To register your interest in sponsoring the Karuna shirts and caps please contact verena@karuna.org.au

We can't wait to run, walk or wheel with you!



Karuna Kids Group

One of the most overwhelming and sad events a child can experience is the death of someone they love or someone that plays a meaningful and essential role in their lives.

Karuna is offering a group bereavement program enabling children aged 5 - 12 years to explore and understand grief reactions in a safe and caring environment.

The program will be facilitated by counsellors specialising in children's grief.

The program will be held at Karuna House Windsor in May 2019 on Wednesday one afternoon per week (3.30pm - 5pm) for six consecutive weeks. If you would like to learn more please contact theresa@karuna.org.au.





Stories for Generations

How often do we get the chance to tell our life story? Karuna's Biography Program offers our clients the chance to record their personal histories and ensure their story will be remembered for generations to come.

Well-known as a significant piece in the holistic palliative care continuum a biography is another way Karuna is helping people to live well and die peacefully, in this case giving them the chance to tell their life's story.

Karuna's Biography Program is administered by Carmel Williams. Carmel, along with her team of biographers, has produced around 200 biographies since the service was established.

Carmel says the objectives of the program are to give clients the opportunity to reflect on their life and come to terms with their impending death.

"The biography process transports our clients away from being sick and dying to a happy, fulfilling state of mind because they are reliving and sharing their past with our interviewers," said Carmel.

"Since the story telling is such a personal and in depth process often our biographers and clients and their families form a strong bond.

A great advocate of the Karuna Biography Program is Gaye Reeve from Brisbane. Last year Karuna cared for Gaye's mother, 99 year old Irene Cook (nee Andronicus).

"My mother Irene was a wonderful, outgoing person who loved to socialise, have a laugh and talk about her life to anyone who would listen! So when Karuna offered to write her biography while caring for her in her last few months we took up the opportunity," said Gaye.



Above: Thank you to the many wonderful volunteers who made the 2018 Karuna Christmas Market the most successful on record. L to R: Pam Walsh, Kerry Gallimore, Ven. Tenzin Chödrön, Deb Turnbull, and Erica Smith. Photo courtesy of City News.

"Mum had already written and published her memoirs at the ripe old age of 93 but that book only covered her first 21 years of life. So she still had a lot of years to cover.

"Irene really enjoyed her interview sessions with the Karuna biographer Anne Burton and we all became good friends, to the point that Anne attended Mum's funeral and we have had several phone calls since.

"I highly recommend other families take up the offer of a Karuna Biography because it means that once their loved one's story is recorded it ensures that they won't be forgotten.

"Our family is very grateful to Karuna for documenting aspects of her 99 years so thoroughly," she said.



A Beacon of Peace and Happiness

Set in the beautiful gardens of Karuna is a symbolic representation of the enlightened mind and the path leading to that state of perfection - this structure is called a stupa.

Karuna's stupa is dedicated to world peace and the happiness of all beings, including our clients, past, present and future. It is filled with sacred objects such as mantras, spiritual texts, images of the Buddha and relics of holy beings. In 2006 the stupa was consecrated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, our spiritual director, with other lamas, monks and nuns. Then in 2007 we were privileged to have His Holiness the Dalai Lama visit Karuna and bless the stupa.

Tibetans believe that walking clockwise around any sacred stupa (this circumambulation is called "Kora") brings great benefit to the mind, bringing people in tune with their innate goodness, inspiring compassion, and therefore good karma.

Making an offering to a stupa, for example light, sound, flowers or a contribution to construction and maintenance, creates the cause for success in this and future lives.

With Thanks ... The stupa has been receiving tender loving care from our wonderful team of staff and volunteers. We are also very grateful to Lindsay Pratt from Chenrezig Institute and Chris Hoole Painters who kindly supplied the scaffolding.

In addition to being dedicated to world peace, stupas are also built to prevent war, famine, disease, and poverty. They are also used to protect against danger from earth, water, fire and air, and especially as a powerful antidote against earthquakes.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Khadro-la, a highly respected Tibetan spiritual practitioner foresaw extensive loss of life due to earthquakes in Dharamsala in Northern India. Many stupas were built in the area and small earthquakes occurred but without serious damage or loss of life.



Profile: Dr Ralph McConaghy

Karuna works with a host of well-respected palliative care specialists and physicians. One such practitioner who has had a long term association with Karuna is the Medical Director of the Wesley Hospital Palliative Care, Dr Ralph McConaghy.

With 40 years medical experience, Dr McConaghy has a strong commitment to understanding and easing suffering in its many forms – physical, emotional and spiritual.

Throughout his time in general practice Dr McConaghy devoted an increasing amount of time to community palliative medicine, providing medical support to Karuna and other nursing services, whilst also regularly acting as relieving director for the Mater and Logan Hospital palliative care services. He left his practice in 2006 to work full time in palliative care and was awarded his specialty palliative medicine qualification (FChPM). Dr McConaghy became Director of the Wesley Palliative Care Service in 2007.

In Dr McConaghy's words...

I was first introduced to Karuna after I started work at the Wesley in 2006. Secret knowledge handed down from one palliative care specialist to another....

I provide Karuna with specialist medical assessment and overview of management. This is usually in the context of having seen the patient prior to referral to Karuna either as an inpatient at the Wesley or as an outpatient via my practice in ICON Cancer Care. This means that I am available to the Karuna staff 24 hours a day all year to provide answers, prescriptions or advice and additionally to



accept patients for admission if they can no longer be cared for at home.

Karuna go above and beyond. I know their care is truly patient centred and they make themselves readily available. Karuna offers superior telephone support backed up by a willingness to do more than one visit in 24 hours if required.

I choose to refer people to Karuna because they just do the best job (by far!) and don't reject a Friday referral! Mind you they turn themselves inside out to provide it.

"Dr McConaghy's expertise and dedication to community palliative care provision is second to none and he is very much a part of our team." says Karuna Clinical Services Manager, Beverly Mercer.

A Stitch in Time

The overwhelming success of the 2018 Karuna Christmas Market would not have been possible if it weren't for a wonderful team of staff and volunteers, which include some very talented craftspeople.

One of the volunteers who toiled away all year lovingly creating beautiful embroidered cotton nighties and a new white clothing range for the Christmas Market was Jackie Coldwell.

In mid 2017 Karuna cared for Jackie's husband Bob and following this experience she sought to give back to the organisation by volunteering in the Christmas Market program both last year and this year.

Jackie said volunteering was her way of "paying it forward" and giving thanks for the service Karuna provided Bob and her family.

"I wanted to help Karuna by hand making items for their Christmas Market. But I have also found working with Karuna staff and volunteers a great solace after the loss of Bob," said Jackie.

Jackie's passion for delicate embroidery and fine stitching can be seen throughout her work and her pieces are still available for sale at Karuna. Stop by or call for details.





Is there a place in your Will for Karuna?

When it comes to making your Will, it's only right that your family and friends come first. These days however, many people also like to include a cause close to their heart.

A gift in your Will for Karuna supports in-home clinical, psychological and spiritual care for someone living with a terminal illness, enabling them to remain at home with their loved ones, amongst familiar surroundings.

To find out more about the difference you can make by leaving a gift to Karuna please contact tracey@karuna.org.au or complete the form below.



"I want to make sure Karuna is still around for other people and for me down the track. I hear people say 'I hope I never need Karuna's Services', but I say, 'I hope I do'. I hope they are there when I need them."

- Susan



"The kindest care. I have seen Karuna's nurses and volunteers light up the darkest rooms with compassion, excellent pain management and expert guidance."

- Ilse



"Karuna staff are walking beside me as I care for my husband. They give me the strength to go on and bring love and compassion to the whole family."

- Ann



AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2019 - DONATION

I would like to help Karuna provide essential care to the community.

Title:..... First Name:

Surname:

Address:

Suburb: State: Postcode:

Phone: Mobile:

Email:

☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ or \$

Please tick preferred payment option:

☐ Cheque/money order payable to "The Karuna Hospice Service Ltd"

☐ Please charge my credit card for the amount above

☐ Please deduct the regular amount of \$ _____ each month from my credit card

☐ **Please send me details on making a gift to Karuna in my Will.**

☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Diners ☐ Amex

Name on card:

Credit Card Number:

Expiry Date: ____/____/____ CVC:

Signature:

Date: ____/____/____

Donations to Karuna of \$2 and over are tax deductible. Our Privacy Policy is available at www.karuna.org.au.

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karuna
dedicated holistic support
compassionate care



Memorial Service

Join us at Karuna for our Annual Memorial Service. Bring a framed photo or a memento of your loved one to place on the memorial table during the ceremony. Light refreshments will be provided afterwards.

Date: Wednesday 3 April 2019

Time: 2pm - 4pm

RSVP: Please phone 07 3632 8300 or email karuna@karuna.org.au by 22 March 2019 with your name, number of people attending and the names of the people you are remembering.



Good Grief - Living With Loss

Good Grief is a free program for the wider community offering guidance on grief and loss. The program, which is run over two consecutive sessions, offers practical suggestions for living with grief, including information on self-care, mindfulness techniques, what grief looks like and how loved ones can help.

Locations and Dates:

Wednesday 26 June & 3 July 2019 at Caboolture

Wednesday 11 September & 18 September 2019 at Windsor.

Please phone 07 3632 8300 or email karuna@karuna.org.au for further information. Information on Living with Grief is also available on our website.

Karuna Wish List

To assist in caring for our clients, we would like to purchase some equipment which includes:

- Replacement Equipment for Nursing Kits (10 Kits) - \$600 each
- Syringe Driver x 3 - \$2895 each
- Photocopy Paper for Biography Program 100 GSM (10 boxes) - \$550
- 120L Esky for Events x 4 - \$250
- Karuna Kids Group Art Supplies - \$300

If you can help with our wish list, please phone 07 3632 8300 or email karuna@karuna.org.au



Spiritual Care With The Dying - Retreats

Focusing on understanding death and dying from a spiritual perspective, these residential retreats draw from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and its application to end of life care. The course is intensive and deeply experiential. The more we face and prepare for our own death, the more present we can be with others in preparing for theirs.

Presenter: Venerable Tenzin Chödrön

Locations and Dates:

August 22nd - August 27th 2019,
Pinjarra, Western Australia

October 17th - October 22nd 2019,
Springbrook, Queensland

November 10th - November 15th 2019,
Adelaide, South Australia

Please phone 07 3632 8300 or email karuna@karuna.org.au for further information.



“The true essence of humankind is kindness. There are other qualities which come from education or knowledge, but it is essential, if one wishes to be a genuine human being and impart satisfying meaning to one's existence, to have a good heart”

- His Holiness the Dalai Lama

