

Winter 2011

# Out of the Blue

2011 Life is what you make it



## Message from the CEO



Carol Allen

As we all start to bunker down and stay warm and well for winter, at BlueCross we have been out and about in a big way. It has been a time of celebration over these last few months.

## Our 97+ Birthday Bash

During April we held a huge birthday party to celebrate our annual over 97+ year old, or should I say still young at heart, clients. Many were celebrating their centenary and over.

We were delighted that so many family and friends were able to join in the celebration.

Our 97+ birthday party is a special event to celebrate ageing positively and demonstrating a new way of providing aged care that keeps our elderly citizens active and enjoying life.

This event also allows us to acknowledge the contributions older Australians make to their communities and families.

See page 4 for more of our celebration pictures.



Booroodara Mayor Nicolas Tragas was a guest at the 97+ birthday party and congratulates Miriam Sward and her son John.

## Volunteers are vital

At BlueCross there are 200 volunteers across our services that provide a vital contribution to our ageing community. During Volunteers Week in May BlueCross held award presentations to say 'thank you' to our many valuable volunteers. **CONTINUED PAGE 4**



Carol Allen, BlueCross CEO congratulates some of the vital BlueCross volunteers during Volunteers Week. L-R: Jean Harris 10 years service, Carol Allen, Christine Simpson 13 years service and Ellen Easton 22 years service.

## ACCV State Awards for Excellence 2011

It was my absolute pleasure in June to congratulate one of our extraordinary staff members, Annie Tragin from BlueCross Hansworth, who won the ACCV State Award employee category "Recognising the dedication and contribution of an individual employee in the delivery of services to older people and people with a disability".

This award pays recognition to individuals that have contributed to the quality care of our older Victorians amongst their peers. Annie will now progress to be nominated for the Aged & Community Services Australia National Awards. Well done Annie, we are very proud of you and the team at Hansworth. An award that is very well deserved!



L-R Carol Allen BlueCross CEO, Gerard Mansour ACCV CEO, Linda Dowell Hansworth resident & ACCV Award winner, Annie Tragin.

## Out of the Blue

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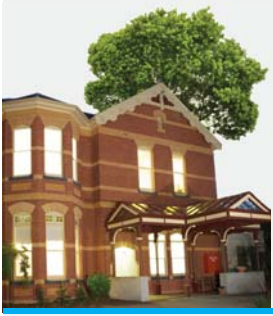
BlueCross staff conference (p3)

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Out of the Blue is the newsletter of BlueCross community and residential services.

For further information call 1300 133 414 or email [info@bluecross.com.au](mailto:info@bluecross.com.au) [www.bluecross.com.au](http://www.bluecross.com.au)

enriching lives



## Keeping *warm & well* in winter at Yarralee in Kew

Winter is a renowned enemy of the elderly and during the coming cold months remember there is always a choice to stay warm and well with a respite stay at a BlueCross residence.

BlueCross Yarralee Residence is centrally located in Kew and is a beautifully restored Heritage Listed Melbourne home. Perfect as a winter respite for elderly or frail parents while families are on holidays, or just the place to recuperate after hospitalisation for convalescence.

Yarralee is a smaller residence offering personalised and dedicated care with extra services provided for those who require higher levels of care. As soon as you walk through the doors of this boutique residence you know that this is a special place.

Relationships are personal and friendly while providing excellent care for those with higher needs in an environment that fosters independence, dignity and respect.

This graciously refurbished residence offers a home away from home. Surrounded by beautiful gardens, a charming new gazebo, courtyards, stately lounge and sitting rooms, all to enjoy a quiet chat or to socialise with friends and visitors.

**Please contact Yarralee to make your booking now on ph (03) 9816 9055.**



Yarralee resident Leonard enjoys a morning of songs with Joanne, the music therapist. Joanne runs the music program every week and says it stimulates the different senses and helps to orientate residents to their environment. The morning is spent reminiscing through the old-time songs and enjoying the movement and smiles along with the music.

## Get out those winter woollies

### So why do so many people perish in the colder weather?

Professor Bill Keatinge, an expert from Queen Mary University of London, has studied the issue extensively.

***"The fact that we now keep much warmer in winter and we are aware of the problem means that all the various causes of cold-related illness have declined,"*** he explains.

When exposed to cold, the body contracts down the blood vessels in the skin to stop blood flowing to the skin and to prevent heat loss. This means more of the blood circulates to central parts of the body, which overloads the heart and lungs with blood.

The body gets rid of fluid to reduce this load by excreting salt and water, but the net result is the blood becomes more concentrated and liable to clot and can cause a stroke or heart attack. The next biggest cold-related problem for the elderly is respiratory infections such as flu.

## Staff Profile: Introducing Julie Maya



Julie is the General Manager, Client Relationships and has worked with BlueCross in various positions over the past 5 years. Julie's role at BlueCross is to ensure that we communicate with our current client's and prospective clients and their families.

A key part of Julie's position is to let the community know about the range of services BlueCross delivers across the broad spectrum of aged care and disability services. Julie has worked in aged care for probably more years than she cares to remember!

But with 25 years experience and history caring for the elderly Julie is an integral part of our organisation bringing sensitivity, empathy and a real understanding of what it means to help our clients age positively. Julie has been connected to the elderly all her life, having the benefits of an extended family and her own grandparents sharing the family home, aged care was a way of life.

Julie owned and operated an aged care home and bought her 3 children up in this environment. Julie says "my family have had the opportunity to share their lives with 20 fabulous grandparents. There was always someone that wanted to listen and share a wonderful tale with my children. This is why I do what I do, because I can make a difference and I always get back more than I give"

## Losing my marbles

A book review by Carol Allen, BlueCross CEO



Author, Marian Penman.

"I think I'm losing my marbles!" How many of us have said this line when something doesn't come to mind and we forget the simplest of things? Over Easter I found the time to read a very moving book titled "Losing My Marbles". It is a fictional story based on the experiences of a family living through the diagnosis and life changing effects of Alzheimer's.

I was touched by the honesty of the characters and felt it demonstrated the 'real' story of how the effects of this illness transfers to all those living in contact with someone who actually has Alzheimer's disease. If you have a family member or friend with this disease I recommend it to you. **Visit the website [www.marianpenman.com](http://www.marianpenman.com) to order your copy.**

# Spotlight on *care* at home

**Veterans not only receive help from Care at Home, but health and happiness too! Here's a story of how Care at Home and our Nursing Care service has helped one elderly lady to remain safely at home.**

Mrs Freeman\* is a 92 year old lady who lives at home with her 70 year old son who is her main carer. Her son assisted Mrs Freeman with medications, shopping, paying her bills and other day-to-day tasks.

Recently her son was unexpectedly admitted to hospital. Jane, the BlueCross Manager, Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Programs was contacted by the out of hours care coordinator and a BlueCross carer arranged to visit Mrs Freeman that evening to ensure she was coping well, managing her medications and preparing meals.

After Jane had spent some time with Mrs Freeman it was felt that she would benefit from some extra support so Jane spoke with other agencies and arranged several other services.

This included a reassessment of Mrs Freeman's care needs and an increase of two more daily visits by Care at Home staff to assist with personal care, medication and meal prompting.

The carer respite centre also arranged for six visits to take Mrs Freeman to see her son in hospital which made a huge difference to her.

An Occupational Therapist came and assessed the home for safety and any

necessary aides. They organised a personal alarm and then contacted the local RSL who provided a volunteer to supply and fit a key lock.

The hospital social worker, where Mrs Freeman's son was admitted, provided a referral for a Community Aged Care Assessment and Mrs Freeman was eligible for a funded home care package which now ensures she has a Case Manager to assist with short and long term care planning. This will include BlueCross Nursing Care visiting weekly to monitor medication compliance and support Mrs Freeman.

Jane knew that Mrs Freeman loved her garden and would enjoy a social visit, so she took her own daughter to Mrs Freeman's house one weekend and together they spent the afternoon weeding the front garden. This provided a lovely social activity and eased her anxiety about her garden maintenance.

BlueCross is about person centred care. Listening, watching and asking questions to learn how we can best support each individual and meet their particular needs.

\*Name has been changed

**It's all about you, your home, your choice, our care.**

## Supporting Veterans at home

BlueCross has been working with the Department of Veterans' Affairs as a home care provider for many years and we have an understanding of their needs. To ensure a level of care compatible with Veterans' requirements our Care Coordinators work closely with the clients and carers to personalise a service plan.

Nursing Care at home is available to all clients including war veterans.

**Nursing care may include:**

- ✦ Education
- ✦ Wound care
- ✦ Diabetes management
- ✦ Assistance with medications

To learn more about how we can create a suite of services to meet your individual care needs please contact **BlueCross Care at Home on 1300 786 857.**



*Learning and development opportunities are an important part of staffing practices at BlueCross.*

## Inaugural BlueCross staff conference

In July this year BlueCross is introducing a staff conference that involves 300 employees from across all of the BlueCross service divisions. This initiative is part of our organisational commitment to provide learning and development opportunities for all staff, to review and improve their individual practices and collaborate with colleagues.

It is also important for us all to meet together and evaluate our services to see how they may be enhanced and to discuss improvements in the delivery of quality aged care and community programs. Strategic learning opportunities are invaluable to maintain and renew clinical practices, as well as discuss the holistic needs of our ageing population and how BlueCross can meet these requirements.



## BlueCross welcomes new Board Director

We are pleased to announce that Sally Evans has been appointed to the Board of Directors and welcome her continued support of Blue Cross. Sally is a healthcare industry specialist with over 20 years experience in both clinical and executive roles in the operation management of services to the aged care and hospital sector. We are very fortunate to have this expertise on our Board and know that Sally's contribution to the company will be invaluable. Welcome on 'board' Sally!

**Our volunteers offer a diversity of activities that would not be possible without their involvement.**

## Volunteers are vital CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Volunteer involvement ranges from weekly dancing lessons to offering the simplest of gestures, a good old chat, an outing, or reading someone a book. But the benefits are extraordinary!

Ellen Easton is one of our vital volunteers. Ellen received an award for the exceptional 22 years of service she has provided volunteering at BlueCross Springfield in Box Hill.

Ellen provides a library service to the elderly residents. When asked why she has continued to volunteer year after year Ellen explains,

*"For some I am the only outside contact they have. I talk with them about their health, families, football and whatever is in the news of the day. They have become friends as well as clients and I get enormous satisfaction and pleasure bringing them the books and CD's they enjoy."*

Our volunteers offer a diversity of activities that would not be possible without their involvement. The value added to the lives of those touched by volunteers is enormous. We are very grateful for their donated time, generosity of spirit and the

practical support they provide that enriches the lives of our aged care residents and home care clients.



Volunteers gathered at BlueCross Broughtonlea to receive awards and well deserved recognition for their contribution to aged care services.

## Celebrating 97+ years young!



Concetta is turning a 100 in November and received some flowers from the BlueCross General Manager, Client Relationships, Julie Maya.



Bill Peterson (C) shared the occasion with his family.



And thank you to our corporate supporters who came along to celebrate ageing positively with BlueCross.



And of course there was cake! Proudly cut by BlueCross Managing Director, David Eccles.



Our eldest birthday recipients were (L) Ken Sillcock, a resident at Broughtonlea (pictured with Broughtonlea staff member Nathalie) and (R) a BlueCross Care at Home client, Marjorie Sampson (pictured with Mary Gorman from BlueCross) who are both heading toward 101 years in October.



For more information call  
Residential enquiries **1300 133 414**  
or Care at Home enquiries **1300 786 857**  
or visit [www.bluecross.com.au](http://www.bluecross.com.au)

  
**BlueCross**  
community & residential services

ANGLESEA	CHELSEA	EAST MALVERN	MANHOE	LOWER TEMPLESTOWE	MULGRAVE	TEMPLESTOWE
AVONDALE HEIGHTS	CHELTENHAM	GLENROY	KEW	MILL PARK	SUNSHINE	TOORAK
BOX HILL	CROYDON	HEIDELBERG	KILMORE	MOOROOLBARK	SURREY HILLS	