



South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWS LHD) Palliative Care Volunteer Program

The community in Bowral is privileged to have the SWS LHD Palliative Care Volunteer program formally operating with three palliative care volunteers. The program is part of the services offered by the Palliative Care Team. The volunteers have undertaken a comprehensive training program, which enables them to extend the practical caring and support to palliative care patients and their caregivers.

The service operates from Monday to Friday between the hours of 8.30am and 5.00pm. The volunteer program is supported by the SWS LHD Palliative Care Volunteer Coordinator.

What can a Community Palliative Care Volunteer do?

Community Palliative Care Volunteers visit clients in their own home and can help in a number of ways, such as,

- Providing the “little extras” for patients and families including emotional support, sitting quietly, listening or talking, reading, playing board games or doing craft.
- Companionship – they can be with the patient while the carer goes to do the shopping, attends appointments or has some much needed “Time Out”.
- Provide comfort with some peaceful respite through gentle hand and foot massage meditation and listening to soothing music or simply sitting quietly.

The volunteers do not:

- Make decisions about patient care
- Make decisions about the need for medication
- Provide personal care.
- Lift the patient, although they may assist others to who are assisting a patient to gently stand or reposition (the volunteers have undertaken manual handling training).

To be able to access the Volunteer Service, patients must be known to the Palliative Care Nursing Consultative Service.

If you would like to know more about the palliative care volunteer program please contact the SWS LHD Palliative Care Volunteer Coordinator on 0457 526 847.

In her own words, Lynn Harris, SWS LHD Palliative Care Volunteer says,

“The generosity and invaluable support of the palliative professionals when caring at home for my dying husband lead me to become a volunteer Palliative Care worker. My personal experience was complemented by a training course at Liverpool Hospital, together with ongoing training provided through South Western Sydney Local Health District. As part of the Palliative Care team within Wingecarribee Shire, I work with one patient at a time. My duties include at least weekly visits to their home, or taking them out to appointments, shopping or to a café. Mostly, my job is to listen, that may be to their memories, concerns, challenges and I am there to facilitate what they want and need. I have gained tremendous insight from my voluntary work. I have learnt amazing things about life and death- and it’s a chance to give back to the community that supported me in ‘my hour of need’.”

Pictured Below: From Right: Heather Parkes (Palliative Care Volunteer), Arlene Roache (Coordinator) Lynn Harris (Volunteer)

