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From the Editors

We hope this newsletter brings you much-needed peace and joy while reading it. When we finished up at the end of last year, we really had no idea what January and February would bring and nor did we expect Omicron to play such a critical role in our lives. In times like this, we must support each other however we can and ensure the most vulnerable in our community are looked after and supported. Despite the challenges, we know that our community visitors are resilient as we continue to navigate the impacts of Covid-19.

RESILIENCE ON DISPLAY

At the beginning of each year, many people make vows to either do or not do something to improve their life in some way. The fresh start of a new year is magically equated with a fresh start to life and often imbued with renewed hope that this year things will be better. As we enter 2022, after two years of living with COVID-19, this hope may be stronger than usual.

How we respond to the shocks of the pandemic depends in part on our resilience: the ability to adapt well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress.

As a means of sharing, we asked our visitors to share with us how they got through those difficult times during lockdowns. Each has different strategies to cope with the challenging situation. See their actions on p.4 & 5.

LIVING WITH COVID

There is this million-dollar question, "When can business be as usual?" Things will gradually be going back to a new kind of "normal".

We understand that many of our visitors are desperate to visit their residential aged care home 'friends'. As different aged care homes have different policies and procedures, the safety of our residents and yourself must continue to be our primary concern as we continue to adhere to these.

OUR HEART GOES TO THE UKRAINIANS

As the situation in Ukraine unfolds, we would like to take this opportunity to send our thoughts to anyone impacted or effected by the violence. The CVS family are deeply saddened by the situation and hope the conflict will end soon.

HEALING WITH ART

The benefits of art therapy have been well documented in helping clients in mental health settings. Over the decades, it has moved into other community settings such as schools, shelters, nursing homes, residential treatment facilities and halfway houses. In more recent years, research findings show art therapy helped reduce pain, decrease symptoms of stress and improve quality of life in adult cancer patients. One of our treasured volunteers, Vesna TRKULJA, has kindly shared her healing journey through art and volunteering. Read Vesna's story on p.2 & 3 and view some of her paintings.

BACK TO "NORMAL"

COVID-19 has had an immediate and far-reaching impact on the way the world operates. Digital communications have become the norm almost overnight. Applications like Zoom, FaceTime, WhatsApp, WeChat, etc. allow us to maintain connection with our loved ones. Although most restrictions had been eased, the coronavirus will continue to have an enduring impact on life beyond our homes going forward. It has become clear that remote working, social distancing, and a rethink of how public spaces are being used and run will redefine what is "normal" for a long time to come.

We understand that face-to-face meetings remain the preferred mode for our visitors, especially those not familiar with the technology. On the path of our business recovery, we are going to trial virtual meetings. Virtual catch ups are a great way we can connect and keep everyone safe.

In the meantime, keep well and look after yourself.

All the very best,
Valerie CHU & Jeannie TAM

Healing through Art and Volunteering By Vesna TRKULJA

I came to this beautiful country called Australia 11 years ago with new hopes as well as big worries. The language, the culture, the way of life, and virtually everything were very different from my previous life.



My parents and I (baby)

Struggling with depression

Back in my home country of Serbia, I was struggling to make ends. As a single mother with two children and an abusive marriage, it was extremely challenging. If those were not enough, there were ongoing wars, endless bomb attacks, worsening economy ... Fear, anxiety and uncertainties were all over our heads. The situation was dire, devastating and disheartening. I found that I could no longer cope with all these.

And eventually I was diagnosed with 'Major Depression' – a health condition that I am still struggling to overcome. On three occasions, I was on the verge of a total breakdown. Somehow, I managed to 're-start' my life from scratch.

Coming to Australia

By the time I felt almost losing the battle of managing my illness, I met my second husband. While we were in love, he offered me an opportunity to start a new life outside my country. It was a very difficult decision but I was willing to give it a go and felt excited to be in a new environment.

Fortunately, my second husband was supportive and I also got some assistance from the community. I started off by learning English and some computer applications. The future started to look brighter. And I could proudly claim Sydney to be my home. It is such a fascinating place - fragrant air, exotic plants, beautiful streets, ... all these are unique. It healed me slowly and I started to look for jobs. I also made attempts to bring my kids over from Serbia.



My husband and I

Another dip into depression

After some effort and attempts, I managed to get my daughter over. We were happy to be united again. However, the visa for my son was denied for numerous times and till now, we are still separated and unable to see each other.

For some silly reasons, that struck me like a flash of lightning and I came down again with this terrible sickness. I sank back into depression and all the suffering had returned. I could see no light at the other side of the tunnel. All my gained confidence had gone and there did not seem to have any hope in life ... just tears and humongous pain surrounded me. I was contemplating to give up on my life.

Volunteering gives me a lifeline

Years passed on like that and I could not lift myself up. As the lingering illness was crashing on me step by step, I suddenly remembered my English teacher who had told me previously to go online for some volunteer work that I would like to take. And in that manner, I found out about the CVS - a volunteering opportunity that allows me to use

my language. I applied for the position and was warmly welcomed by our beautiful, passionate, inspirational 'supervisors'.

With their support, I started to feel excited, happy and worthy again. I find satisfaction working and sharing my experience with those people living in nursing homes who have similar problems as mine - language barriers, sickness and loneliness. I could see that I have the ability of brightening up their life and make it more bearable in a confined environment.

It is very rewarding seeing big smiles on their faces when I walk into the nursing home. This is how they welcome me. They all look forward to the weekly chats and entertainment. The joy and happiness I brought to the residents also heal me.

Covid-19 changed everything

Then came the Coronavirus. It felt like the world had stopped. "Stay safe, stay at home." OMG! For how long ...?

I have tried my best to continue 'window visit' my two friends in the nursing home during this 'dark' period. However, they were gone in 2020 and 2021, without giving me a chance to say goodbye to them. I was dragged back to the abyss of loneliness and disappointments. This lockdown period was long enough to make me feel like losing myself in a dark alley.

With the two previous pick-up experiences, I knew I had to do something at this point of time. I started looking for something that could potentially lift myself up again. So, what could I do to help myself without the need of relying on other people or the need of going out?

The beauty of art therapy

Then I started to pick up my painting brushes again. When I paint, time stops. My mind stays in the beauty of colours. There are calmness, stillness, quietness, silence and tranquillity no nasty voices talking to me how I am worthless,

no worries and no anti-depressant medication.

As my painting skills improve, so does my mood and my mental health. I could feel that I am healing day by day.

Although I am still suffering from the horrible side effects of medication – losing hair, gaining weight, aching stomach, ... it does help me to be less anxious and sensitive. I feel blessed that I have the courage to share my story with you.

And more importantly, I have resumed my visiting role with a new resident in late 2021. My social life is back again! My new friend is a chatty gentleman who is open to share with me his life. I visit him almost every week but this stopped again with the new wave of COVID variant – Omicron. This time, I have the confidence that I will beat it.

I find support and happiness from visiting older people in aged care homes and enjoy the sense of tranquillity and comfort from creating my artwork. I could feel that I am healing and transforming through the magic of painting and volunteer work. The world looks brighter and happier. Although I am still in the process, I feel so much better and happier than before.

And on the request of my beautiful supervisors, I would like to share two of my paintings and hope you'll like them.



Resilience on Display



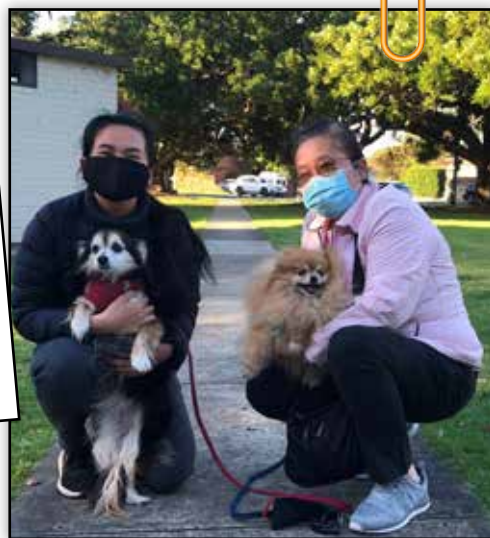
Anna ISYP: "Putting wallpapers on during lockdown for our newly opened tattoo studio."



Lucy CHEVALIER: "Even though we were restricted, nature follows its path. Being outside makes me feel good."



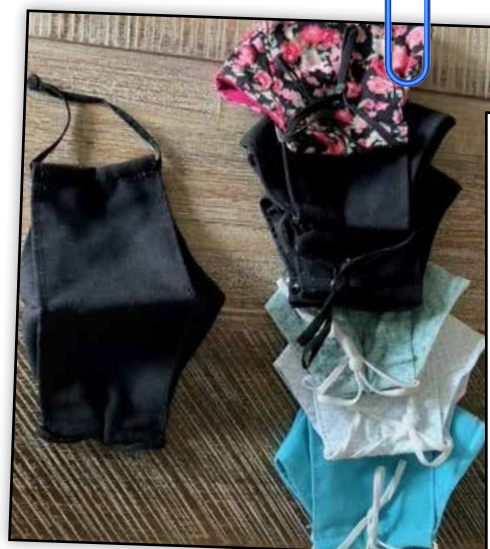
Frank SILVER: "Helping my daughter and son-in-law to do house renovation."



Alice CHEN (Right): During the peak of the lockdown in 2020, Alice and her daughter each strolled 5 kms (max limit) to meet in a park and walked their dogs together.



Mishka JAMBOR (Left): Indulging in the cold mountain air while enjoying a walk in the Beskids, 150 km from Kraków, Poland.



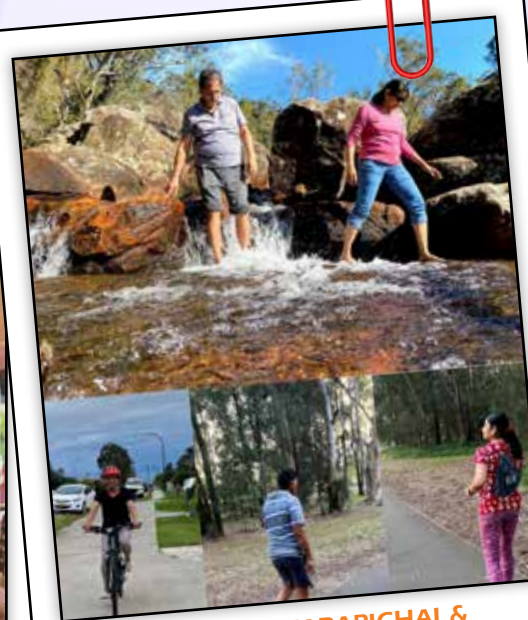
Birgul UGUR: "Difficult times during lockdown! Very depressing too! But we managed to get through it by making lots of face masks and painting a chest."



Mary SEEMAMPILLAI: Polishing her cake baking skills with her friends.



Paula ZELYNSKI: "Attending to the garden gives me so much joy & pleasure, and the much needed relief from the psychological burden of the pandemic."



Ravishankar SANKARAPICHAJ & Jayashri RAVISHANKAR: "Making every opportunity to getting out of the house and enjoying the great outdoor is the best antidote for the enclosed feeling of working from home."



Renato & Corazon MAISOG: "Looking after our grand-daughter is the best past-time ever. The joy and pleasure take our mind away from the unpleasantness of the pandemic."



Betty NHAM: "Taking a camel ride on Lighthouse Beach near Port Macquarie – the best way to escape from the worries and depressing mood resulting from the pandemic."



Jacqueline McVEAY: "One of the blankets I knitted for one of my little darlings in the nursing home to take my mind off the lockdown & I can assure you it was time well spent."



Yi YANG (Jackie): The joy of a newborn girl and the starting of a new family is enough to take Jackie's mind from the negative impact of the pandemic, although she is keen to take her baby to meet the grandparents overseas.



YanQin CHEN: The lockdowns gave YanQin the perfect opportunity to live a sustainable life. She's got a garden full of fresh produce. Here in the picture, she is having one on one time with her duck. She's got other animals like rabbits, fish, cats and a dog that were keeping her very busy.

FUN FOOD QUIZ



- 1 How many legs does a prawn have? a) 8 b) 10 c) 12
- 2 What animal is lard made from? a) cow b) pig c) duck
- 3 What was Cinderella's Coach made from? a) orange b) melon c) pumpkin
- 4 What is the Japanese alcohol drink Sake made from? a) rice b) wheat c) fermented pears
- 5 What is chowder? a) fruit b) soup c) dessert
- 6 The city of Dijon in France is famous for producing what? a) mustard b) wine c) jam
- 7 What are the two main ingredients of bubble and squeak? a) carrot and parsnip b) popcorn and butter c) potato and cabbage
- 8 What nuts are most commonly used in marzipan? a) walnuts b) almonds c) hazelnuts
- 9 What flavour does mulligatawny soup have? a) sweet and sour b) curry c) vanilla
- 10 Which fruit, when dried, produces prunes? a) apricots b) grapes c) plums
- 11 Borscht is an East European soup. What is it made from? a) cabbage b) beetroot c) potato
- 12 Where do lamingtons (little cakes) originate from? a) England b) Australia c) India
- 13 Traditional Italian pesto is made from basil, olive oil and which nut? a) walnut b) pine nut c) almond
- 14 What kind of smoked fish is a kipper? a) salmon b) haddock c) herring
- 15 What is the resulting flavour when chocolate is added to coffee? a) cocoa b) mocha c) latte
- 16 Mangetout is a variety of which vegetable? a) pea b) bean c) asparagus
- 17 What herb goes best with lamb? a) basil b) rosemary c) tarragon
- 18 A tomato is a? a) fruit b) vegetable c) herb
- 19 Which flower is the vanilla pod from? a) crocus b) orchid c) lily
- 20 What is a dried plum known as? a) prune b) raisin c) date

Answers: 1. 12 2. Pig 3. Pumpkin 4. Rice 5. Soup 6. Mustard 7. Potato and cabbage 8. Almonds 9. Curry 10. Plums
11. Beetroot 12. Australia 13. Pine nut 14. Herring 15. Mocha 16. Pea 17. Rosemary 18. Fruit 19. Orchid 20. Prune



WHO ARE OUR VISITORS ? (March 2022 Statistics)

Language Groups	No. of Active Visitors	No. of Residents being visited	Language Groups	No. of Active Visitors	No. of Residents being visited
Arabic	4	4	Japanese	2	3
Assyrian	1	1	Korean	1	1
Chinese - Cantonese	60	98	Latvian	1	1
Chinese - Mandarin	17	21	Macedonian	1	3
Chinese - Shanghai	2	2	Polish	1	2
Chinese - Teo-Chow	3	3	Russian	1	1
Croatian	3	3	Serbian	1	1
Czech	1	1	Spanish	1	1
English	2	2	Swedish	1	1
French	5	7	Tagalog	2	4
German	5	5	Tamil	8	12
Hindi	4	4	Ukrainian	1	1
Indonesian	1	2	Vietnamese	5	7



HELP! HELP! Volunteers Needed

Do you have any friends who can visit some of these lonely residents?

Language	No	Locality	Language	No	Locality
Arabic	2	Bankstown, Quakers Hill	Romanian	1	Surry Hills
Croatian	1	Bankstown	Russian	1	Annandale
Finnish	1	Petersham	Serbian	2	Ashfield, Gladesville
French	1	Marsfield	Spanish	3	Kings Langley, Dural
German	1	Blacktown	Tagalog	1	Bankstown
Hindi	1	Summer Hill	Turkish	2	Auburn, Berala
Korean	2	Strathfield			



A lot of problems in the world would disappear if we talked to each other instead of about each other.

Do not regret growing old. It's a privilege denied to many.

Do not listen with the intention to reply, but listen with the intention to understand.

One who knows about himself is never disturbed by what others think about him.

Life is full of give and take. Give thanks and take nothing for granted.

It is not impermanence that makes us suffer.
What makes us suffer is wanting things to be permanent, when they are not.

When you replace "Why is this happening to me?" with "What is this trying to teach me?", everything shifts.

Everything is energy. Your thought begins it, your emotion amplifies it and your action increases the momentum.

It takes a lot more COURAGE to let something go than it does hold onto it, trying to make it better. Letting go doesn't mean ignoring a situation. Letting go means accepting what is, exactly as it is, without fear, resistance, or a struggle for control.

STRENGTH does not come from winning. Your struggle develop your strengths.
When you go through hardships and decide not to surrender, that is strength.

Sometimes life doesn't give you what you want, not because you don't deserve it, but because you deserve much more.

You only have so much emotional energy each day. You can use it to fight with people, resist the present, and worry about the future, or you can agree to disagree, accept the present, and use your energy to create the future.

HAPPINESS means loving yourself and being less concerned with the approval of others.

