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## From the Editors

Guess many of you are already feeling the winter chill. But a fluffy blanket, a good book and nights spent by the fire, or a heater can easily make you feel cozy again. Embrace the beauty of winter and say some kind words to people. "One kind word can warm three winter months", a Japanese proverb.

After all, what good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it the sweetness. If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.

Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth and for the touch of a friendly hand. It is the time for home – the home in your heart.

### Volunteer Spotlight - Elizabeth KIM

In this issue, we have invited one of our youngest volunteers, Elizabeth KIM, to share with us how her relationship with her grandparents and an aged care home resident helps her to connect to her cultural heritage and background. Read her inspiring story on page 2.

### Another 'flu Season

The 'flu season looms once again. Head of the interim Australian Centre for Disease Control, Professor Paul Kelly reminded us that flu is not the common cold, which people often mistake it for. It is a serious virus that can cause severe illness, hospitalization and death among otherwise healthy children and adults. We should take steps to ensure that our family and community are protected from the influenza virus.

The flu shot is the most effective way to protect our vulnerable friends in aged care homes from the infection. Please support our seniors to stay well in winter by taking the flu shot which is available at general practices, pharmacies, immunization clinics, and some workplaces.

### NSW Get Healthy Service

The Get Healthy Service offers free phone (1300 806 258) and online health coaching to help you make lifestyle changes to improve your health. Delivered by NSW Health, the service is available to people over 16 years of age living in NSW.

When you join, you'll receive 6 or more confidential coaching calls with a university qualified health coach. The coaches can support you to:

- set and achieve your health goals,
- eat well and keep active,
- reduce the amount of alcohol you drink,
- reach and stay at a healthy weight,
- gain a healthy amount of weight in pregnancy,
- stay active during and after cancer treatment.

You can sign up to get started with this link (<https://www.gethealthynsw.com.au/get-started/>) or ask your health professional for a referral. Find out more on page 6.

The ACVVS team wishes you and your family a cosy and comfortable winter! Stay warm and active!

Valerie CHU & Jeannie TAM



# Connecting with

Mr K

By Elizabeth KIM

## Disconnection

Relationships with elderly citizens are a warm and familiar experience. I commend my grandparents who raised me with such love and care and continued to be part of my life into adulthood. Throughout our weekly coffee dates, bushwalks and lunches, I eagerly listened to their tales as I learned about their part in Korea's history. As an Australian-born Korean, spending time with them was an important way to stay connected to my cultural heritage and learn more about my background. Therefore, when they both passed during the pandemic, I not only felt a deep loss but also an unexpected disconnection from my heritage. While feeling the loss of this relationship and bingeing 'Old People's Home for 4-year-olds', I was inspired to seek out this connection again.

In the garden of the nursing home I visited lived a large maple tree. Maple trees are abundant in Korea. Like a calendar, they signal the change in time and season through the transformation of their vibrant leaves. My introduction to Mr K was in the garden where the maple tree stood. Mr K watched as the red and orange leaves of the maple tree began to cover the grass like a warm blanket.

Mr K was 90 years old (just 2 years younger than my paternal grandfather). Mr K had moved to Australia in the 70s (before the larger waves of Korean immigrants) to mine opals in South Australia. Through his hard work, he was able to move his wife and two sons to Australia. Since his immigration, he only ever returned to Korea to bury his wife. He was a Korean-

born Australian.

Mr K would always share his gratitude to be an Australian citizen. He showed this by eagerly helping the nursing staff wherever possible like maintaining the nursing home by raking the leaves in the yard or cleaning up after other residents. He aimed to burden no one. He would dress himself, complete all hygiene tasks himself and never placed any requests or demands on myself or the staff. He would also try his best to speak English whenever possible. However, he always stressed that as Korean was his first language, it would always be his mother tongue and thus much easier for him.

He was sound in mind as well as in health. No hearing loss nor cataracts interfered with his detection of planes and birds. His eyes would always scan the skies as his ears were alert for the whirring of the jet engines. When I asked Mr K why he would always look out for them, he would say "I think they're on their way to Korea. I wonder what Korea looks like now...".

Mr K was also very proud of his dentition. Not a filling was present nor was a single tooth missing. He would insist that he had no preference for any dish or food. However, he would share that he was always grateful for the Korean staff who made him a warm bowl of seaweed soup or soybean stew to enjoy.

## Connection

As the maple leaves on the ground began

to dry out, and the branches became bare, Mr K and I met weekly.

I shared how my grandfather had also immigrated to Australia in the 90's and brought over his children. Mr K and I also shared the same surname and through conversation, found that we had come from the same historical clan. Although I did not know much about the origins of my surname, Mr K made sure that by the time the new leaves of the maple tree came, I knew the heritage of my name.

Although my Korean always needs work, Mr K was always ready to praise my efforts. This made me want to learn more Korean and expand my vocabulary. My friendship with Mr K motivated me to dig out my dusty vocab notebook to jot down any new or unfamiliar words that came up in our conversations. As a token of my appreciation, I always ensured to deliver Mr K a fresh Korean newspaper, hot off the press. He would always smile and thank me for my troubles.

Whenever Mr K wondered about his hometown or longed for Korea through the passing planes, we would search them together on Google Maps. He would be mesmerized by the newly paved roads and skyscrapers as he would share stories of the places that were once nothing but farming fields and dirt roads.

While Mr K was very thankful for the Korean cooks, he began to eat less and less as the weeks went on. When I asked him about his appetite he said despite the abundance of food, he didn't feel like eating much when he was alone. Thus,

(with the permission of the facility and family), I would bring ginseng tea, soy milk, traditional rice cakes and even a cheeky cheeseburger to enjoy together. Mr K also enjoyed walking and escaping the perimeters of the picket fence. Thus, we would also journey out to a local cafe or park taking in the scenery and fresh air on our little adventures.

## Reconnection

After many adventures with Mr K, the leaves of the maple tree turned red and orange once again. However this time, Mr K was no longer at my side. After wishing him a bittersweet farewell at his funeral, I now like to think that he is up in the skies, proudly watching Korea and its incredible development since his immigration.



I am thankful for the ACVVS program, its team members, and Mr K, to have been able to reconnect with my heritage in such a meaningful and special way.

I am also thankful to be back in the same courtyard with a new friend, Mrs K, with whom I am excited to build a relationship with, as I continue to learn more Korean terms, customs, and traditions.





# The Power of Listening

Listening is an important skill in all areas of life, whether we are supporting a loved one through health problems, dealing with colleagues or family members. But how well do we listen to the people around us? The fact is most of us aren't as good at listening as we'd like to think.

Listening can be challenging, especially in today's fast-paced, virtual world. With all the distractions around us and within our own heads, it's incredible that we ever hear anything that anyone says at all.

When we show we're really listening, it's much more rewarding for the person talking to you, and we will get more out of it too. It can help avoid misunderstandings and reduce the potential for conflict. It also allows us to better understand ourselves and other people. By listening, we can become better leaders and learners. Listening is not only the most essential aspect of communication – it can make or break our relationships.

## The Benefits of Listening

Listening has a significant effect on our ability to appreciate, respond to, and empower others. Below are some of the benefits of listening:

### Listening shows respect

- By listening to others, you show them respect.
- You let them know that you care about what they're saying and that you value their perspective.
- When you show respect to others, they will show it back to you as well.

### Listening helps you understand

- When you use the power of listening, you can better understand what people are saying, why they are saying it, and where they are coming from.
- Listening can help prevent misunderstandings, conflict, and confusion.

### Listening helps foster relationships

- Showing that you care by listening can go a long way in helping foster relationships.
- When someone knows that you are truly listening, it can help improve your relationship with them.
- People are grateful for others who know how to listen.

### Listening allows for many positive things to happen

- Improved communication
- Resolved conflicts
- Deeper connection
- Greater appreciation
- Enhanced understanding
- Increased learning
- Profound awareness

## Becoming a better listener

Listening resembles a muscle. It requires training, persistence, effort, and most

importantly, the intention to become a good listener. It requires clearing your mind from internal and external noise. Below are some best practices:

### Give 100% of your attention, or do not listen

- Give the person your full attention. Stop everything you are doing.
- Constant eye contact lets the speaker feel that you are listening.
- By being present, you will hear everything the other person is saying. You will make them feel acknowledged and important.

### Do not interrupt

- Resist the urge to interrupt before the speaker indicates that they are done for the moment.
- Being interrupted is frustrating for the other person – it gives the impression that you think you're more important, or that you don't have time for what they have to say.

### Do not judge or evaluate

- Listen without jumping to conclusions and interpreting what you hear.
- If you start reacting emotionally to what's being said, then it can get in the way of listening to what is said next.
- Don't assume that you know what's going to be said next. You can't listen and prepare at the same time.

### Show that you are listening

- Nod your head, smile and make small noises like "yes" and "uh huh", to show that you're listening and encourage the speaker to continue.
- Don't look at your watch, fidget or play with your hair or fingernails.

### Form an Emotional Connection

- When we are present, we can listen between the words. We can hear and feel where someone is coming from.
- When we connect with the person emotionally, it's much easier to resolve a conflict, understand them, or figure out how to support them.

### Do not impose your solutions

- It's not always easy, but lending a listening, supportive ear can be much more rewarding than telling someone what they should do.
- When a loved one has health problems is a time when they probably want to tell you how they're feeling, and get things off their chest, rather than have lots of advice about what they should be doing.
- In other areas of life too, most people prefer to come to their own solutions. The role of the listener is to help the speaker draw up a solution themselves. When listening to others, refrain from suggesting solutions.
- If you believe you have a good solution and feel an urge to share it, use a question, such as "I wonder what will happen if you choose to do X?"

### Ask more (good) questions

- Asking relevant questions can show that you've been listening and help clarify what has been said.
- If you're not sure if you've understood correctly, wait until the speaker pauses and then say something like "Did you mean that x..."
- Before you ask a question, ask yourself, "is this question intended to benefit the speaker or satisfy my curiosity?"



# NSW Get Healthy Service

Source: NSW Health

The Get Healthy Service is funded by the NSW Government and is part of a broader strategy to improve the health and wellbeing of NSW residents.

The Get Healthy Service in NSW is a free, confidential telephone-based health coaching service that is available to all NSW residents aged 16 and over. The service is designed to provide support, guidance, and motivation to help individuals make positive lifestyle changes, such as increasing physical activity, improving nutrition, reducing alcohol intake and quitting smoking.

The service is staffed by qualified health professionals who work with clients to identify their goals, develop a personalised action plan and provide ongoing support and encouragement. Sessions can be scheduled at a time that suits the client and are typically conducted over the phone, although online chat and email options are also available.

The service has been designed to be accessible, convenient, and effective, with a focus on empowering individuals to take control of their health and make positive, sustainable changes to their lifestyle.

## ABOUT THE SERVICE

The Get Healthy Service® is completely free and tailored to the needs of the client. The university qualified health coaches are ready to support the clients to:

- eat healthy and get active
- reach and stay at a healthy weight
- improve your well-being
- manage your health while living with type 2 diabetes or cancer

- help you reduce the amount of alcohol you drink

## BENEFITS

The first step is setting health goals that are important to you. During the program you'll be supported to work toward becoming a healthier you with:

- Goals & actions
- Tracking progress
- Encouragement
- Solutions
- Information

## HOW IT WORKS

Get Healthy is designed to fit in with your life, so services are provided via phone, email, text and online – all at a time that suits you.

When you join Get Healthy, you'll get:

- your own university qualified coach
- 6 or more regular phone and video coaching calls
- tools and guides to help you stay on track
- emails and texts to keep you on track
- reminders about appointments
- help to overcome challenges to reaching your goals

## HOW TO JOIN

To join the Get Healthy Service, call 1300 806 258 Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm or to register online, visit: [gethealthynsw.gov.au](http://gethealthynsw.gov.au)



# Warm up with exercise, not comfort food as temperature drops

Source: [https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/news/Pages/20180511\\_01.aspx](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/news/Pages/20180511_01.aspx)

Health experts are urging the community to stay active by exercising for at least 30 minutes on most days to keep the extra kilos at bay in the cooler months.

On the back of worldwide studies showing people putting on weight when seasons change, Professor of Medicine in the Department of Endocrinology at St Vincent's Hospital Katherine Samaras has urged people in NSW not to fall for the same trap.

"The hibernation pattern of animals such as bears is well known but people don't always think about how their habits change too when temperatures drop," Prof Samaras said.

"The winter months cause changes to our internal biological clocks – our circadian rhythms – which affects how we sleep and when we wake, our metabolism, our desire to be outdoors and even perhaps our desire for richer foods."

"In the US, studies indicate people commonly put on 2-3kgs in autumn and winter. We don't have specific data on seasonal inactivity in Australia, but our experience is likely to be similar and for some people those small gains each year will accumulate."

Obesity is a serious public health issue with one in two adults in NSW being overweight or obese.

In 2017-18, the NSW Government committed \$31 million to reduce the prevalence of overweight and obesity in NSW, \$19 million of which has been allocated to the delivery of the Premier's priority to reduce childhood overweight and obesity.

Professor Samaras said the community would do well to embrace cooler temperatures, instead of reacting to them with high heating and too many layers of clothing.

"Just being in cooler temperatures activates the body to warm us up - which in turn helps burn kilojoules," she said.

Everyone knows that physical activity is good for your health and wellbeing. But you don't need to run a marathon for it to be beneficial. Small amounts of exercise can make a big difference to your health.

Simple tips to keep unwanted extra winter kilos at bay are:

- be active every day
- sit less and move more, you'll burn more kilojoules
- plan ahead – get your exercise clothes ready the night before
- choose smaller portions richer winter foods
- remember, it's ok to be cool
- up the H2O to stay hydrated
- seek further information and support from your own personal health coach through the free NSW Health Get Healthy Service.





# Languages our Visitors are speaking

(June 2024 Statistics)

## Language Groups

Arabic	Hindi
Assyrian	Indonesian
Bosnian	Italian
Chinese - Cantonese	Japanese
Chinese - Hokkien	Korean
Chinese - Mandarin	Lithuanian
Chinese - Shanghainese	Macedonian
Chinese - Teo-Chow	Polish
Croatian	Russian
Czech	Serbian
English	Spanish
Filipino	Tamil
French	Ukrainian
German	Vietnamese



Do you have any friends who can spare some of their time to keep older people company in residential aged care homes?

- to share stories over a cup of tea
- to work on a joint hobby
- to listen to music or enjoy videos online

We would need people who can speak a second language, in particular **Cantonese** (Blacktown, Canley Vale, Toongabbie), **Korean** (Strathfield), **Macedonian** (Bankstown, Bexley), **Mandarin** (Penshurst), **Turkish** (Berala), and **Vietnamese** (Bankstown, Lakemba, Westmead).

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Level 7, King George V Building, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Missenden Road, Camperdown 2050.

Tel: **9515-9871**