

# BVRC NEWS

**Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre Newsletter**



MAY 2009 #40

## BVRC UPDATE



It's well and truly autumn, isn't it? We hope you're coping with, and perhaps even enjoying, the shorter daylight hours, cooler conditions and the countless opportunities to scrunch through the golden leaves.

It's been nice to see a little rainfall here and there too, although we're not breaking any records on that front, unlike the tragic bushfires of February this year in extreme, record breaking weather conditions. The scenes and tragedy of Black Saturday were horrific. Thanks to all those who gave so generously of their time and donations, and who volunteered their efforts in the face of Victoria's worst bushfire tragedy. We were inundated with inquiries from volunteers at the BVRC and, although we know it's been said before, if there was one positive to arise from this tragic event, it was the amazing community

spirit and overwhelming assistance offered by volunteers from near and far.

Records are being broken at the BVRC, however! At our Centre we've had a noticeable increase in people expressing interest and wanting to book interview times with us, and there's no sign of this slowing down.

This interest has been great for volunteering, but it's meant that some people have had to book appointments, sometimes a couple of weeks in advance. Thanks to those of you who have been understanding in these circumstances, and rest assured we're doing our very best to assist everyone in a timely manner - your patience is appreciated.

In this edition of the newsletter you'll find some broad information on National Volunteer Week, on training opportunities available over the coming months, and you can read about a couple of interesting people who have been through the Centre, both recently and a little less so!

Take care, and enjoy!

## NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

This year National Volunteer Week is being celebrated from 11-17 May, and we've included some information below taken directly from the Volunteering Australia website.

National Volunteer Week (NVW) began in 1989 and was the first collaborative

attempt to promote volunteering nationally.

This year's theme is

*Volunteers: Everyday people,  
extraordinary contribution*

This theme carries the message that everyone has something of value to offer and that every volunteer's contribution, no matter how big or small, is extraordinary because that person cares enough to be a volunteer.

The theme acknowledges the enormous contribution of volunteers and the value of volunteering.

It encourages new volunteers by reinforcing that everybody can become a volunteer.

From the BVRC, we'd like to wish all volunteers a very happy National Volunteer Week and thanks. Without your efforts, many of our services in the community simply could not operate.



## A TRIBUTE TO GAIL AITKEN

It is with sadness that we advise that Gail Aitken, one of the BVRC's volunteers, passed away unexpectedly on 6 April.

Gail had been volunteering with the BVRC for more than ten years, making her one of the Centre's longest-serving volunteers.

Gail will be remembered for her commitment, her attention to detail and for her reliability. If you receive this newsletter via the post, then it's most likely that Gail would have been the one to mail it out to you over the years.

Volunteering was a very large part of Gail's life, and over the years she volunteered with organisations such as Alzheimer's Australia, the Australian Breastfeeding Association, Asthma Victoria, and we're sure there were many others who benefited from her volunteer work.

Gail was also an employee of the City of Boroondara, having worked there for nine years and eight months, and we have many fond memories of Gail at the various social events and work functions, such as the staff Christmas parties and International Volunteer Day celebrations.

Gail was a generous, caring member of the BVRC's volunteer team, always had time for a chat, and she will be sadly missed.



*Gail in the midst of a mailout!*

**2009 VOLUNTEER EXPO**

The BVRC's annual volunteering Expo was held on Wednesday 11 March 2009 at the Hawthorn Town Hall.

It was great to see the 46 organisations there on the day, and even more pleasing to welcome the 687 prospective volunteers that we counted who took the time to wander through on the day and chat to the various organisation representatives who were there.

The Expo has become an annual fixture on the BVRC's calendar, so we hope to see you there in March 2010.



*2009 Volunteer Expo*

**VOLUNTEER PROFILE -  
BRUCE ABBOTT**

Bruce Abbott has volunteered in the past but since visiting the Volunteer Expo at the Hawthorn Town Hall in March 2009, volunteering has featured in Bruce's life in an entirely different context. At the Expo, Bruce chatted with Froni of the Auburn Centre (Uniting Aged Care) and, since that day, has embarked on a short-term, project-based volunteer role with

the Auburn Centre that involves sourcing volunteers for a woodworking group which runs for a couple of hours once a week.

Bruce had also recently commenced as meals on wheels volunteer in Balwyn, and he's the first to point out that these two volunteer roles are quite different, but that diversity suits him and fits well with his retirement life balance.

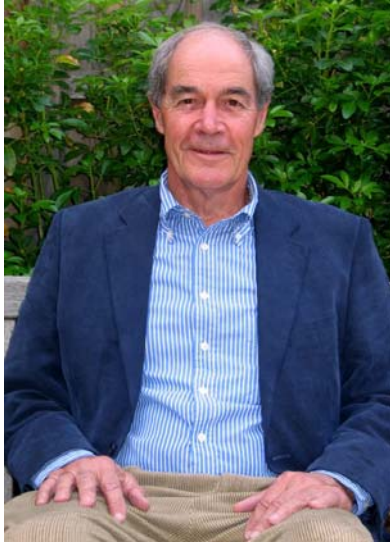
Prior to retiring in 2008, Bruce had spent many years working in sales and marketing, people management and, more recently, he had spent the last 17 years running his own business as part of a global executive search company. Travel, both overseas and within Australia, had been an integral part of Bruce's working life.

Bruce decided that volunteering was one way to remain active in retirement, and both volunteer roles offer Bruce the opportunity to 'give something back' to the community, while at the same time enjoying the many benefits of retirement. Volunteering has broadened Bruce's understanding of what goes on in a community, as well as an opportunity to contribute his skills, ideas and experience to the woodworking project.

To those who are considering volunteering, Bruce's advice is to determine what time you have available and then find a volunteer role that will fit with what you're seeking. Bruce's attitude is "nothing ventured, nothing gained - give it a go!"

Bruce also has excellent negotiation skills! His "fee" for being interviewed for this volunteer profile was to ensure that it included a call for volunteers who may be interested in leading and coaching in the woodwork program at the Auburn Centre (Uniting Aged Care) in Hawthorn.

So, if you're interested in volunteer work with a small woodworking group for a couple of hours a week, you can contact Bruce or Froni on 9818 4484, or call the BVRC on 9278 4550 for more information.



*Bruce Abbott*



*Volunteering with children*

**EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST  
- KINDERGARTEN AND  
CHILDCARE CENTRE  
VOLUNTEERS**

Childcare centres and kindergartens within the City of Boroondara are looking to establish a program to support children with additional needs, both in three and four-year old kinder programs and in childcare centres.

If you would like to provide support and assistance to the teaching staff, please contact Ame Christiansen on 9278 4620. Volunteers who speak a language other than English are also encouraged to apply. You will need to have a current Working with Children check, a police check and fulfil other requirements, as specified by the individual childcare centre or kindergarten.

**VOLUNTEER PROFILE  
VISHU GUNDELLI**

Vishu Gundelli is a wonderful advocate for volunteering and for the Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre (BVRC), and we thought you might like to know why.

In 2002, when Vishu arrived in Australia from India, he contacted the BVRC to find out about volunteering as a way to gain local experience, and was put in touch with St George's Hospital in Kew.

During his three months at St George's, Vishu enjoyed undertaking a project that involved preparing a reference manual on neighbourhood houses, which was subsequently widely distributed to health workers. The reference manual was developed as a CD which, at the time, was a reasonably new and progressive concept.

Vishu found the whole volunteer experience at St George's extremely rewarding, and gave him a greater confidence in himself. Vishu describes his volunteering as a "bridging experience" which allowed him to draw on his previous experience and qualifications as a social worker in India.



*Vishu Gundelli*

Since 2003, Vishu has worked for the Department of Human Services, and continues to enjoy the many and varied opportunities for advancement and learning that have been afforded him through various roles there.

In light of his positive experiences, over the years Vishu has actively encouraged many people (both from overseas and even those more local) to try volunteer work, and last month he personally accompanied his sister, who has recently settled in Australia, to the BVRC to guide her through what will hopefully be a similar volunteering experience to his.

Vishu says, "voluntary work is a very rewarding experience for people who are new to the country".

In his spare time, Vishu enjoys painting, listening to pop music and spending time with his wife and son. And, perhaps one

day, he will find the time to undertake his PhD at Melbourne University, an opportunity he was unable to continue when he first arrived due to work and family commitments.

Thanks for spreading the volunteer word, Vishu!

## VOLUNTEERING UNPLUGGED

During the week commencing 11 May (National Volunteer Week), online job site SEEK launched Volunteering Unplugged, which is a website that encourages volunteers to share their stories about volunteering.

It is hoped that this website will encourage many volunteers to share experiences, as told in their own words.

SEEK hopes the website will become a dynamic conversation within the community to 'unplug' and talk frankly about the challenges, rewards and changes facing volunteers today which, in turn, will inspire more people to devote some time to volunteering.

If you have a story to tell and would like it to be featured in Volunteering Unplugged, contact Naomi Barson via email [nbarson@seek.com.au](mailto:nbarson@seek.com.au).

## UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

### *Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre*

The BVRC's 2009 training is listed below. The venue for all training will be confirmed closer to the date, and will either be a Camberwell or Hawthorn location. All sessions are free of charge, and bookings are essential as places are limited. Please note that we are implementing a new booking system, and bookings for training will open two months prior to the training date.

#### *Professional Boundaries for Volunteers*

Date: Wednesday 27 May

Time: 1-4pm

Facilitator: Department of Human Services

#### *Conflict Resolution in the Workplace*

Date: Wednesday 10 June

Time: 9.30am-4.30pm

Facilitator: Jim Cyngler

#### *Dementia Awareness*

Date: Wednesday 24 June

Time: 9.30am-1.30pm

Facilitator: Alzheimer's Australia

#### *Myer Briggs Type Indicator*

Date: Thursday 13 August

Time: 9.30am-12.30pm

Facilitator: City of Boroondara



### *Monash Volunteer Resource Centre*

All training sessions are free of charge and bookings are essential. Unless otherwise specified, all training/workshops run from 9.30am-

11.30am at the Monash Volunteer Resource Centre, 5 Myrtle Street, Glen Waverley. If you are interested in attending training and workshops please contact Monash Volunteer Resource Centre on phone 9562 0414, Fax: 9562 0411 or email: [mvrc@iinet.net.au](mailto:mvrc@iinet.net.au).

Please note street parking is limited to two hours. Four hour parking is available across the road and at Centrelink, which is located in Bogong Avenue. Participants are asked not to park on the premises of Monash Volunteer Resource Centre.

#### *The Dementia Experience*

Date: Wednesday 27 May

Facilitator: Alzheimer's Australia

#### *Communication Skills and Conflict Resolution*

Date: Wednesday 24 June

Time: 9.30am-12.30pm

Facilitator: Janet Myers-Creed

#### *Preparing for a Funeral*

Date: Wednesday 29 July

Facilitator: John Allison Monkhouse

#### *How to Handle Difficult Behaviour*

Date: Wednesday 26 August

Facilitator: Janet Myers-Creed

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Do you have some spare time or do you know someone else who has? These are just some of our member organisations looking for volunteers to be involved in a variety of jobs:

For further information on any of these opportunities please contact the BVRC on 9278 4550.

- **Prahran Mission**  
Volunteers required for our Café! Food preparation, serving, cleaning of kitchen. Join a great team led by qualified chefs.
- **Benetas**  
A general handyman assistant is required to help out with simple handyman work at our nursing home in Camberwell. Hours negotiable; however, required only during the week.
- **Special Olympics Victoria (SOV)**  
An experienced and dynamic State Sports Manager is needed to ensure there are adequate competition opportunities in each official sport, including the offering of state games competitions in all sports each year, for state selection pathways and to represent Victoria.
- **Epworth Hospital (Richmond)**  
A volunteer with retail experience is required in Richmond to volunteer in our gift shop. You will be responsible for selling of newspapers, magazines and confectionery items to patients, visitors and staff. You will be entitled to free parking and lunch.
- **Chinese Community Social Services Inc**  
Aged care assistants needed to help with activities and outings in day care centres for aged Chinese.
- **Balwyn Welfare Association**  
The Companion Animal Volunteer Support Program (CAVS) helps frail, older people with disabilities to keep and care for pets in their home. Volunteering may include walking, grooming, vet transport or respite care for pets. Most

volunteers walk dogs.

- **Young Achievement Australia (YAA)**  
Volunteer mentors required from various business sectors to draw on their experience and knowledge to guide students through the stages of the Business Skills Program. Mentors will be supported by our organization and a team of fellow mentors.

## DAYS, WEEKS AND MONTHS OF INTEREST

Listed below are some days, weeks and months that may be of interest to you. Read on for an interesting selection of events:

### MAY 2009

- 10-16 National Families Week
- 11-17 National Volunteer Week
- 11-17 Epilepsy Awareness Week
- 12 International Nurses Day
- 15 Walk Safely to School Day
- 15 International Day of Families
- 17 World Hypertension Day
- 17-23 Schizophrenia Awareness Week
- 18-24 Hepatitis Awareness Week
- 18-24 Education Week
- 21 Harmony Day
- 24-30 Kidney Health Week
- 25-31 Library and Information Week
- 25-31 National Health and Fitness Week
- 28 Australia's Biggest Morning Tea
- 31 World No Tobacco Day

**JUNE 2009**

- 5 World Environment Day
- 7-13 Bowel Cancer Awareness Week
- 8-12 Safety in Schools Week
- 14-20 Refugee Week
- 14 World Blood Donor Day
- 15-21 International Men's Health Week
- 20 World Refugee Day
- 21-28 Deafblind Awareness Week
- 22-26 National Crohn's & Colitis Awareness Week
- 26 Red Nose Day

**JULY 2009**

- 5-12 National NAIDOC Week
- 12-18 Diabetes Awareness Week



Well, that's it for this edition. We welcome your feedback and look forward to updating you with further information in the future. In the meantime please feel free to forward this newsletter to friends and relatives who may also share an interest in volunteering - don't keep it a secret!

If you would like more information about any of the topics discussed, please contact the staff at the BVRC on 9882 5860. Please also let us know if you no longer wish to receive newsletters from us, but we'll be sorry to see you go.

You can also contact the BVRC by e-mail at [bvrc@boroondara.vic.gov.au](mailto:bvrc@boroondara.vic.gov.au) or via fax on 9804 0060. You're always welcome to visit us again to check the latest volunteer roles listed on our database but call us first to book in an appointment and avoid disappointment.

Our website is located at [www.bvrc.org.au](http://www.bvrc.org.au) and you are able to view an abridged version of our database on [www.govolunteer.com.au](http://www.govolunteer.com.au). We're also on **Facebook** so see you on the net!

*Volunteer!*  
*What better way to spend the day?*

