



in this edition:

- the power of words
- when angels make appointments
- there is no place like home
- ILC during covid-19
- and much more.

OUR VISION

To be a leader in the provision of quality, accessible and affordable community care services for the general and CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) communities.

OUR VISION

To be the focal point in Queensland for the promotion and study of the Italian language and culture.



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The year 2020 will be recorded as one of the worst in humanity's individual and collective consciousness.

On a global scale, in Australia, we have been fortunate with the low number of contracted Covid-19 cases but our thoughts are with those families here and overseas who have lost people they love in the loneliest of circumstances.

Amidst all of the chaos and panic reactions of our community, I am proud to say that as an organisation, we have adapted and upheld optimum safety and health procedures to ensure the most frail and vulnerable in our community are not neglected and still provided with support and services.

Despite cutbacks, restructuring and reduced hours to meet isolation requirements, our staff has met these new challenges with continued dedication and commitment and I thank them earnestly.

Although a number of our programs have been suspended until the pandemic is diffused, we are keeping in contact by telephone, and other media so that our clients do not feel forgotten.

I hope that as a community, we are aware of older people living alone in our area who might need support.

Through this period of uncertainty, we are learning new ways of working and especially in maintaining contact with other groups, other organisations and colleagues.

Technology and using software such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams has become integral and used by many employees either working from home or from our offices. It has been a steep learning curve for all of us, but adapting to these new programs will be a positive addition in our workplaces in the future.

Our language classes have also been running via Zoom or Skype and have kept our students engaged and motivated in learning Italian. The younger students learning Italian through our after-hours program have also attended Zoom classes with enthusiasm.

We look forward to the resolution of this pandemic as safely as possible as we continue to work within this new framework.

Keep in mind that at Co.As.It. we are committed to helping in any way we can during this uncertain time, and it only takes a phone call to get support..

Dina Ranieri

CO.AS.IT. CASTS A SAFETY NET

**GOVERNMENTS TOO SHOULD BE
COMMEDED FOR THEIR HANDLING
OF THE SUBSEQUENT ECONOMIC
CRISIS AND ATTEMPTS TO PREVENT
WIDESPREAD POVERTY, INDEBTEDNESS
AND HOMELESSNESS.**

Recognising the plight of many foreign students stranded in Australia because of Covid-19, Co.As.It. has been conducting webinars in Spanish for full-fee paying students who have found themselves unemployed and ineligible for government assistance.

Co.As.It. has been working together with the Italian Consulate and Com.It.Es. to support the Italian students. Organisations such as Go Study, Nomit, ING have also been able to support them through this difficult period.

Many of them have returned home as there was considerable strain on their financial situation.

Sixteen people participated in the first session, which provided advice on mental health, finding work, living arrangements and staying healthy.

The sessions ran for 45 minutes to an hour and have been held each Wednesday in April and May.

In a global context, Australia has so far fared remarkably well in managing and containing the spread of COVID-19. Governments too should be commended for their handling of the subsequent economic crisis and attempts to prevent widespread poverty, indebtedness and homelessness.

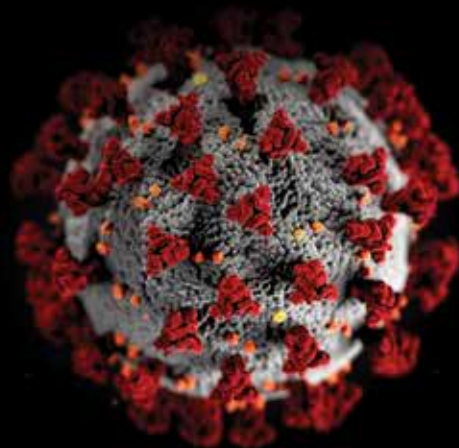
Initiatives such as the doubling of unemployment benefits and the Jobkeeper program have attempted to ensure workers who are unemployed or who are unable to work because their employers have closed, can count on a basic safety net. However, overseas residents here on work visas and casuals who have not worked for their employer for at least 12 months are not eligible.

Co.As.It.'s weekly webinars intended to provide positive encouragement to the Spanish-speaking participants and were conducted by Co.As.It. counsellor Antonio Nerio, a highly qualified mental health expert and Community Services Officer Cintia Paolino, who has lived the experience of the hardships of finding meaningful employment and making a new life in Australia. Both staff members have strong ties to the Spanish speaking community in South-East Queensland.



COVID-19 - DOMANDE FREQUENTI

ANCHE SE IL CORONAVIRUS PUÒ PREOCCUPARE, È IMPORTANTE RICORDARE CHE LA MAGGIOR PARTE DELLE PERSONE CON QUESTI SINTOMI PROBABILMENTE HA UN RAFFREDDORE O ALTRE MALATTIE RESPIRATORIE E NON IL CORONAVIRUS.



Cos'è il coronavirus e il COVID-19?

I coronavirus sono una vasta famiglia di virus noti per causare malattie respiratorie. Queste possono variare da un raffreddore comune a malattie più gravi come la Grave sindrome respiratoria acuta (SARS) e la sindrome respiratoria del medio oriente (MERS). Questo nuovo coronavirus ha avuto origine nella Provincia di Hubei, Cina, e la malattia causata dal virus si chiama COVID-19.

Come si diffonde il coronavirus?

È molto probabile che COVID-19 si diffonda da persona a persona attraverso:

- contatto ravvicinato con una persona mentre è contagiosa o nelle 24 ore precedenti l'apparizione dei sintomi
- contatto ravvicinato con una persona con infezione confermata che tossisce e starnutisce
- toccando oggetti o superfici (come maniglie o tavoli) contaminati da una tosse o uno starnuto da una persona con una infezione confermata e seguito dal contatto con la bocca o la faccia.

Posso uscire di casa?

Tutti gli australiani sono tenuti a stare a casa a meno che non sia assolutamente necessario uscire fuori. Gli australiani hanno il permesso di uscire di casa per motivi essenziali, come:

- fare la spesa
- esercitarsi all'aperto, evitando il contatto con altre persone
- uscire per esigenze mediche
- fornire assistenza e supporto ad un'altra persona in un luogo diverso dalla propria casa
- andare a lavorare o studiare se non è possibile farlo da casa.

Quali sono i sintomi del COVID-19?

I sintomi del COVID-19 sono simili ad altri raffreddori e altre influenze e includono:

- febbre
- mal di gola
- tosse
- stanchezza
- mancanza di respiro.

Anche se il coronavirus può preoccupare, è importante ricordare che la maggior parte delle persone con questi sintomi probabilmente ha un raffreddore o altre malattie respiratorie e non il coronavirus.

Cosa devo fare se si sviluppano i sintomi?

Se ritieni di esser stato esposto o se hai il COVID-19, devi telefonare al National Coronavirus Helpline (1800 020 080) per consigli.

Come possiamo prevenire la diffusione del coronavirus?

Praticare una buona igiene delle mani, del tossire o del starnutire e mantenere la distanza dagli altri quando sei malato sono le migliori difese contro la maggior parte dei virus. Occorre:

- lavarsi le mani spesso con acqua e sapone per 20 secondi, prima e dopo i pasti, e dopo esser stato in bagno
- coprirsi la bocca e il naso quando tossisci e starnutisci, gettare i fazzolettini e lavarsi le mani
- evitare il contatto con gli altri (stare a più di 1,5 metri dalle persone)
- esercitare la propria responsabilità personale per quanto riguarda le misure di distanziamento sociale.

MEN'S SHED - CO.AS.IT. STYLE

Four Italians, three Australians, a Syrian and an El Salvadorian walk into a restaurant... and talk... and eat!

This little band of men are part of Co.As.It.'s 'Mind the Men' Group, which is designed to provide support for men who live with isolation, anxiety, substance abuse and anger management issues as well as providing respite for men carers.

'Mind the Men' is run by men, for men, and facilitated by Co.As.It.'s Counsellor Antonio Nerio.

The groups are an informal, relaxed get together that provide information, networking, social contact and friendship. Age is not important and members range from 17 to 81 years of age.

The topic for the most recent get together was 'Resilience' with guest speaker Renzo Zanuttini, architect, designer and construction company owner. Mr. Zanuttini provided a brilliant and vulnerable sharing of how he has learnt to navigate life's roughest waters, from his teenage years in Italy to the current challenges in his daily life in Australia.

Everyone was attentive to Renzo's speech, which was filled with solutions, passion and compassion. He offered the following advice on resilience to the group. *"To work through pain is not to make it disappear, but to make it mean something different for us: to turn it into wisdom."*

The face-to-face 'get-together' with other men enabled them to have heart to heart talks.. as well as share individual experiences and wisdom.

According to Antonio, one of the successes of the two hour lunch was the potential it created for follow-up contact. *"It was wonderful to see the men swapping contact details and offering to drive each other home."*

Once lockdown is eased, Antonio says *"The next scheduled meeting will be bird watching at Manly, where the men can discuss 'mindfulness' whilst looking through binoculars"*.

If you would like more information or wish to go along to the next Mind the Men group, please contact Antonio Nerio at Co.As.It. on 3624 6100.



THE POWER OF WORDS

AS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN SAID, “REMEMBER NOT ONLY TO SAY THE RIGHT THING IN THE RIGHT PLACE, BUT FAR MORE DIFFICULT STILL, TO LEAVE UNSAID THE WRONG THING AT THE TEMPTING MOMENT.”

Words can be one of the most influential forces for humanity as they have the energy and power to help, to comfort and to heal a broken spirit.

We should never ignore the power of words as they play a perpetual role in our life and those with whom we come into contact. They are the source of our ability to find love and joy because we rely entirely on the frequency of those words being sought, expressed, received, and understood.

Choose the words that you speak very carefully because they have the potential of accomplishing nearly anything or destroying nearly anything.

Just one negative comment can ruin a person's day, a few might even ruin the person's life. On the flip side, one positive and encouraging comment can be just enough to increase engagement and make more of a difference in an individual's life than you will ever know.

As a counsellor, I regularly listen to clients' life stories of unprecedented courage and determination as well as hidden pain and suffering.

When I called John (name changed) who had lost his wife suddenly, my simple introduction: *“Hello, my name is Laura, I am from Co.As.It, and we offer support, how can I be of assistance?”* was enough for him to share his heartfelt emotions for the first time.

In John's words: *“I could start living again after the sudden death of my wife.”* We tend to overlook the small things in life but we should remember that the words we speak are emotionally potent.

All of us can offer a listening ear, free from assumptions and expectations if we keep in mind that words influence others and build relationships but they can also tear relationships down.

Simply put, language holds massive, colossal power to manifest change in behaviour, whether it's good or bad.

“The emotions we feel, the events we experience, and our ability to interact with other humans are all controlled by language. The problem is that most of us don't take an active enough role in choosing the words we express and curating those coming into our lives. We often speak without contemplating the immense force that flows from our speech. We all know people who fly off the handle without stopping to think about the consequences of what they're saying? Later on people will be sorry for what they said but the damage is done.”

[Brendan McCaughey]

EMILY

The pandemic has affected us all in different ways but it has especially impacted those who have had to be in quarantine for 14 days if they have returned from overseas.

This is what happened to one of our QCSS clients.

When Emily recently returned from visiting relatives in New Zealand, she arrived home in late March where she immediately quarantined for 14 days.

One of our most basic needs - getting food - can be a problem if you cannot leave home and have no-one to help you.

Co.As.It. care staff were able to assist Emily by doing her shopping and delivering groceries to Emily's front door throughout her quarantine period. Emily was very grateful for our services during this challenging time as were many other clients who were self-isolating in the comfort of their own home.



WHEN ANGELS MAKE APPOINTMENTS A TRULY MOVING STORY.

Sometimes life can bring some real surprises and the unexpected can leave a deep sense of a higher order in our consciousness. Co.As.It.'s Coordinator Cheryl Shurmer went to visit our client Gerda just before Christmas last year and Gerda shared her extraordinary and beautiful experience - one which leaves not only goose bumps but an understanding of the meaning of love.

Gerda had mentioned her husband Alex was in Redlands Hospital - he was waiting to be placed into care on Monday 9 December. Whilst knowing he was not so well, Gerda expected him to get better soon.

On December 6, unexpectedly Gerda heard a knock at the door at 11pm. When she opened her door, she saw two ambulance officers standing there saying that they had her husband in the vehicle.

Gerda was alarmed and perplexed because she wasn't expecting him to come home and certainly not at that hour. Nevertheless, the ambulance officers brought her husband Alex to the front door.

Alex said to her *"I have come to say good-bye"*. Gerda reassured Alex that she would see him the next morning when she would go to the hospital. The ambulance officers then took Alex back to the hospital.

Gerda got up early the very next morning and went to Redlands Hospital at 6.00am to see Alex. Nursing staff sadly informed her that Alex had *"passed away exactly 3 minutes before."*

Perhaps Alex really did make an appointment with his angels to make sure he got to say goodbye to Gerda.

A truly moving story.



MARIA TERESA CERA

A few months ago Piera, our Services Review Officer, had the pleasure of meeting Mrs Maria Teresa Cera. Mrs Cera is a talented and busy lady: although she has 24 grandchildren and one on their way she still loves to dedicate some spare time to her passion: jigsaw puzzles!

Maria Teresa showed Piera some of her creations, she has done all sorts of puzzles - some of them had 10,000 pieces which is approximately the size of a double bed.

Maria Teresa has cultivated her passion for many years, she has plenty of puzzles in her house and she has a “puzzle room”. Piera didn’t think she had ever seen that many puzzles in one place in her entire life, it was truly amazing!

After talking to Maria Teresa, Piera felt inspired and decided to investigate the benefits of solving puzzles - especially for the elderly.

Mental activities for seniors are important, they relieve boredom and stimulate memory and problem solving and the completion of puzzles boosts their mood whether these are jigsaw puzzles, Sudoku or others.

Puzzles are a great activity for seniors to do on their own or with others, and solving puzzles improve concentration and can even reduce the chances of dementia and cognitive decline.

Solving puzzles also helps the elderly to exercise their fingers, challenge their minds, have fun, and feel a sense of accomplishment when completed.

Give them a try!





THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Forty-one years ago, Wai Bun Chan (or Popo, as she prefers to be called) made the long journey from China to Australia to help her nephew Allan and his wife raise their children. Now, in her 101st year, Allan is doing everything he can to care for his beloved aunty, whom he considers his mother.

Popo has been a Co.As.It. client for approximately four years, receiving carer respite, personal care services and domestic assistance.

Regrettably a fall at the end of 2019 saw her hospitalised from November to January and in hospital, she celebrated her 100th birthday. In early 2020, Allan decided Popo should be at home with him and reached out to Co.As.It. Home Care Services Coordinator, Kris Clark for help.

Despite Popo's complex needs, Allan was undeterred. Popo was unable to sit up unaided and required an air mattress to minimise pressure sores.

Kris, who has a nursing background, worked with Co.As.It.'s occupational therapists to hire a specialised mattress and worked with the nurses

and physios to develop a plan for managing Popo's care. Initially Kris put in place many arrangements making it possible for Popo to be cared for at home with care staff doing 28, then 24 shifts per fortnight with Allan doing the weekend/evening shifts.

Kris personally trained each of the community care staff to sponge, turn and care for Popo. They were taught how to care for pressure points and all of the support staff team was introduced to Popo before services commenced.

In addition to supporting her in every way he can, Allan takes care of his aunt's dietary needs too, growing Chinese vegetables which he uses to prepare fresh, nutritional meals for his beloved Popo and family.

Allan has been approached by a specialised Cantonese care provider several times, but he refuses to put Popo's care in other hands.

We are genuinely pleased and very proud of our staff who he says are dedicated, professional and perform high quality work. Well done everyone!



PHYSIOTHERAPY DURING COVID-19

Since the emergence of Covid-19, life for Co.As.It. clients has changed dramatically as they adjust to limiting themselves to home based activity.

Clients still continue to need and want physiotherapy to assist them in managing pain and chronic conditions, preventing falls and keeping them at home and out of hospital.

Conversations with clients include reassurance and encouraging them to stay calm as many clients express their anxiety for themselves and their families.

Our visits have become even more important for the social interaction they provide in what is now for most, a severely limited environment.

Naturally, as we continue these services, we do so in the context of increased attention to infection control, including strict hand washing procedures, pre-attendance phone health questionnaires, and the use of personal protective equipment when needed.

Recently during physiotherapy, we have noticed an increased 'community togetherness' within the new norms of social distancing.

Walking clients around their yard, others call out over the fence, saying hello to their elderly neighbours, reminding them that they are there to help if needed.

Families who live together have more or less confined themselves to home. Increased time together could of course be challenging but many positive family interactions have also been recounted.

It has been encouraging to see how communities have accepted strict isolating and distancing measures, while continuing on with life and showing support for their elderly, vulnerable members.

HAPPINESS TO THE ITALIAN RESIDENTS



Fortunately, just before Aged Care homes and the Government imposed restrictions on visitors the CALD Activity Officer was able to hold the monthly CIAO session at Casa Damore at Coorparoo.

The Lifestyle Coordinator and the Activity Officer went to great effort for the residents, by organising a pasta-making session during the group.

We are grateful that their kindness and energy brought so much happiness to the Italian residents there.

The joy on the residents' faces was evident as they interacted with each other, preparing the dough, kneading it and then processing it through the pasta machine.

As they kneaded and flattened and pressed, there was much discussion about the merits of the ratio of semolina to flour, the best ingredients to use

and whether to add eggs or not. There were many opinions and everyone had a recipe they swore was the best - there was no swaying from tradition for anyone!

The fruits of their labour (or perhaps the 'pasta of their labour') was then laid out to dry as they eagerly awaited to cook it.

The next hot topic of discussion was what would be the best sauce recipe to cook with the pasta! Everyone was beaming and the room looked like one of the old-fashioned pasta-making days that used to happen decades ago in many Italian homes.

The Italian passion for food is something they are born with and it is a very big part of their lives and culture. Pasta let alone freshly made pasta is rarely served in aged care homes in Australia so this activity was both a gastronomic and cultural highlight for everyone!

ANTONIO

Occasionally we will get referrals to support people in the community who need urgent assistance. It is always concerning for our staff and we are constantly gratified to see the efforts they go to, to ensure that vulnerable members in our community are never left without help and particularly if it's going into the weekend.

Antonio had been referred to us for DA (usually Domestic Assistance which can be used for unaccompanied shopping). Antonio only spoke Spanish, lived alone without family or friends who could support him and his health issues necessitated that he remained at home. He had no more food in the house and had other items he badly needed but no-one available who he could turn to. It was urgent that we organised some support to carry him through the next few days.

Usually after a new referral, it may take a few days to organise a home visit, complete the paperwork, meet with the client to go through the agreement, perform a WHS inspection for our care staff and then set the client up in our data base and rostering

HE HAD NO MORE FOOD IN THE HOUSE AND HAD OTHER ITEMS HE BADLY NEEDED BUT NO-ONE AVAILABLE WHO HE COULD TURN TO.

system as well as organise a Community Care Worker to start. With an office-wide collaboration and great cooperation and liaison between the Rostering and Data Entry teams we managed to organise, on extremely short notice, a care worker who spoke Spanish who could start immediately and get him not only enough food to last a few days but all of his other needs as well. Had this not occurred, Antonio would have experienced awful hardships.

Teamwork and putting Antonio's needs as a priority showed us our staff's dedication - you all made a huge impact to Antonio's wellbeing. Great job everyone!



EVENTS, EVENTS AND MORE EVENTS!

Valentine's Day

There weren't near enough hearts at our centres for Valentine's Day. Clients were greeted by hanging heart mobiles which all craft groups across the different days lovingly helped to make.

Heart shaped centre pieces on the tables, red napery, wooden love signs and vases filled with hearts and roses as well as heart shaped confetti on the tables before the last little titbit - a heart shaped chocolate on every cup!

Unforgettable romantic love songs from generations gone by echoed through the room as heart shaped waffles and cream were served up for morning tea.

Clients sang, laughed and reminisced about their loved ones and how long they had been together. Our longest romance was a couple who have been married for 65 years.. and still going strong!

Waitangi Day - (New Zealand)

New Zealand's Waitangi Day is always a vibrant and energetic theme for our centres. One of our staff members was very busy creating a Poi Ball for every client.

The Poi Ball is a tethered weight and is traditionally used in performances by the Maori in New Zealand.

The ancient Poi Ball was a form of exercise to train for battle or hunting, developing wrist strength and flexibility to handle weapons or tools.

Our clients also put them to good use - for morning exercises that everyone enjoyed.

Regrettably, the social groups and social outings have been temporarily suspended due to Covid-19. Our staff is regularly contacting participants for wellbeing checks and they are all looking forward to coming back!



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY HIGH TEA MORE THAN FROTH AND BUBBLES



We were lucky to be able to share International Women's Day (IWD) on Saturday 7th March before everyone went into pandemic lockdown.

Just as well, as all of the 360 guests had a memorable time because events, large and small, were cancelled not long after!

IWD is a global movement that stresses the importance for gender equality and of women standing up for other women. This year the IWD #Each for Equal campaign theme was drawn from a notion of 'Collective Individualism'.

We are all parts of a whole. Our individual actions, conversations, behaviours and mindsets can have an impact on our larger society when women challenge stereotypes, fight bias, and celebrate other women's achievements.

TV Personality Kim Skubris compered the event and introduced guests speakers: the Hon Grace Grace MP - Member for McConnell, Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations, The Lady Mayoress, Nina Schrinner, Co.As.It. CEO Dina Ranieri and keynote speaker, Belinda Cox, from the Domestic Violence Service who conveyed a poignant



speech about domestic violence in Queensland and nationally.

Ms Ranieri stressed the role of women as mothers in teaching the next generation. Mothers can empower their sons and daughters to expect and give women respect and to ensure that husbands, partners and significant males are modelling healthy, respectful relationships with girls and women.

Despite the sobering topic, there was fun and frivolity too as guests caught up with friends,

enjoyed the delicious spread and eagerly awaited the drawing of 35 raffle prizes.

We thank Italiquore for their ongoing sponsorship, our staff who helped on the day and everyone who donated a prize.

A special thankyou is extended to Designer Emporium and ModnamarKa for the kind organisation of the Fashion Parade.

Funds raised will be used to support our Dementia and Carer Support programs.

IN HOME PHONE VISITS



The restrictions CVS is facing of social distancing and isolation especially for the elderly are in direct contrast to the intentions of the CVS program, which are about building connections and companionship (a special friend) through regular physical visits by matching a volunteer with a client.

Home Care Package client Joe who lives alone enjoys his visits from his CVS visitor Perry. Joe's face usually lights up when Perry arrives at his home.

Over a cup of coffee that Joe proudly prepares by setting the table with a table cloth and good china, he reminisces and recounts the stories of his family migrating from Italy in the early 1930's and becoming a pioneer cane cutting family in north Queensland. Joe delights in sharing his many stories and achievements throughout his life as well as poems that have inspired him during his life.

Since COVID-19, Perry has now transitioned to recreating and continuing his visits through regular phone calls with Joe to assist him to stay connected and offer any social support he may need.

Normally new volunteers and clients are matched through a physical meet and greet visit with the CVS coordinator but due to protecting the health of our

elderly community at this time this process is not possible.

With the coordinator's encouragement and assistance new volunteers have been initiating the first contact with their new client by phone.

This is new territory for the program's coordinators and volunteers. In essence they are achieving the goal of helping the vulnerable in our communities to stay connected and enhance their wellbeing.

Below is an extract from an email the Coordinator Sarina received from the first new volunteer who introduced herself to her new client via telephone.

After receiving coaching from the client's carer regarding her background and interests, the volunteer had a brief knowledge of Cora's past life experiences.

Hi Sarina

The phone call with Cora went really well! It was very easy to talk to each other and she's a very funny, talkative lady. Without knowing it, you matched us perfectly as we have a lot in common and share very similar interests. She was very grateful and we both decided we will continue to talk on the phone until we can finally meet :)

Silvia

REGIS LUTWYCHE RESIDENTS REMINDED THEY ARE REMEMBERED

With weekly telephone calls replacing face-to-face visits to Italians in residential aged care facilities, the CVS Coordinators, Sarina Campbell and Luisa Ruggiero decided to round up a few local children to remind the 20+ Italian residents at Regis Aged Care Lutwyche that they hadn't been forgotten.

Luisa and Sarina enlisted the help of 6-year-old Amira to deliver a load of brightly coloured posters to Debra Dorgan, Lifestyle Co-ordinator at Regis, to brighten the residents' rooms.

Ms Dorgan made a point of commenting on how social and community-minded the Italian residents are. *"We have a new gentleman who moved in this week and the first day, he met people he knew. He's already walking around smiling and joining friends for meals."*

Regis eased some of its lockdown procedures a while ago and has started allowing some visitors into the facility. Prior to then, residents were having 'window visits', where they would sit or lounge in one of the two window seats and speak to visitors via the phone.

Ms Dorgan said the posters would be beautiful, colourful additions to the residents' rooms.



reimagine what aged care could be like

RETHINK WHAT YOU THINK OF AGED CARE

Regis Lutwyche is a luxurious mix of innovative programs, premium hotel-style services and dedicated, caring and highly-trained staff. Everything we do is designed to help you feel safe and comfortable, stay connected with loved ones, and confident to embrace life the way you want. To find out more, please go to regis.com.au or call us on **1300 998 100**



FINDING SOLUTIONS FOR OUR SENIORS

A dispetto della necessità di isolarsi a causa del Covid-19, i nostri volontari non hanno dimenticato i nostri anziani e sono passati dalle più tradizionali visite alle telefonate. Una situazione senza dubbio non facile, ma che stiamo piano piano superando.

Alcuni anziani afflitti da demenza e da problemi cognitivi trovano il telefono, creatore di voci per loro strane, difficile da usare, soprattutto se si trovano a combattere anche con problemi di udito.

Le visite dirette, faccia a faccia, quelle insomma che portavano sorrisi immediati, erano per loro ovviamente le preferite, visto che potevano stabilire una connessione immediata con la voce e il viso del volontario. Per questi anziani, proprio per non causare loro ulteriori problemi, stiamo pensando a metodi di contatto alternativi per ricordare loro che continuano ad esistere e ad essere importanti per noi.

Stiamo chiedendo ai volontari di scrivere biglietti e di inviare cartoline di auguri ai residenti delle case di riposo, che verranno consegnate loro dal personale della struttura. Luisa, una delle coordinatrici del programma, si è messa in contatto con le scuole della zona chiedendo che gli alunni preparassero dei poster da consegnare agli anziani una volta completati. Come se non bastasse, il programma si è trovato a far fronte ad un altro problema: chiamare gli anziani che non

hanno il telefono in camera. Questo ulteriore ostacolo è stato superato grazie alla richiesta, esaudita, che un telefono fosse portato nella camera degli anziani in momenti prestabiliti. Non proprio una visita vera e propria, ma in mancanza di meglio...

Una scoperta stupenda è stata fatta durante la fase di transizione dalle visite regolari alle telefonate, quando Rosa - una nostra volontaria - ha saputo che una ex volontaria del programma del Co.As.It. si trovava presso il Regis di Lutwyche.

Rosa aveva conosciuto Antonietta quando facevano le volontarie assieme ed è stata una soddisfazione incredibile poter riallacciare i contatti con Antonietta via telefono e nella loro lingua.

Immaginate le visite dei nostri volontari agli anziani come una transazione bancaria: Antonietta stava facendo versamenti nella sua banca di bontà e dedizione quando offriva servizi di volontariato, e adesso può effettuare prelievi nella banca di un altro volontario.

Speriamo vivamente che il programma ritorni presto a pieno ritmo. Nel frattempo però, chiunque fosse interessato ad offrire tempo e amore come volontario può contattare Luisa e Sarina chiamando il Co.As.It. al 3624 6100.



LEARNING NEW SKILLS IN LOCKDOWN



Since March, when life as we knew it was turned upside down, social media has been filled with pictures of sour dough bread and other home cooking delights. An onlooker could be forgiven for assuming that the whole world is consumed with cooking and making music videos.

Not everyone, however, is focused on food.

Co.As.It.'s NDIS participant, Lillian Northcott is using her time at home differently. When the physical distancing measures were first introduced, Lillian turned her hand to a craft activity.

Lillian is now whiling away the hours painting terracotta pots, a past time that lets her creativity flow.

While Lillian says the pots “are a work in progress”, it is obvious that they brighten the lives of all who see them.

Lillian is keen for the restrictions to be lifted, but in the meantime she’s enjoying her original creations and says she finds painting a relaxing hobby.

Lillian maintains social contact with her community care worker Mara, so she is not totally isolated and the two pass the time playing board games and chatting.

For more information about Co.As.It.'s NDIS services, contact Paola on 3624 6100.



CO.AS.IT. STAFF TO THE RESCUE!



In these strange and stressful times, the internet is full of stories about hoarding and the affect it has on some of our most vulnerable citizens. The opposite is also true, the stories of human kindness and generosity have the power to raise our spirits and remind us that we will get through this. Recently, an incident with one of our clients shows us the value of kindness.

NDIS Coordinator, Paola Matute provides shopping services for NDIS client, Stephen. After several weeks of empty shelves where toilet paper used to be, Paola became aware that Stephen was using tissues instead.

She and fellow NDIS Coordinator, Bridget Nucifora searched five shopping centres from Chermiside to Peninsular Fair but came up empty handed.

On their return to the office, they put out the call for toilet paper amongst their Co.As.It. colleagues.

The next morning, Paola was delighted to find half a dozen rolls of toilet paper stacked on her desk! Thanks to the kindness of her colleagues, she delivered them to Stephen, who was so thrilled, he offered to pay for them!

No dystopian film ever predicted a shortage of toilet paper! We are indeed living through strange and stressful times but as toilet paper returns to the supermarket shelves, we can take comfort that eventually, this time will pass.

Stay home, stay safe and isolate, together, we will defeat the virus.



LA VITA DURANTE IL COVID-19

Mentre l'isolamento sembra essere ormai uno stile di vita, il Co.As.It. sta utilizzando il proprio personale per far sì che i bisogni dei nostri clienti siano, indipendentemente dalla situazione, seguiti ed offerti.

A seguito della diffusione del Covid-19, le famiglie si sono date da fare per far sì che i loro cari non rimanessero isolati o che non si trovassero a vivere da soli. Abbiamo avuto in questo periodo numerose richieste per spostare, geograficamente parlando, i nostri servizi affinché potessero seguire gli anziani che si spostavano a casa di famigliari e parenti.

Un caso, fra i tanti, è stato quello di Incoronata Donataccio - Tella per tutti - che da Paddington si è spostata dal figlio Peter a Springfield Lakes, ed il

servizio offerto a Tella quando stava a casa sua si è spostato con lei!

La vita in isolamento ha portato comunque dei benefici a Tella: adesso ha compagnia, può stare di più col figlio Peter, e il vantaggio aggiuntivo è che non deve più fare le scale.

A Tella piace annaffiare il giardino. Anche se in effetti le manca la compagnia e le attività offerte dai nostri gruppi - ai quali partecipa tre volte a settimana - il suo pacchetto di assistenza domiciliare le arriva a casa e Tella è contenta di poter parlare italiano con la nostra assistente.

Alla fin fine, per Tella questo periodo di Covid-19 non è poi così tanto brutto!

ONLY A PHONE CALL AWAY



routine and Maria is grateful to Co.As.It. for the services she and Luigi are receiving.

A new initiative of welfare checks, designed to ensure social group activity centre clients are regularly contacted and have a chance to talk to staff in their preferred language has given Maria new energy. She looks forward to the weekly calls in Italian, which always end with the question, *“When are you going to call me next?”*

Co.As.It. staff speak a total of 30 languages, so most clients can speak to a staff member in their preferred language, which is particularly reassuring in times of uncertainty and change.

While she looks forward to catching up with staff and friends at Casa Aurelia, for the time being, Maria is happy to make the most of her weekly chats.

Regardless of how close you may be to your partner, or how many years you’ve been together, it’s only natural that after weeks of confinement people will be craving the company of others.

That’s the case with Maria and Luigi Apolloni, who are both Co.As.It. clients and regular visitors to Casa Aurelia, Co.As.It.’s south-side social group activity centre.

Our staff has demonstrated creativity and flexibility in the type and delivery of services provided during the pandemic restrictions. Maria was identified by staff as someone who may experience loneliness and isolation as her usual support mechanisms were closed.

Maria has compared the current situation to war times, except that she and Luigi are still able to receive important services, such as their home visits by registered nurse, Tina. Tina’s weekly wellbeing checks are a welcome break in the day-to-day



A VERY DIFFERENT “DAY ON THE GREEN”



For those of you who think Sirromet Winery is just a winery, you have never been to one of the many concerts held there on a regular basis - before the pandemic of course!

Thousands of concert goers usually attend Sirromet's 'Day on the Green' concerts to hear international performers such as James Blunt, Rod Stewart and Simple Minds. If the weather is wet, everyone knows to expect ankle-deep mud and hundreds of wet umbrellas but for our social outing groups Sirromet put on a beautiful display!

Just before everyone went into lockdown, our last social outing guests on a recent wine tasting tour, saw a very different side of the Mt Cotton winery to that seen by enthusiastic music fans.

On arrival, the guests were greeted by the manager and staff, who showed them to their tree-lined

dining area where they were treated to tea and scones. From there, it was a tour of the winery followed by an hour of tasting a variety of the rich reds and crisp whites wines produced on site.

A fresh fish and chips lunch was served in one of their many restaurants, overlooking the mist covered valley as the rain drizzled down.

Many times kangaroos can be seen wandering through the vineyard but with the rain that day they were out of sight, sensibly staying undercover no doubt. Dessert was a selection of ice-creams before the guests settled in to play cards, chat or join in a variety of other games.

As anticipated, after all that wine tasting, the trip home was a rowdy one with music playing and lots of good-natured teasing about the antics of various 'tipsy' guests.

Regrettably, the social outings have been temporarily suspended due to Covid-19. Our staff is regularly contacting participants for wellbeing checks and they are all looking forward to coming back!

RUTH

Hello everyone, I am Ruth and I have just completed my first 6 months with Co.As.It. as a Community Care Worker.

I wasn't sure about becoming a care worker in the community work sector. It can be challenging at times but on the whole, I definitely find it rewarding.

I see lots of nice clients who genuinely appreciate the time and effort I put into assisting and supporting them and I'm enjoying the work - no two days are the same.

My support can range from helping people with personal care, taking clients to appointments, taking them shopping or assisting a client with domestic support.

Seeing clients on a weekly basis helps build rapport and I can sense that my clients really look forward to my visits, especially those who do not have close family or friends.

Sadly, I may be the only person going into their homes to see them on a regular basis. I enjoy hearing about their hobbies, having a chat and generally sharing time with them while I help.

Gloria, one of my weekly clients, loves to sew and I recently found her hard at work busily sewing scrub caps to donate to the Redlands Hospital during the coronavirus outbreak. It was great to see her happily working and proudly creating caps that she knows are going to be vital to our medical personnel.



GRACE - IN THE NICK OF TIME..

The reality of COVID-19 hit Co.As.It. on 24 March when our CEO Dina called an urgent meeting to deliver a very powerful speech in our facility's garage - the only place that would allow social distancing.

She advised us about imminent job losses, reduction of hours, closures of social group centres, language classes, outings - in fact everything that we did for our community except essential services, would be suspended and this was going to be the new norm until further notice. You could have heard a pin drop!

That week, as panic buying hit the wider community, our organisation was in desperate need of hand sanitisers, but our supplier informed us *"there's no stock in Australia, it's 4-6 weeks away"*.

With community care staff and our nurses still providing care this was now going to affect our safety measures for workers and clients. Each of us was asked to think on their feet to create new ways to help our clients.

Our Marketing and Communications Officer Grace Demaio pulled out every sanitiser bottle she had saved in her sample bags used for marketing, and other locations no doubt, to gather 200 bottles that were given to our nurses and care staff in the nick of time.

Unfortunately, this was not going to solve our problem long term. Intrepid Grace was persistent: she had researched that Aloe Vera gel mixed with alcohol was an effective sanitiser but apparently, everyone else had too, and those precious products were out of stock - everywhere. She went back to the drawing board.

Grace heard around our office that nearby coffee roasters Fonzi Abbott had diversified from roasting coffee to making sanitiser.

When Grace contacted the manager, she was able to hold 2 litres, provided that Grace brought her own containers. Not to be daunted, Grace emptied the soap from hand soap dispensers in the office and took off down the road.

She returned triumphantly 15 minutes later with 2 litres of rare hand sanitiser to top up supplies for our Brisbane and South Coast offices - it was only March 27. The following week another 5 litres were bought when Fonzi had more stock.

Grace was also able to locate and have delivered 1000 masks before our supply became critical: a timely intervention again, thank goodness.

We are just grateful that her tenacious sourcing skills are noteworthy. Perhaps Grace should be promoted to the role of 'Seeker' - not quite like Harry Potter - but equally important!



A SIMPLE SOLUTION WAS A LIFE CHANGER

Married couple Nicola and Josephine proudly live together in their own house and receive support through their Home Care Package.

They receive a lot of support from Co.As.It. with personal care, domestic assistance, shopping, paying bills, mobility equipment and they feel independent and able to cope with living at home with our support.

However recently, due to COVID-19 despite all these services in place, Nicola and Josephine lost their confidence in being able to live at home.

Nicola rang our office last month and when he spoke to his Coordinator Rosario, he was not very positive about his future. Josephine has health issues and Nicola runs the house and does most of their tasks of daily living.

He stated that maybe it was time for them to sell the house and to start looking for a residential facility where they could receive more help. His main concern was that he no longer felt able to prepare food and cook to ensure he and his wife had a meal each day, it was too tiring for him and it was becoming harder to find their preferred food.

Nicola was very distressed and although they did not want to leave their home, they could not see or think of other options to avoid going into residential care.

After listening carefully to Nicola's concerns, Rosario asked them before they made a decision, to try regular frozen meals delivered to their place that he could organise on their behalf. He explained that these were labour free requiring only a few minutes in the microwave and thankfully, the couple agreed to try these meals.

Here we are, nearly four weeks later and Nicola and Josephine are very happy again. They are loving the meals delivered at home, are eating better, enjoying meals that they have not had in years and they realise what a life changer this simple solution has been for them.

Prepared meals have extended their independence in their own house and allowed them to look at their future more positively. They are now happy to remain at home with our help, but more importantly, they know that they can ask us for more support as their needs change and we will be happy to assist.



ENJOYING HOME VISITS

On the South Coast, as the worldwide pandemic continues to impact people everywhere, our Coordinators and care staff have been flexible and creative in continuing to support our Home Care Package clients with a wide range of assistance.

As it is not possible to attend the Social Activity Centres nor go out, our care workers are able to spend more quality time with our clients by adopting alternative social support services.

One-on-one visits have been wonderful and clients have been playing card games, cooking and listening to music. Viewing family photo albums and reminiscing has created some really interesting conversations!

So let's see what our clients have been doing during their home visits?

Emily, Betty and Myra met at our South Coast Social Activity Centre and have become close friends. Our

wonderful care worker, Pina, has been providing social support to these ladies within their homes.

Although Betty has had feelings of confusion during this trying time and dealing with her changing routine, she was over the moon to have Pina visit.

Betty and Pina chatted over a cup of tea and enjoyed playing cards together, Myra was equally delighted to have Pina's company, appreciating her one-on-one time whilst Emily delightfully challenged Pina to a game of Rummikub.

We are very lucky to be able to continue to support our amazing clients with our unique and diverse team. Thank you everyone for your ongoing support and care for one and all. While we work diligently to ensure ongoing services in our clients' homes, we also remind them and encourage them to remain at home as much as possible. Let's hope that we get to see them together at the Centre soon!



CLIENT SUPPORT DURING COVID-19

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds and new restrictions challenge how we work, shop, socialise and participate in our communities, the most vulnerable in society are now more than ever needing our time and support.

The Commonwealth Government and Health experts have been disseminating information on the importance of our senior population to self-isolate in order to avoid complications associated with contracting COVID-19.

As Aged Care Providers, we can play a vital role in supporting our senior clients to maintain wellbeing and safety during their period of self-isolation.

Welfare checks are being provided over the phone to ensure our clients are safe and have access to basic needs. Psychological first aid is a useful tool to use when determining whether the needs of our clients are being met.

What is Psychological First Aid?

Essentially, Psychological First Aid involves offering humane, supportive and practical help, paying attention to the factors that seem to be most helpful in supporting a fellow human being who is suffering during or after crises or emergencies like the current COVID-19 pandemic (NHS, 2020). These include:

- Providing practical care and support where necessary
- Helping people address basic needs and concerns
- Helping people connect to information, services and social supports
- Comforting people and helping them to feel calm
- Reducing distress and fostering adaptive coping
- Protecting people from further harm

Psychological first aid is not counselling, will not be required by everybody affected by COVID-19 and is not 'psychological debriefing'.

Practical assistance can be provided through new Government initiatives that include the provision of essential services such as delivering meals on wheels and increasing flexibility with essential services through the Commonwealth Home Support Program.

ILC DURING COVID-19

Like everyone, we at ILC have been watching in disbelief as the COVID-19 pandemic takes its treacherous toll on communities worldwide.

Following Prime Minister Scott Morrison's press releases, swift changes were made at ILC to ensure the safety of students, parents and teachers. ILC teachers are a resilient lot, and everyone has seamlessly gotten into the habit of doing whatever it takes to make sure the ILC environment is as safe as possible.

Health posters went up around the centre advocating safe health practices, all hard surfaces were sanitised after each lesson, classrooms were measured and reconfigured to allow for the mandatory 1.5m social distancing between students all within the required 4m² area per person space.

As a consequence, teaching strategies like group work and pair work needed to change and were substituted with more suitable activities.

With the 26 March press release from Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk advocating that all schools be 'pupil free' in the final week of Term 1, ILC needed to adopt more innovative delivery methods and a change from face-to-face to an online method was launched.

This was a solution that ensured contractual obligations were met for both students and teachers as well as ensuring that progress in language learning was uninterrupted.

During the Easter break, ILC teachers were hard at work mastering skills to operate on an online platform and we have successfully transitioned into this new mode of teaching.

Like all other schooling at present, this strategy guarantees ILC's constancy in a world where suddenly nothing is as it was.



ILC
ITALIAN
LANGUAGE
CENTRE

Servizi comunitari per anziani e giovani bisognosi di sostegno.

**Avete bisogno di aiuto nei lavori domestici?
Avete bisogno di aiuto per cucinare?
Volete incontrare nuovi amici?
Assistete qualcuno a domicilio e
avete bisogno di aiuto?**

Il Co.As.It. Community Services fornisce assistenza alle persone anziane e ai giovani dal 1987 e il nostro personale esperto e qualificato è capace di prestare un servizio culturalmente e linguisticamente adeguato.

La maggioranza del nostro personale è bilingue e capace di assistervi nel vostro ambiente familiare in casa vostra.

I nostri gruppi sociali offrono un pasto casalingo e la possibilità di incontrarsi con gli amici e chiacchierare dei tempi andati.

Attività di arti manuali, canzoni e balli, tombola e gite fanno parte del nostro programma giornaliero.



Contattate il nostro centro al

3624 6100

per ulteriori informazioni



Australian Government
Department of Health

