

## **Ministry Report at RSL Life Care by Tony Bradford**

The Village at RSL Life care is a mission field on the steps of St Faith's and the numbers of residents are increasing up to 1500 as well as many staff. This now the 5<sup>th</sup> year living here and being in ministry at RSL Life Care. I have realised for ministry to be successful it needs to be relational. The work is enormous, but each day I start with prayer and bring my day before the Lord because without God's strength that he furnishes I simply would not survive. Devotions and reading the word and especially the Psalms have been most helpful my wife shares the burden by praying with me. The Lord gave me a promise when I first came and he continues to honour that promise based on John 15.4 "I am the vine you are the branches abide in me and you will bear much fruit without me you can do nothing."

I have been blessed with the help from Chaplain Bob Durbin a Pastor, from the Uniting Church, who is very hard working and well organised and connects well with the residents and staff and is in his 3<sup>rd</sup> year here. We work well as a complimentary team and Bob shares much of the work and we pray together.

Our team of volunteers has continued to grow, now up to 55. It brings great joy to me to see the willingness of many these volunteers who are prepared to put in the hard yards in the Nursing Home and Hostels together with us. Here is where the needs of our people are highest.

Many of these volunteers are elderly Residents themselves which limits how much they can do. So please consider whether God may call you to ministry with us. The Bible encourages, over and over again, not to neglect the needs of the elderly widows and the frail and weak in our society.

It also a blessing seeing the many compassionate people among the staff who give so much of themselves to our needy residents; I have learnt a lot from my many non Christian staff member's and friends and colleagues. It has been wonderful when Bob, myself, or a volunteer has been able to earn the right to share our faith with them and praise God this often happens.

Our new Sunday Service is now in the third year and has grown from 12 to 40-50 people attending regularly. We also have an outreach event as either a BBQ or Cafe Church each month at this service and this helps feed people into

the congregation. There were 70 in attendance at the last BBQ and next month when Rob Stokes, member for Pittwater speaks, we should top 100 .

As well as the Sunday morning service we have a 3 p.m afternoon service we supervise. This a ecumenical service I inherited when I came and we share this with visiting ministers from the Baptist ,Uniting ,Presbyterian and Salvation Army Churches. The afternoon service attracts around 20 and has a well supplied afternoon tea.

We conduct additional services through the RSL Life Care Village at the Nursing Home “Peter Cosgrove” and the hostels. There are 9 in all of these.

1. Nursing Service on Tuesday around 17-20 in attendance
2. Nursing Home Service on Friday with 10-15
3. Hostel Kokoda 8-12
4. Hostel Connie Fall 25
5. Hostel Phyllis Stuart 25
6. Catalina Hostel 14-18
7. Milne Bay 7-10 Low Level Dementia
8. Hostel Wirraway 7-10 Mid level Dementia
9. Hostel Tobruk 18 High Level Dementia

The number of services in the Village are 11 and 5 Bible Studies.

We are reaching around 143 regularly with the gospel in these hostels.

With the combination from all the services there are over 200 in regular attendance and many more are being reached through outreach services and one to one pastoral care and evangelism.

Our people are being nurtured and encouraged throughout our services with the additional help of many compassionate and dedicated volunteers.

Out our 55 volunteers 19 have a connection with St Faith’s and the rest are from other churches in the area and from within the Village. I have noticed

volunteers gradually coming more from outside the Village as our own residents become frailer. Volunteers from other churches outside the Village make up 15 of our volunteers and volunteers within the Village are 14. There is some double up because some may attend a church outside the Village such as St Faith's or Narrabeen Baptist as well one of our services.

I am particularly encouraged by the development of a few services particularly for the needs of residents with dementia and it is wonderful blessing seeing the joy on their faces.

We also have 3 Bible studies operating for independent residents (which means those who live in their own unit rather than in a hostel or nursing home). These studies assist in discipling and growing new Christians from the morning service and provide fellowship and support for established Christians as well. Two additional Bible studies are being conducted in the hostel and nursing home.

I have now completed Clinical Pastoral Education conducted through Anglicare at Westmead Hospital. C.P.E is especially developed for Chaplain's. This has been of great value and has turbo charged and enhanced my pastoral skills. Bob Durbin the other Chaplain will also be doing this course later in the year. Please pray that he can manage the extra load the course will demand of him.

God has been developing my ministry with Vietnam Vets and the Vietnam Vet Motorcycle Club has honoured me as a support rider. They often visit here and come to funerals I conduct for Vietnam Vets. Please pray that God give further opportunities to share the gospel with these men.

Bob also does a once a month BBQ during the week that attracts 10-12 men and this helps create community. I also organise a 'Men's Day Out' once a month and this averages 15-18 men. Both these events are useful in connecting with men and outreach.

Bob and I are also called upon to do funerals and support families and this is demanding work. God often uses the message to comfort and raise people's awareness of the gospel .Please pray that these will be successful in outreach.

I have been encouraged lately by some young mothers who bring in their 2 year olds and visit residents. This really cheers up the residents and is a great

witness for the Lord. Perhaps some mothers out there could consider this also.

God seems to be moving me into a more managerial role, which I find not easy. However, to hold things together administration and good communication is necessary. So please pray I can learn and be gracious in this role and be able to encourage others to care for the broken hearted and share their faith.

We have a large child-care centre opening here soon called "The Little Diggers". This will benefit staff who need child-care. This will also benefit our residents who can watch the children play and receive visits from them. There may be opportunities here to share the gospel with the children and parents, so please pray for us that God will guide and give us wisdom how this should move forward.

I have shared many things but an important thing is I feel we need another qualified Chaplain, so please pray the God of the harvest will open the door so the work to continue to grow.

Your representative at RSL Life Care 'War Vet'

Rev Tony Bradford.