

20 May 2015

Local heroes thanked during Palliative Care Week

It's National Palliative Care Week (Sunday 24th - Saturday 30th May 2015) and South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) has highlighted the amazing work performed by local palliative care volunteers, congratulating recent graduates of a Palliative Care Volunteer Program.

SWSLHD Director of Palliative Care, Janeane Harlum said the role of the palliative care volunteers was to support patients and their families by providing compassion, companionship and comfort.

"Palliative care is specialist care provided for people living with a life limiting illness and for whom the primary goal is quality of life," Ms Harlum said.

"Our main aim is to ensure that people are provided with the best care possible as they reach the end of their life, to help make them as comfortable and content as we can."

SWSLHD Palliative Care Volunteer Coordinator Arlene Roache said volunteers complemented the services provided by the doctors and nurses in hospitals and in the community.

"Congratulations and thank you to the 15 volunteers who graduated from the SWSLHD Palliative Care Volunteer program," Ms Roache said.

"All volunteers undertook a comprehensive training program which enables them to extend practical care and support to patients and their families," she said.

Campbelltown resident Elizabeth-Ann Rullis recently moved back to the area from the South Coast and recently undertook the training to become a palliative care volunteer. Elizabeth is a Diversional Therapist who has worked in aged care for 23 years.

"There is a big need for volunteers in the area of palliative care," Elizabeth said.

"The training has given me more insight into palliative care and has grounded me and made me grateful for what I have.

"The best thing you can do for patients and their families is to give them your time and just be there to listen to them," she said.

During National Palliative Care Week, Palliative Care Australia (PCA) is encouraging Australians to share a coffee with those close to them and discuss their wishes for end of life care.

Ms Harlum said people needed to be comfortable and confident to ask for the care they wanted.

"Talking can be difficult. But talking about end of life wishes in a calm environment ahead of big decisions can make it easier. An advance care plan is one way to express wishes and to make arrangements for after death," she said.

For details on advance care planning visit www.palliativecare.org.au

To become a SWS LHD Palliative Care Volunteer or for more information call 8738 9755.