

Volunteering in Palliative Care: An Aotearoa/ New Zealand Perspective

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Overview - Hospice in New Zealand

- In New Zealand, the goal of hospice care is to support people with a life limiting illness to live every moment in whatever way is important to them, their family and whanau.
- Holistic approach encompassing emotional, spiritual, social and physical aspects of health.
- Hospice services are free. Only partly government funded.
- 29 Hospices in New Zealand, 16,000 patients in 2014
- In 2014 11,384 Volunteers = over 1 million volunteer hours

Mary Potter Hospice

- Over 600 volunteers - Retail, Community, In Patient Unit
- Three community bases - wide geographic and socio-economic spread
- Community and In Patient Services
- Education and Research Focus

Volunteer Roles with us





Our Volunteers

- 93% NZ European, 5% Maori, 2% Chinese
- Most volunteer have over 6 years of service
- Most between the ages of 50-69

Why Volunteer at the Hospice?

- Personal experience with a friend or family member
- Giving back to their community
- Religious or faith based
- Changing views and definitions of volunteering

Volunteerism is a basic expression of human relationships. It is about people's need to participate in societies and to feel that they matter to others. We strongly believe that the social relationships intrinsic to volunteer work are critical to individual and community well - being. The ethos of volunteerism is infused with values including solidarity, reciprocity, mutual trust, belonging and empowerment, all of which contribute significantly to quality of life - UN Volunteers

Volunteer Experience

What is it about the Hospice which attracts me?

What is this sense of honour and privilege I feel each time I step foot through the door?

What is it in the eyes of the people to whom I serve dinner, the lowered voices and the patient respect of my fellow volunteers?

What but the veil between life and death being lifted

What but a recognition of my own mortality.

Strange, it is not, that it takes war and a natural disaster to bring communities together.

Strange that it takes instability...stark confrontation with the great unknown... A possible end to our patterned lives... For people to actively reach out.... To help one another

And yet here I find the same without war, without natural disaster.

People coming together to support one another.

A community reaching out, touching with honour and privilege the veil between life and death.

Challenges

- Recruitment
- Increasing diversity
- Finding the 'right volunteers'
- Retention and Support - Resources
- Being creative with recruitment - shorter volunteer projects
- Ageing population - New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy

Consumer Engagement Study

'Oh, the volunteer people are lovely ... they're giving out their own time but from what I know and talking to them they love doing that anyway which is good. They don't just look after the patients - they help with everyone else as well - like my family, when they're around, they'll sit down and talk to them or if the kids are running around and really want a drink they'll still give them one

'The presence of volunteers was a great thing... I think a volunteer always has a sense of service that a paid employee doesn't necessarily have. And I think paid employees, yes they have other concerns, like domestic concerns at home or family difficulties or any sort of other difficulties, it's easy to bring it into the workforce, take your money, take your pay, just do your job, and so - it's easy for them to do their job and take their pay packet. Whereas a volunteer is always volunteering and I found it quite interesting... There are volunteers for all sorts of things like therapy or counselling, there were meal bringers, and the ... the morning and afternoon tea... all the people who brought meals were volunteers, and uh, they all turned up, I never missed a meal. And I think, I just detected a different view, because they were volunteering, they weren't getting money for it'

Māori & Pasifika communities

- Volunteering means different things to different parts of our community
- As a community organisation, we need to respond to the needs of our community
- Whanaugatanga (kinship)
- Mahi Aroha (work of love)

Future Plans

- Community Volunteering
- Advanced Care Planning
- Death Cafe's
- Further training, support and education for volunteers
- Making our volunteer service accessible to our community