

# NATIONAL 18-24 MAY 2020 VOLUNTEER WEEK

CHANGING COMMUNITIES.  
CHANGING LIVES.



# Acknowledging our Volunteers and their Service.....

**C**ommunity of Christ has been always blessed by Volunteers - Community of Christ people are a blessing to others as they volunteer both within and outside the walls of our churches.

In National Volunteer Week 2020, we want to take the opportunity to give thanks for the many ways you serve others. We do this because we want you to feel valued and that we appreciate the many seen and unseen hours you give, and say you are a blessing to the world. Each of you form the piece of something bigger. Without you and what you do, there is something missing

In my life and in my work I see a lot of people offering servant ministry-volunteering and making a difference...For example

I see people taking annual leave to come and be on staff at camps and they do it for love.

I see others come cook and do dishes just for love.

I see people giving up time and energy to sing in nursing homes, offering not just a song, but warmth and the gift of touch and hugs, and they do it for love.

I see a lovely man teaching the neighbours kids to drive, spending hours of his time and he does it for love.

I see a woman go into the schools helping, supporting, encouraging, reading, listening and she does it all for love.

I see another cooking and preparing outings and events and for the aged, looks after her neighbours, writes cards and visits in the homes and she does it all for love.

I see a beautiful couple who coach netball teams, but somehow seem to be life coaches as well and they do it for love.

I see another who prepares Sunday School lessons and goes the extra mile and more and she does it for love.

I see a man who does things for others, who uses his hands to fix things and make them work again and he does it for love.

I see a lady who for months has sat for hours and hours with a group of others making poppies to honour the fallen and those who served in times of conflict. She does this for love.

I could go on and on about the servants I see in action.

**Please feel the love and appreciation we have for you – please pay that appreciation forward to others who you see in action, serving others and the ripple affect with be amazing!**

## God Bless YOU! Thank you!

**Wendy Ballard and  
Volunteer Acknowledgment Team**

**Anne Bonnefin  
Emma Espinosa  
Ben Smith**

**Thank you for being a piece of the puzzle... for your gifts of skills, time and resources which play a vital part in the successful delivery of the programs and initiatives of the church and delivery of services and activities in the wider community.**

**Please enjoy a small selection of stories highlighting some of the volunteer ministry that members of Community are engaged in.**

**Volunteering – its importance to me and the community in which I serve.**

**V**olunteering is part of my DNA. I was raised in Community of Christ and have been involved in volunteer roles for as long as I can remember.

In my early years volunteering in church activities was my life – childrens' and youth camps, Sunday services, reunions.

Along with church activities, serving on the Boards of Camp Quality and SaintsCare followed in my working life.

In retirement I have been involved in outreach ministries of the Brisbane congregation. Initially 'HOPE Community CARE' a SaintsCare program in a local caravan park where there was over 500 residents.

When this program concluded the congregation sensed the need for food support to some needy community members. For the past 6 years as the congregation's Compassionate Ministries Coordinator I have led a team of committed members and friends in the 'Tuesday Connect' program, held weekly during school terms.

This program, from 12 noon to 2-30pm involves community members gathering for a cuppa, a period of meditation, a relevant TED talk and distribution of food which the congregation sources from Foodbank.

Volunteering gives me a sense of purpose as I realise that my wellbeing is directly related to the wellbeing of others. We are all interconnected and each person, no matter their appearance or circumstance is of worth.

I am most grateful for the example set by my parents and the influence of Christ in my life, as expressed through my church family. My response is to help others wherever I am able.

Anne Sutton - Queensland

**I feel so much closer to God through doing it**

**I**n my life I try to live by a few things, I try to be the best version of myself every day, I don't always succeed but I don't stop trying. I get knocked down, but I get up every time, not always straight away. I push myself to learn new things and go out of my comfort zone. I do this a lot, especially in my volunteer work. I volunteer for St John Ambulance, I am an emergency Medical assistant for Country Ambulance WA and I assist the Paramedic. I am often uncomfortable, and often humbled, and often made very aware of how lucky I am to have basics, like shelter and food.

The hardest thing in this work is to be open minded. To not judge people. Every time I find myself doing this I remind myself of our Enduring Principal 'all persons are of worth'.

My volunteer work has ups and downs, but I feel so much closer to God through doing it. It is hard, and yes the ambulance is hard to reverse (A question I always get asked) I have shifts where I am drained, and others where I am uplifted. But every shift reminds me that everyone has an inestimable value, and that God made them that way, and so regardless of anything else, they are a person of value and worth, and no matter what, I will do my best for them in their time of need, I will be there for them, and I know that God will help me in that task.

Laura O'Dea - Perth



**"Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can." – Arthur Ashe**



## Geoff Dutton - Celebrating 60 years of Volunteering

**G** Geoff has been a minister in Community of Christ since 1954. At 85 years young he has demonstrated a lifetime of service to others; conducting weddings and funerals as well as volunteering in both public and personal ministry.

### Geoff's impact on his community and church and the benefits his activity provides?

Geoff is a quietly spoken and humble man who leads by example. He has dedicated his life to serving others in the community. He has been a mentor, friend, encourager and minister to thousands. He helped establish the cancer support charity Camp Quality in WA and was instrumental in also establishing the Camp Quality Puppets program. He trained dozens of other volunteers throughout his 18 years of service with Camp Quality and improved the quality of life for hundreds of children living with cancer. He helped establish a community centre in Beldon, WA in 1990 that supported individuals and families for 16 years before additional infrastructure was subsequently provided by Government. His work as a Christian minister has often supported people at milestone events in their lives, such as weddings and funerals. He has promoted the highest values of integrity, honesty and self sacrifice on behalf of others. Many people continue to maintain connection with Geoff as a mark of the positive impact he had on their lives and the respect they have for him. Despite his age of 85 years, he continues to offer support to others. He has played a leading role in planning and supervising modifications to our Perth church building to provide a food charity for those in need. Since 2012 he has been the leading kitchen hand in serving those who come.

On three occasions in the past Geoff has been nominated for WA Citizen of the Year. He received an Advance Australia Award in 1990 for his charity work.

The greatest compliment of his volunteer work over the past 60 years or more is the esteem and respect afforded to Geoff by those who have had the pleasure to know him. He has been a profound influence for good in the community, lifting up the worth of every person, no matter what their circumstance. He has provided a role model of service that encourages all people to see that their welfare lies in the welfare of others.

### Above and beyond in leadership and innovation.

For over 60 years Geoffrey Dutton has led an exemplary life as a volunteer, serving thousands across WA.

From 1983 until 1997 he served as Director of Camp Quality WA while maintaining full time employment as civil engineer at the Shire of Kalamunda. He led

hundreds of volunteers to deliver annual camping retreats for children with cancer, organized fund raising activities, sailing and sporting outings, mothers luncheons, picnic events and mentored volunteer 'companions' supporting each child. Geoff served as State Coordinator of the McDonalds Camp Quality Puppets program from 1998 till 2002 as a puppeteer and trainer, visiting over 400 schools across metropolitan and regional WA, exposing over 1,500 children to the challenges of living with cancer, promoting understanding and empathy. His work with the medical professionals at Perth Children's Hospital and those living with cancer helped establish Camp Quality as a leading national charity. He remains in contact with many children and families today.

Under a Host Family Scheme for refugees, in 1980 Geoff and his wife Flora volunteered to support a Vietnamese family fleeing persecution and assist their assimilation into Australia. His connection to that family has continued since then and grown to include the family's children and grandchildren.

Geoff chaired a building committee to renovate a church building for a food charity. Since 2012 he has volunteered to manage its kitchen operations, preparing soups, sandwiches and morning tea for the more than 40 people each week (approximately 900 individuals each year) who receive food assistance. Geoff has also been instrumental in establishing an opportunity shop where clothes and household goods are available.

Geoff served on the steering and management committees of a community centre established in Beldon in 1990 known as 'the Homestead'. He continued in that role for 16 years as the centre served communities of the burgeoning northern suburbs of Perth during the 1990's and early 2000's, offering training, education, counselling, advice and support services to hundreds of individuals and families until its closure in 2006.

In the 1950's Geoff was the inaugural secretary of the Subiaco Men's Hockey Club and from 1978 to 1983, the junior team manager at the Kalamunda Hockey Club. Following National Service in 1953 he served in the Army Reserves until June 1967 as Captain and then as 'officer in reserve' for a further six years.

From its inauguration in 1997 Geoff served as a committee member and trustee of the Local Government Engineers Association. He helped convene State and National conferences and select presentations. Between 2003 and 2010 he was a selector for the Australian Open Gardens Scheme, inspecting properties, interviewing owners and recommending gardens for display in WA.

Between 2002 and 2008 Geoff served as a member of the Youth Care Chaplaincy Council for the Churchlands District.

**We thank Geoff for his lifetime of dedicated and loving service. Thank you Geoff for being a piece of the puzzle.**



In 2015, Ferntree Gully Congregation established a Community Garden at the church with vegetables, herbs and fruit trees. A local committee, with support from the local council and generous suppliers, has arranged monthly Open Days for the local community creating opportunities to “grow” relationships with nature and people. A great story of earth stewardship in action.

"A huge thank you to our permablitz designers for all their hard work over the last few months in coming up with this design. We look forward to seeing this garden grow and evolve in time with community support. We feel very blessed to be able to share this garden with everyone."

Emma Ghazarian, Ferntree Gully Community Garden coordinator



Isn't it exciting that you can be so passionate about a certain hobby/cause/project that you would do anything to see its success? Bendigo Community of Christ has many volunteers across the boards for multiple charity based drives and events but one that sticks out is the community garden. The community garden was first initiated back in 2015, using the muscles of the youth group to bring it to life, and the brains of Don who had the vision for what the front garden of the church could be. The garden produces many crops of spinach, basil, lettuce, limes, tomatoes, spring onions, sweet potatoes, silver beet and much more which is all taken to the 'Grow, Cook, Share' program run by the Bendigo Foodshare.

The simple act of volunteering ones time to water the garden, dig up a few weeds, help plant seedlings (and maybe sneak a cheeky taste of a tomato) brings not only joy to those who may be struggling and rely on these crops, to the community as they walk past and see us out the front but also brings a sense of satisfaction to know they are contributing to something larger than themselves and make a difference. This community garden would not be able to impact the lives it does, without the help of volunteers.

Alicia Turner, Bendigo  
Congregational Support Minister

