



## **Case study: the proof is in the pudding**

More than 50 volunteers come through the Liferview doors in any given week to enrich the lives of our residents but it takes just one person to make a resident's day. For Liferview Willow Wood residents Les and Jimmy, that person is Brodie.

In this case study, we touch on the benefits of volunteering at Liferview for residents and volunteers through the eyes of Liferview Willow Wood Social Support Coordinator Sue Rose and volunteer Brodie Farrer.

### **Liferview residents enhance the lives of volunteers**

In recent years, a number of federal government initiatives have been formed to increase the level of volunteering in residential aged care homes, particularly through the Australian Government Community Visitors Scheme for aged care.

While the number of volunteers is expected to increase through the baby boomer generation, Brodie is a volunteer at Liferview Willow Wood who defies the stereotype.

Brodie was born with cerebral palsy and at the tender age of 18, she supports a variety of areas of Liferview Willow Wood one day a week, such as administration, hospitality and her favourite area; social support.

For Brodie, the benefits of volunteering at Liferview have been instrumental. Her teachers from Marnebec Special School noticed how the 8-week placement improved her social development and in turn, Brodie enjoyed the interaction with the residents and made the choice to continue volunteering at Liferview.

"When I walk through the doors of Liferview Willow Wood, I feel like I'm coming home," says Brodie.

"I'm able to be myself and bring a smile to residents' faces, which brings me satisfaction."

According to Sue Rose, volunteering with the residents at Liferview Willow Wood has brought a sense of calmness to Brodie.

"Brodie came to Liferview with boundless amounts of energy and by assisting in resident activities alongside our social support team, she's developed how to communicate with maturity and confidence."

Brodie also takes great pride in revealing how she takes ownership of jobs in the Liferview home, regardless of how big or small they may be.



“Every Tuesday, I test my skills from my Hospitality TAFE course by bringing delicious meals to the residents in the dining room,” she says.

“It may be a simple task, but for me it’s how I get to talk to the residents and if I can *make their day* by cracking a joke, then it’s even better.”

However, the biggest benefit for Brodie is often taken for granted by most people who volunteer in aged care – acceptance.

“The staff don’t treat me any differently to other volunteers; we understand each other because we all work towards *accomplishing extraordinary things* for the residents.”

### **Volunteers make their mark on Lifeview residents**

At Lifeview, a key focus for volunteers like Brodie is to include residents in social activities and conversations that share their life experiences.

For Lifeview Willow Wood resident Les Adair, his favourite day of the week is Tuesday because Brodie often spends time simply chatting with him in the sunroom.

“Sometimes I find myself thinking about the old days and it’s nice to be able to share my stories of World War II with young people like Brodie,” he said.

According to Sue, the Lifeview staff notice the difference in Les’ attitude once Brodie has had a chat with him.

“He often feels like a weight is lifted off his shoulders after he talks to Brodie,” she said.

“As a result, he comes out of his shell and is more likely to join in social outings and activities,” she revealed.

On the flip side, Brodie’s ability to light up a room and encourage the residents to be more social is unmistakable, just ask Lifeview Willow Wood resident Billy Curram.

“Tuesday afternoons are a special day of the week for me because that’s when Brodie and I play pool,” says Billy.

“While we teach each other different strategies, it’s fair to say that we just enjoy spending time with each other – she’s also good at telling jokes!” he said.



Caption: Volunteer Brodie Farrer cooks a lovely meal for Liferview resident and friend Billy Curram.