

Media Release

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International Nurses Day – changing lives in residential aged care

Wednesday 12 May is International Nurses Day, a global celebration that acknowledges and celebrates the commitment and bravery of nurses around the world.

VMCH CEO Sonya Smart says she is thankful for all the nurses who work across the organisation.

“We are so lucky to have many exceptional, passionate and caring nurses across our aged care, disability, educational and allied health services.

“I want to personally thank each of them; they all work tirelessly to ensure the health and wellbeing of our residents and clients. We are so very lucky to have them.”

Jyoti and Alisha have been working for St Bernadette’s Aged Care Residence, Sunshine North for five and three years. Both started out as Personal Care Assistants (PCAs) before undertaking further study and training to become Registered Nurses (RNs).

“I was 19 when I started working here, when I came to Australia from Nepal,” says Jyoti. “It was a real home away from home. I love working with older people, especially when they smile as you when you walk past.

Alisha, also from Nepal says being a nurse in aged care is a childhood dream for her.

“When I first came here I started work in aged care. Back home, we’re used to living with elderly people, so it’s like one big family here. Starting out as a PCA here in Australia was lovely, I became so close to all the residents, I learned all about them and their lives.”

In Nepal, Jyoti and Alisha both say that while they often live with their older relatives, they don’t monitor their health as we do within aged care residences. Jyoti says this makes a big difference in their overall health outcomes.

“We get to know them so well, so when something changes we notice it. It’s so important that we look after our residents like they’re our grandparents.”

As part of their role, Jyoti and Alisha handle residents’ medications, coordinate external health services, monitor residents for any health changes, and have the additional responsibilities of assisting with COVID vaccinations.

While Jyoti loves being a nurse, she says it can be challenging when residents enter palliative care, as it is a very emotional time.

“It affects us all. While we are here to support and reassure the families, we are affected as well because we develop such strong relationships with them; they are like our grandparents.”

Alisha added “It’s always hard to see them go, because we are emotionally connected to them. But at the end of the day a smile from the residents make it easier.”

“Being a nurse is a very rewarding job, especially in aged care,” says Jyoti. “Working in a hospital, you don’t build that emotional connection, it’s so fast paced. Working with residents, and knowing their history, hearing their stories, it’s very impactful.”

“Seeing residents smiling, we know we make a difference,” says Alisha. “We’re helping to change their lives.”

Image: Alisha (left) and Jyoti (right) love working with the residents at St Bernadette’s Aged Care Residence, Sunshine North

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About VMCH

Here at VMCH, our services are as diverse as the people we support.

Our values underpin the work we do. As a Catholic not for profit organisation, compassion, respect and inclusion aren’t just words to us, they guide us in everything we do.

While we’ve been around for over a century, we’re always moving forward. We stay true to who we are by supporting people and families to live their best lives, providing a place to call home and spaces to learn and grow.

Our professional and compassionate teams are with you on your life journey. We provide a wide range of support from early learning and therapy, specialist education, disability services, affordable homes, residential aged care, retirement living and at-home aged care.