

Media Release

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Unique aged care volunteering program receives national recognition

A heartwarming partnership between for-purpose aged care provider [VMCH](#) and [Mannix College](#) has been recognised on the national stage.

Intergenerational volunteering program, Mannix Young Hearts, was this week named a finalist in the [2025 Future of Ageing Awards](#) under the Community Engagement category.

The awards recognise initiatives that go beyond traditional aged care models by involving the community in meaningful ways that enhance the lives of older Australians.

Launched in September 2024, Mannix Young Hearts brings together students from Mannix College, a Catholic residential college affiliated with Monash University, and residents of VMCH's Corpus Christi Aged Care Residence in Clayton. The program fosters meaningful connections through shared activities including music, arts and crafts, exercise, technology lessons and pampering days.

VMCH CEO Sonya Smart says the program is a powerful example of the organisation's mission in action.

"At VMCH, we believe that age should never be a barrier to connection. It's fabulous to see students and residents form genuine friendships and learn from each other. Mannix students bring energy and kindness into our residents' lives. Seeing our residents light up during these visits reminds us why we do what we do. We're proud to work with a college whose values mirror our own – and are pleased we can offer an environment in which students can also gain valuable experience and form real connections."

In their most recent activity, students joined residents to create items for inclusion in VMCH's Christmas hampers, which bring joy to VMCH's affordable homes residents each year.

Mannix student Ellen Sambell describes volunteering at VMCH as a "truly incredible experience".

"There is something so amazing about talking to the residents and hearing these fascinating stories that I might otherwise have never been able to. Helping the Lifestyle Team bring joy to the residents' days, whether it's through planned activities or chill one-to-one chats, has created this sense of connection. Not only do they look forward to seeing me, but I look forward to seeing them."

For residents like Sr. Mary Jenkins, visits are also a source of joy and renewal. "It's sort of like a breath of fresh air," she says. "You feel uplifted that young people are prepared to give their time and their energy to help us. I just love having new people around".

Andrew Swan, Principal of Mannix College, says the nomination is a proud moment for both organisations.

"It's a wonderful reflection of our students' commitment to building connections across generations. Service is central to our community culture, and Young Hearts has been a joy for our students."

The Future of Ageing Awards, now in their seventh year, celebrate innovation and leadership across the care sector. Winners will be announced at the Gala Dinner in Sydney on Thursday, 27 November 2025.

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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, for-purpose organisation, love, joy, hospitality and courage 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. Always staying 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; helping you with 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.

