

A message from CEO Amanda Murphy

Dear Volunteers,

As we wrap up another year, I want to thank each and every one of you for your contribution to our community throughout 2022.

It has certainly been a significant time for us, with many changes, new initiatives and a return to 'normalcy' in our service delivery.

None of this would have been possible without the support of our volunteers.

The new year saw all our services return onsite, as we worked with our clients to ensure they were best connected to health and wellbeing, after operating under public health restrictions in the previous years.



In February, we completed upgrades to our hydrotherapy pool at Bentleigh East. We also finished installing more than 250 solar panels to our roof at our Gardeners Road site, a huge leap forward in reducing our environmental impact.

During May, we celebrated our wonderful volunteers during our National Volunteer Week celebrations.

Throughout the winter months, our HRAR team continued its work with vulnerable communities to ensure everyone had access to COVID-19 and flu vaccinations, information and support during isolation.

And in August, we celebrated our launch of an Australian-first research project into that work, that collated the voices of more than 800 social housing residents and frontline community health workers during the pandemic.
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CEO MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

This research was conducted by Swinburne University in partnership with a number of our Community Health partners. The research has practical implementation steps that we are encouraging government and service providers to adopt to reduce the health inequity of social housing residents.

During October, we recognised the outstanding work of our Gambler's Help Southern team during Gambling Harm Awareness Week, celebrating the many ways they work to prevent gambling harm in our communities.

All this work benefited from our volunteers' assistance.

Of course, the most significant decision of the year was one to amalgamate with our partners Central Bayside Community Health Services and Star Health to form Better Health Network (BHN). **See more on Page 7**

This has been a significant task for all involved and as we progress into the transformation, the bright future of BHN for our volunteers, staff and clients becomes is very clear.

At the Annual General Meeting in

November, our members voted to change the constitution to replace the rules of membership so that the Directors of BHN are the members going forward.

This decision will facilitate the legal and administrative matters relating to company wind-up and will see our Board of Directors retire at the end of the year. The same changes were passed at the AGMs of CBCHS and Star Health. We all look forward to our members remaining engaged with BHN through a different membership structure.

Throughout 2022, with your support, Connect Health & Community has been able to excel and deliver the best possible health care and create new initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of our community.

On behalf of the organisation and our clients, we thank you immensely for the work you do, day in and day out.

I look forward to seeing what we achieve together in 2023 - and our exciting future as part of Better Health Network.

I wish you all a happy and healthy festive season,

Amanda.

To all our volunteers, thank you for sharing your time and talents with us at Connect Health & Community.

We really appreciate the great work you are doing. Wishing you and your families a wonderful and safe festive season.

Enjoy your break and we will see you in 2023.

From the Community Connections Team

Get to know Steph, your Volunteer Coordinator

By Leesa Sillery



Many of you would have already met Steph Timmons, who recently joined us as Volunteer Coordinator in the Community Connections team. Let's get to know her a bit better!

Tell us a bit about yourself:

I live with my husband and 2 beautiful kids. Ivy who is almost 4 and Jax who is 9 months old. I love basketball and netball, and play regularly. I enjoy the beach and love summer.

I have come from 6 years of Volunteer Management at Sacred Heart Mission, where we had a team of 1000 volunteers across 9 different programs.

What are you most looking forward to working at Connect Health & Community?

Exploring what the volunteer program has to offer and how we will merge into BHN.

What attracted you to work in community health?

- Close to home
- Family-friendly environment
- Community feel

What is a fact about you that people may not know about you?

I'm very competitive. I love vegemite toast. I am terrified - absolutely terrified - of spiders.



Welcome to the team, Murphy!

We are excited to introduce you to our cutest new recruit, Murphy.

Volunteer Brett, and his family, welcomed Murphy to their home at the end of November when he was 8 weeks old. Brett has already started his training and hopes that he can in time become a certified therapy dog.

Murphy has some big paws to fill, though he's already showing his talent.



Brett says he is a great communicator and in his first week at home he learnt to sit, wait and use a doggy door.

We are all so happy that Brett and his family have started this new chapter with Murphy after the passing of their beloved Jasper in October.

Jasper leaves behind a legacy of kindness, love and cuddles. Many of you will remember how he was able to make everyone's day brighter as a therapy dog in the Community Transport team.

Important dates

16/12/22 – Last day of Volunteering

23/12/22 – End of Year closure of services

25/12/22 – Christmas Day

26/12/22 – Boxing Day


31/12/22 – New Year's Eve

1/1/23 – New Year's Day

03/01/23 – Reopening of services

16/1/23 – First day of Volunteering

27/02/23 – Staff and Volunteers transfer to BHN.

Volunteers
contributed
 **1050 hours** 
across our
programs and
services in
October,
November
and December.

POSTPONED: End of Year Celebration

Due to the current wave of COVID-19 infections across the country, we made the difficult decision to postpone any large group gatherings including our End Of Year Celebrations.

We hope we will be able to reschedule this event in 2023.

All the best, Joe!

After 30 years volunteering with us, our friend and colleague Joe has decided to take a step back from his volunteer roles.

We are so grateful to Joe for his incredible support over the years. In his time with us, he has shown off his skills in various roles including hydrotherapy instructor, pool cleaner, gardener, grounds maintenance and as a driver in our Community Transport team.

Before and after his volunteer shifts, you would often find Joe in the volunteer room, chatting and exchanging ideas and gardening tips. Many volunteers, staff members and clients have also been lucky enough to sample home grown produce from Joe's garden, that he would generously bring to share.

As if his long tenure of great work at Connect Health & Community wasn't already enough of an community contribution, Joe also volunteered as a community visitor at a local aged care facility.



Additionally, Joe played an integral role as a volunteer with Parks Victoria, helping to create the beautiful Karkarook Park in Heatherton, by propagating and planting thousands of native plants.

We will all agree that Joe is someone who uses his talents to bring joy and create a sense of community.

His company and hard work will be greatly missed.

Thank you, Joe! Enjoy this next chapter and a well-earned break.

An update from Damian's Office

Thanks to the hard work of our teams throughout 2022, I am pleased to confirm that Connect Health & Community, Central Bayside Community Health Services, and Star Health have now formally amalgamated to BHN.

At our recent Annual General Meetings, a special resolution was passed to make the BHN Board and Directors the sole members of the legacy organisations. This was an important step that will help us progress the wind-up of the three organisations in a streamlined way.

The legacy Directors of the three organisations took the opportunity to formally retire from the Boards, meaning governance of the organisation will now be managed by the BHN Board of Directors. In line with this new structure, I will be responsible for reporting to the Board as BHN CEO.

In February next year, we will commence a process to transfer staff employment from our legacy organisations to BHN.



This is a legal step we need to take in order to integrate the businesses – there will be very little impact on everyday processes.

We are excited to welcome all volunteers to BHN at this time. The transfer will be an automatic opt-in process, meaning volunteers do not need to take any action if they wish to transfer to BHN. These upcoming changes will not affect the arrangements of your role.

To coincide with the transfer, some initial branding changes are also planned for March 2023 as part of the integration.

- BHN lanyards will be provided to all volunteers and staff to use with existing IDs.
- A new dual-brand email signature block will be introduced as an interim measure to help communicate our integration to BHN. It will include the BHN logo together with the logos of the three legacy organisations.

Further information and FAQs will be provided again from mid-January.

Volunteer Morning Tea



More than half of our volunteers attended a volunteer morning tea in Bentleigh East on 10 November.

It was a great opportunity to catch up in person, mingle with volunteer peers and meet BHN CEO, Damian Ferrie.

Damian spoke about the increased range of volunteering opportunities at BHN, and the crucial role volunteers will play in the new organisation.

He emphasised that there will be no pressure to take on new work, however volunteers will be able to take up new opportunities across BHN if they wish to do so.

To learn more about Damian's vision for volunteers at BHN, see page 10.



Interview with Damian, CEO of Better Health Network

By Leesa Sillery



Leesa: What do you expect from the volunteers at BHN?

Damian: Volunteers are very important in the work of our Community Health services. As such, they are a full part of BHN – with clear Position Descriptions, professional development opportunities as well as support and supervision. I therefore expect that Volunteers reflect our vision and values and behave in ways that reflect our commitment to our clients.

L: Will there be any changes to our roles as volunteers?

D: Our Community Health services are so proud of the amazing work that our volunteers do every day of the week. BHN will continue to ensure that Volunteers play a key role in supporting our clients and our local community. We will not be changing the role of our Volunteers and look forward to expanding the opportunities for volunteers in the future.

L: Will we need extra training to do our volunteer jobs?

D: Training and Professional Development is an important part of working in Community Health and that is equally true for Volunteers. BHN will provide opportunities for volunteers to explore training opportunities if they would like to.

L: Do you have any goals you want the volunteers to achieve?

D: Volunteers should expect to get something out of their work. Evidence suggests that volunteering is good for one's health, but the work they do should also be meaningful and fulfilling.

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L: What have been the biggest challenges you've faced in the integration of BHN so far?

D: The coming together of three Community Health services is an exciting time, but there is a great deal to do in the creation of BHN. Learning from one another and deciding how we will work in the future has been an important and challenging process to engage with.

L: When will you be at the Bentleigh East site?

D: At the moment I am spending all my time moving around the 19 Better Health Network sites. I am often at Bentleigh on Wednesdays.

Christmas Wordsearch

A	S	P	M	P	N	A	N	G	E	L	I	R	A
R	T	R	A	W	C	C	N	X	Q	V	P	U	T
E	O	F	Z	C	A	B	S	M	K	A	U	D	I
I	C	A	O	S	N	R	O	A	K	C	D	O	N
N	K	M	Q	A	D	W	H	S	G	L	D	L	S
D	I	I	F	N	L	I	B	I	A	U	I	P	E
E	N	L	J	T	E	Y	E	N	E	D	N	H	L
E	G	Y	O	A	C	K	L	A	O	L	G	Z	L
R	D	T	R	E	E	I	L	I	B	E	V	G	V
C	H	I	M	N	E	Y	S	H	H	I	L	E	C
U	X	Z	S	P	O	J	M	E	R	R	Y	S	S
Z	S	B	D	P	O	I	N	S	E	T	T	I	A
D	T	J	O	L	L	Y	Z	R	M	U	R	A	K
S	L	E	I	G	H	V	S	W	R	E	A	T	H

ANGEL
BELLS
CANDLE
CHIMNEY
ELVES
FAMILY
JOLLY
MERRY
NOEL
POINSETTIA
PUDDING
REINDEER
RUDOLPH
SANTA
SLEIGH

Volunteers support Kenneth Street Christmas Celebration

A team of volunteers joined the Health Promotion team on 7 December, to support a resident Christmas celebration at Kenneth Street Public Housing Estate.

The event was run in collaboration with Bayside City Council, Headspace, Lennie's Van and Cultivating Community.

Residents enjoyed a BBQ, ice-cream, a screen printing workshop and gardening activities, as well as the opportunity to connect with local community services.

Residents also received food hampers and movie vouchers, donated by Brighton Rotary.

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers Rhonda, Jan, Cynthia and Carole, for coming together to support this community event.

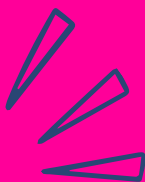


Pictured above: Volunteers Rhonda, Jan and Cynthia with Sarah from our Health Promotion team.

Pictured Below: Residents and Community groups enjoyed blue skies, sunshine and activities at the Kenneth Street Christmas event.



Volunteer position openings for 2023



Do you have a friend or family member who would like to get involved? Or maybe you would you like to try something different in the new year?

All positions ongoing, commencing 16 January 2023

Contact Steph at community@connecthealth.org.au for more information.

Hydrotherapy Pool Sitter

Welcome clients, take payments, check attendance, assist clients in getting equipment while they are in the pool.

- Position does not involve getting in the water
- Shifts approx 1 hour between Monday-Friday.

Community Transport – Driver

Drivers take clients to and from appointments.

- Shifts 1 – 2 hours long between 8:30am – 4:30pm, Monday-Friday.
- Option of using own car or Connect Health car. Kilometres reimbursed for those using their own vehicle.

Community Transport – Jockey

Assist Volunteer Driver with directions, escort clients on and off the bus, provide social interaction and support to clients.

- Shifts 1 – 2 hours long
- Monday- Friday.

Youth take control to help Brains Bloom

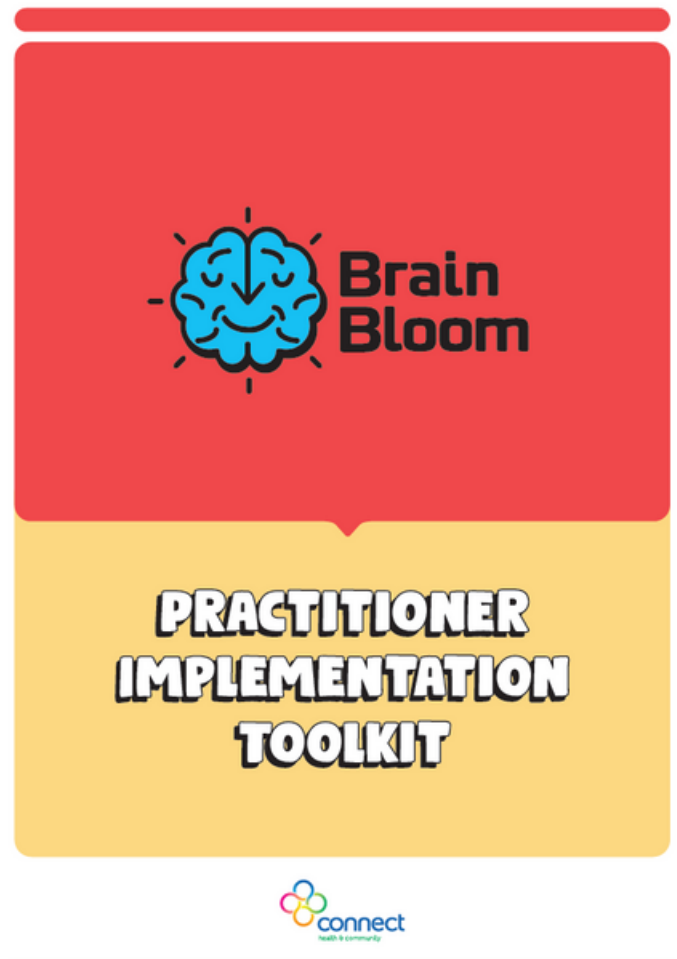
Congratulations to the Health Promotion team on their recent launch of the Brain Bloom Practitioner Toolkit.

Brain Bloom is a youth mental health initiative for secondary schools that focuses on increasing young people's understanding of mental health and breaking down the stigma associated with mental illness in school communities.

The Brain Bloom Practitioner Toolkit is a free, downloadable resource that makes research, training opportunities and support available to all schools, educators and youth-support settings.

The project was first created in 2020 with three Melbourne secondary colleges. It was piloted over three years with assistance from Brighton Secondary College and Sandringham College.

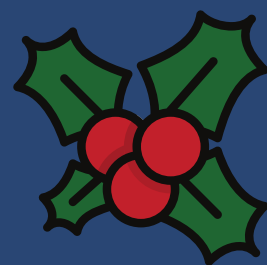
The positive feedback from the pilot highlighted an opportunity to develop an easily accessible toolkit that could be made available to the wider community.



As a result of participating in the Brain Bloom pilot:

- 81% of students reported an increase in their understanding of mental health
- 77% reporting an increase in their ability to recognise the signs and symptoms of mental illness
- 74% reported feeling more comfortable to talk openly about mental illness
- 81% reported that they were more likely to seek support for a mental health concern.

CHRISTMAS CRACKERS!



Volunteer Leesa has rounded up the best Chrissy jokes to help you laugh your way through the silly season.

What is the best Christmas present in the world?

A broken drum, you just can't beat it!

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?

Frostbite!

What Christmas carol is heard in the desert?

O camel ye faithful!

What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?

Tinsilitis!

What's every elf's favourite type of music?

Wrap!

What do you call an old snowman?

Water!

What the difference between the regular alphabet and Christmas alphabet?

The Christmas alphabet has noel (no L)!

Who delivers presents to dogs?

Santa Paws!

What did Adam say the day before Christmas?

It's Christmas, Eve!

What do you call Santa living at the South Pole?

A lost clause!

Why are Christmas trees so bad at sewing?

They always drop their needles!



Christmas Pudding in the Slow Cooker

Many families have a special recipe that is passed down through generations. Volunteer Leesa shares her family's Christmas pudding recipe with us.

Directions:

Fruit and nuts – About 2 weeks before Christmas, place the chopped nuts, mixed fruit, glacé cherries, dates chopped and 1 cup of rum into a big bowl and mix it all into the rum. Give the mixture a stir once a day.

Pudding – Mix the sugar and butter together to make a cream and beat in 2 eggs at a time.

Fold the flour and spices into the mixture of the butter, sugar and eggs. Then add the fruit and nuts in the mixture.

Boil the calico cloth, then spread it out on a bench and sprinkle with flour.

Empty pudding mixture into the centre of the calico, then tie it securely allowing some room for it to rise.

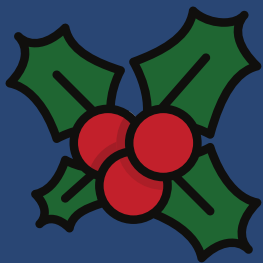
Pour the boiling water into the slow cooker. If your slow cooker bowl is ceramic, it is wise to warm up the bowl with some warm water before, otherwise it may crack the bowl.

Cook on high for 2 hrs and then on low for 2 hrs. Drain the water when it is cooked and let it cool in the slow cooker. Serve with hot custard, cream, ice-cream or all of them!



What you need:

- 1 kg mixed fruit
- 500g walnuts
- 250g glacé cherries
- 250g chopped dates
- 1 cup rum
- 5 cups plain flour
- 500g butter
- 3 cups brown sugar
- 10 eggs
- 20g mix spice
- 1 slow cooker
- 1 large calico cloth



FESTIVE RECIPES

White Christmas Rocky Road



Ingredients

- 2 cups of rice bubbles
- 3/4 cup dried cranberries
- 20g freeze-dried raspberries, lightly crushed
- 300g white marshmallows, halved
- 20g (1/4 cup) shredded coconut
- 400g white chocolate, melted, plus 100g, extra, melted

Step 1

Line base and sides of two 6.5cm x 25cm pans with non-stick baking paper.

Step 2

Combine the rice bubbles, half of the cranberries, half of the raspberries, marshmallows and coconut in a large bowl.

Step 3

Add white chocolate and stir until well combined and coated. Divide mixture evenly between prepared pans, pressing down firmly.

Step 4

Drizzle over the extra white chocolate and sprinkle with remaining cranberries and raspberry. Set aside for 2 hours or until set. Cut into slices to serve.

Are you up to date
with your COVID-19
vaccinations?



If you have symptoms including runny nose, sore throat, cough, fever or chills you should isolate and test for COVID-19.

Free Rapid Antigen Testing kits are available at Connect Health.

If you have, or suspect you have, COVID-19, please wear a fitted, surgical mask when you are near other people.

Wearing a face mask, practicing safe hand hygiene, physical distancing and getting vaccinated can stop or slow viruses from spreading.