

Hello!

Summer is over and 2014 is nearing its end. Seems so unreal, repeat this with me, 2014. Yes . . . Two thousand and fourteen! Where have all the years gone? **TIME** flies by so quickly, without really noticing, even our days seem to be shorter!

But let me get back to the key word . . . **TIME**. This is what so many of you offer to Mater Dei, 'our' hospital. **TIME** is a precious thing which is so abstract, it cannot be seen and it cannot be felt, but it exists and is priceless. How we all wish we had more of it.

VolServ volunteers dedicate a minimum of four hours weekly to Mater Dei Hospital. That is twelve hours monthly. Several of our volunteers dedicate much more than this and some even serve 'full-time' hours. An hour for you may be the same as six hours for someone else. All **TIME** is valuable and each individual knows his/her priorities. In the end, one of the main attributes of a volunteer is the generous contribution of his or her **TIME**.

Besides volunteering by assisting at Mater Dei, volunteers use their **TIME** to help out in VolServ fundraising events held at the hospital. Equally important as raising funds during these events, is the noticeable comradeship and coordination between the volunteers. We are all part of the VolServ Family after all. Special thanks to the wonderful Fundraising team and beneficiaries whose selfless **TIME** and care go into these activities, many hours of which are unseen.

Another aspect where you contribute **TIME** is through your attendance at any of the feedback/support groups. We need to hear your voices – positive or negative – we cannot move forward without your feedback.

Finally, there are the specific training sessions which are available to all, not only for your benefit but for VolServ in general. Taking the **TIME** to attend these much thought out sessions, allows us to be more optimistic about future session planning.

So **TIME** is in your hands, you decide how to use it. It is better to have quality **TIME**, rather than wasted **TIME**.

THANK you ALL for your **TIME** . . .

Pat



The Server

Issue No. 1 – September 2014



Interview with Volunteer... Vince Muscat



With the first issue of "The Server", we are presenting you all with an insight into the life of one of our longest-serving volunteers.

His name is Vince Muscat; he is 69 years old, retired and originally hailed from Ghajnsielem in Gozo. Vince held many varied positions during his working life and some of these were in the Public Works, the Army and Prison Security. For the last 44 years he has lived in Zurrieq.

Vince joined the Volserv ranks after his wife's sudden passing away about 6 years ago and he daily offers all the work he does at Mater Dei to her memory. He has 3 grown-up children but only one still lives with him in Zurrieq.

Mater Dei holds many memories for Vince as this was his late wife's last "abode". It was solely this fact which made Vince choose Mater Dei as his future volunteering port. Nowadays, he can be found at the Orth. O.P. controlling the patients being called into the inner examination rooms. He attends Mater Dei from Monday to Friday from 06:45hrs to 14:15hrs. That is more than 7 hours

a day and approximately 38 hours a week! Vince is very happy with the service he is providing and were he to be asked to put in extra hours, he would not hesitate to say "Yes". Vince has another volunteer helping him out twice a week and desperately needs another person for the other 3 days of the week.

Over the years, Vince has managed to carve a niche for himself in the O.O.P. and many patients recognize him and address him by name. He is a welcome sight to out-patients and nursing staff alike.

Fishing is Vince's favourite hobby and there are days when he crosses over to Gozo to fish there. He finds this past-time very relaxing and rewarding and since he loves to cook, he personally prepares various tasty dishes with his catch.

Until 20 years ago, Vince was also a keen hunter. A fluke hunting accident made him realize how much pain a tiny creature suffered after being riddled with pellets and due to this accident, Vince has never hunted again. He still has a number of pellets embedded in his scalp and two more round his eyes. Vince's association with birds nowadays is merely watching them and listening to their different calls.

We at Volserv congratulate Vince for his amazing efforts at Mater Dei and wish him a long and healthy future. Every-one is a winner in this scenario: the staff, the patients and Vince himself. Thank you for all you do Vince and Prosit. Keep up the good work!

By Row & Margaret



WHAT IS PALLIATIVE CARE?

Palliative care is specialized medical care for people with serious illnesses. It focuses on providing patients with relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress of a serious illness whatever the diagnosis. The goal is to improve the quality of life for both the patient and the family.

Palliative care is provided by a team of doctors, nurses and other specialists who work together with a patient's other doctors to provide an extra layer of support. It is appropriate at any age and at any stage in a serious illness and can be provided along with curative treatment.

WHO ARE PALLIATIVE CARE VOLUNTEERS?

Volunteers have long been an integral part of palliative care with some services owing their very origins to volunteers. These volunteers are people from local communities who give their time freely to provide compassionate support and practical care to those living with a life limiting illness and their carers. Palliative care volunteers provide respite, emotional and social support to some of the most vulnerable people in our society. They also assist with the governance of palliative care organisations, fundraising, projects and promotion of palliative care principles. Palliative care volunteers are constantly interacting with their wider

community and influence public attitudes to palliative care, death and loss.

PALLIATIVE CARE AT MDH

VolServ is developing a core team of volunteers to be ready for the new Oncology Unit at Mater Dei. The first training in Palliative Care was given in May and June of 2014. The volunteers will be part of the team approach to care, they will spend time with the patient and their family and support them every step of the way. Those interested should contact our office on 2124 4123.

C.T.E.

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As Pat has reminded us *Time Flies*, our year is more than half over and it has been a very eventful time for VolServ this far!

Early January 2014 saw VolServ Management, both at SOS Malta Premises and Mater Dei returning to work. The usual activities continued running and preparations started for the necessary tasks of recruitment, fund raising and training.

Three sessions of recruitment for adults were held and a good number of new volunteers joined our ranks. Sixty students from various schools attended training during their Easter holidays to volunteer at Mater Dei as part of their SOK project or Community Service during the summer months.

VolServ Management organised several fund raising activities which required much preparation. The activities, though facing tough competition from other organisations, proved to be very successful.

Preparations for the Easter fundraising involved selling the traditional figolli and kwaresimal, together with other seasonal sweets like Easter eggs. This activity also involved a lot of work at the SOS Malta premises and the Psychiatric Unit, where Easter eggs were made more presentable by packing them with mugs and toys. A small group of volunteers led by Geoffrey and Mary Fisher are to be commended. Again, this activity was very fruitful to VolServ and the products made were appreciated by the customers.

The following fundraising event was organised for Mothers'



Day and again the small group of volunteers this time prepared cards and jewellery for sale. The small group of volunteers who manned the stalls was very hard-working and this proved a success in the end as well. The next fundraising activity will be around Christmas. We need all the help you may offer, so please keep this in mind.

Several Feedback/Support sessions were held both at Mater Dei and SOS Malta premises during which Volserv volunteers discussed difficulties with Catherine Conti Caligari, and suggested improvements for our services at Mater Dei. The last meeting was preceded by a survey made through a questionnaire prepared by Catherine. Next issue will hold a follow up to this survey

Summer is over and preparations are already being made for the recruitment and training of new volunteers, while those who were with us for the summer, have gone back to their routine work. Its business as usual!

Joe Micallef

VOLSERV TRAINING

Specific Training

Tuesday 21st October
Health and Safety

Support / Feedback Group (MDH)

Tuesday 28th October

Basic Training

Monday 3rd November: 09.00 – 13.00
Introduction to Volunteering in Healthcare

Tuesday 4th November: 16.00 – 19.00
Communication Skills I

Wednesday 5th November: 16.00 – 19.00
Communication Skills II

Thursday 6th November: 12.00 – 14.00
Hospital Visit and Placement

Times for training are approximate.
Kindly always check location and time at the VolServ room at Mater Dei Hospital.

Friday 5th December

Certificate Ceremony and Gratitude Reception at

The Westin Dragonara Malta, St. Julians at 19.30 hrs

Quiz

TRUE or FALSE

- The average body temperature is 40° C.
- During a heart attack, the heart stops beating.
- Heart disease kills more men than women.
- Heart disease is the No. 2 killer of women in the U.K.
- Eating soya makes a difference to cholesterol levels.
- Fish oil has many positive health benefits.
- It is healthy to skip breakfast in the morning.
- Eating slowly and chewing food helps to lose weight.
- Exercising also assists blood circulation.



- Aspirin and Paracetamol reduce inflammation.
- Quality of sleep is better than quantity.
- Plain dark chocolate in moderation is beneficial.
- Too much pasta and rice can have a severe bloating effect.
- Caffeine is a recognized medicine.
- Three glasses of wine a day is recommended.



Biblical Trivia

- The first book of the bible is Exodus.
- The last book of the bible is Revelation.
- The four gospels are Matthew, Mark, Luke and Peter.
- Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus.
- James doubted Jesus had risen.
- Luke's profession was a fisherman.
- Peter's profession was a doctor.
- Jesus was crucified on the hill of Golgotha.



Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass; it's about knowing you can still dance in the rain!

Volunteer and make a difference!

The Server Team

Margaret Andrews, Ron Johnston, Joseph Micallef, Josephine Sammut, Mary Tanti, Mary Anne Tolu

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|-----|-------------------------------|
| 1. | False – 36.5 / 37.5 |
| 2. | False |
| 3. | True |
| 4. | False |
| 5. | False |
| 6. | False |
| 7. | False |
| 8. | True |
| 9. | True |
| 10. | True |
| 11. | True |
| 12. | True |
| 13. | True |
| 14. | False |
| 15. | False |
| 16. | False – Genesis |
| 17. | True |
| 18. | False – John (not Peter) |
| 19. | True |
| 20. | False – Thomas |
| 21. | False – Luke was a doctor |
| 22. | False – Peter was a fisherman |
| 23. | True |

QUIZ Answers

Mission Statement

VolServ is an SOS Malta service in partnership with the Ministry of Health. VolServ aims at developing and organising voluntary health services to support patients and relatives in the main general hospital. The project was set-up in April 2007 when a service agreement was signed by the two parties.

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