



Australian
Multicultural
Community
Services

Kindness

April 2021

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Home Care Packages
tailored to your needs



Getting to know Home
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We care, we support and **we empower**

Cover image: Mr Cabuang and Mrs Garcia are married and live in the same household. Therefore, social distancing is not required.

Message from CEO

A warm welcome to the April edition of the AMCS newsletter.

This month, we focus on the theme of **kindness**. At AMCS, we are in a privileged position to spread compassion among the community by providing care and support to seniors.

As a caring organisation, we focus our efforts on extending the support services within the community and look forward to

reintroducing more face-to-face activities soon.

I hope you had a safe and joyful Easter. The break was a great chance to spend time with the important people in our lives who share their kindness.

As always, please stay safe and remember, if we can help, we will. We enjoy what we do and are happy to support your loved ones who may also benefit from our care.



Elizabeth Drozd
CEO, AMCS

Nurse's corner — How to prevent a fall

The fear of falling becomes more common as we age. Thousands of seniors break a bone every year. Older adults may avoid activities such as walking, shopping or social events. However, with your doctor's guidance, physical activity can go a long way towards fall prevention.

Here are our top tips to avoid a fall:

- **Stay active.** Regular exercise strengthens your muscles and keeps your joints flexible. Consider walking or yoga.
- **Test your eyes and ears.** Even small changes in sight and hearing may cause a fall.
- **Find out the side effects of your medications.** If a drug makes you sleepy or dizzy, inform your doctor or pharmacist.
- **Sleep well.** You are more likely to fall when tired.
- **Limit alcohol.** Even a small amount can affect your balance and reflex.
- **Stand slowly.** Getting up too quickly can cause your blood pressure to drop and shakiness.
- **Use a mobility aid if unsteady when walking.** Appropriate sticks and walkers can prevent falls, especially in areas you do not know well or with uneven pathways.
- **Wear non-skid, rubber-soled, low-heeled shoes, or lace-up shoes with non-skid soles.** Do not wear socks while walking on stairs and floors or wear shoes and slippers with smooth soles.
- **Inform your doctor if you have fallen since your last check-up, even if unhurt.** A fall can alert your doctor to a new medical problem or issues with your medications or eyesight.

A simple accident can change your life, but an individual can prevent most falls. For Home Care Package clients, please contact your Care Advisor for a referral to a physio or occupational therapist if you need extra help. Otherwise, please seek advice from your doctor.

Picture: This photo was taken before the pandemic.



Home Care Packages tailored to your needs

Live well, age well

As we grow older, certain tasks may become more difficult. But this doesn't automatically mean moving to an aged care facility or changing your entire life. In fact, many seniors prefer to keep living independently in their own home with a little extra support.

AMCS provide tailored Home Care Package services to seniors from many cultural and diverse backgrounds.

George Rousou, AMCS Home Care Package client, receives health services and weekly support worker visits to vacuum, mop and dust, and maintain his garden. Arranged by AMCS, he wears a MindMe Pro personal alarm to help in the event of a fall or emergency.

"I joined AMCS because Sofie, now my Care Advisor, met and spoke with me and my wife, Eleni. Sofie was friendly and patient, taking the time to understand our needs and provided information and prices in a clear and honest manner," George recalls. "This gave us the confidence to choose AMCS. Eleni felt we would be a good match."



Some services AMCS offer under a Home Care Package include:

- Domestic assistance — cleaning, laundry and gardening
- Transport — (to) shopping, banking and medical appointments
- Social support — companionship and attending activities
- Personal care — showering, dressing and meal preparation
- Allied Health — referrals to nursing care, physiotherapy and occupational therapy

"My children are very supportive. I can stay in my home with their help and AMCS' assistance," George says.

Sadly, Eleni, his wife of over 60 years, passed away suddenly in 2018.

During COVID-19 restrictions, George was introduced to drawing, painting and colouring.

It awoke his creative side, and he discovered a love for pictures and colours. His favourite piece is a heart expressing his love for Eleni, dedicated to her memory on Valentine's Day.

George's support workers and Sofie love visiting him to provide personalised assistance. They talk and get to know him better, walk with him in his garden and admire his pictures.

"I like to chat about food, my garden, the news and my artwork. I read the newspaper every day," he says. "Everyone is friendly, and they support me to live at home."

For more information about Home Care Packages, please contact Eloina Zepeda, Intake & Administration Officer, on eloina.zepeda@amcservices.org.au or 0432 099 225.

Client profile

Meet Irma Thiele

Every time Irma opens the door, she greets her support worker with a smile and her “hair in curlers.”

There is always something baking in the oven and handmade cards ready for her loved ones.

“I enjoy cooking and make so many biscuits. November is always flat out with organising half a dozen jars worth of biscuits for my kids,” she says. “I also bake Christmas cakes with whisky, three at a time.”

Every Sunday, she also attends church across the road and is on a roster to prepare morning tea with cake.

Family ties

Irma was born in Leeton, New South Wales, and has two younger brothers and two older sisters.

“My father was a Lutheran Minister and the only one in Tasmania when we moved there,” she recalls. “We travelled a lot, but the frequent night travelling affected his eyes.”

She met her husband at the Lutheran Church.

“We have four kids—boy, girl, boy, girl—and eight grandchildren,” she says.

Even though her husband now lives in an aged care facility where she visits weekly, she is not lonely.



“He was always in control of the television and watched war films which I don’t like,” she laughs. “I’ve never held the TV remote in my hands as much as now.”

Working 9 to 5

At school in Mildura, Irma learnt Dacomb shorthand writing. When she sat the test, she only made one mistake.

“I’ll never forget that error, which was the word, ‘baby’,” she reminisces.

Her shorthand abilities came in handy when Irma worked as a typist at Orlando Wines.

“The best man at our wedding was the supply manager. He asked if I could help for a couple of weeks,” she explains. “Those four to five weeks ended up being twenty years.”

She enjoyed her job and drove from Sunshine North to Oakleigh daily.

The wine thief

While most people would love a job with free alcohol, Irma hardly drinks. “When we moved

Kindness Campaign

Showcasing positive community engagement with seniors

The Kindness Campaign reminds people to engage with seniors and features their great work.

We have seen individuals teach their grandparents how to use the PlayStation, share stories with older

to a new house, I had to throw a lot out because I kept them in a hot shed at the back," she says.

However, one person was only too willing to enjoy the wine.

"One Sunday morning, someone came over the fence and stole a couple of dozens of bottles. We knew the thief must've been nearby because he wouldn't have been able to carry them himself," she remembers. "My son and husband found the wines stored under a bridge nearby. We called the police but never found out who the chap was."

House of cards

In 1994, Irma attended a craft camp at Halls Gap in Victoria, and loved creating cards ever since. The activity is her way of socialising.

"I used to go to craft group every Monday afternoon and sold quite a few cards," she explains. "Some people went to knit. Others came just to talk."

Most years, she produces many one-of-a-kind Christmas, Easter, birthday, and special occasion cards. She always has a box ready and people visit her at Lifestyle Brookfield to buy them for approximately four dollars each.

AMCS experience

"At 83, it's a bit hard to do everything. The worst part is changing the bed sheets. I can't lift the mattress. My support worker comes every fortnight," Irma says. "I can rely on her for general things and don't even have to tell her what to do."

adults in their community and exchange skills like sewing.

Are you often kind to seniors?
Send your photos to marketing@amcservices.org.au and you could win a \$20 Coles Myer gift card.

Picture: This photo was taken before the pandemic.

Staff profile

Tina Parisi Support Worker



1. How long have you worked at AMCS?

22 months.

2. Tell us about your role.

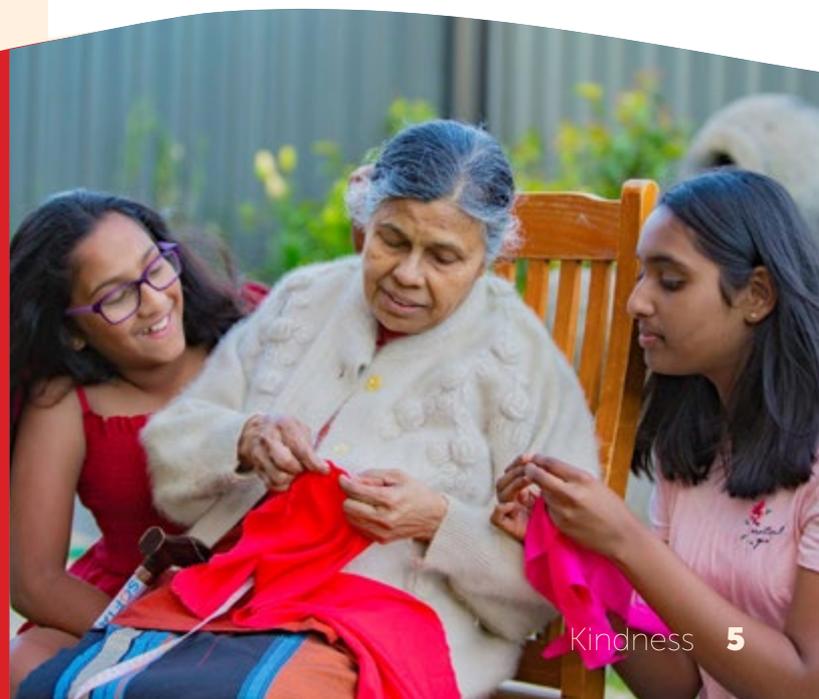
I am a support worker. My key role is to care and support the clients with their everyday needs, especially when someone requires the Italian language. I love working with seniors. My first language is Italian and being bilingual is useful in the ageing Italian community.

I like the opportunity to meet and interact with people from different countries.

3. Tell us about yourself.

I arrived in Australia in 1980 from Italy. I'm married, have a daughter in Year 10, an adult son and a granddaughter who started school this year. My son lives with his family nearby.

I enjoy cooking and creating new recipes, knitting, crocheting and reading, and often share my hobbies with clients.





Staff profile

Hania Hordynska
Care Advisor

1. How long have you worked at AMCS?

Since 2010, AMCS gave me the opportunity for career advancement and growth.

2. Tell us about your role.

My role is to offer support for seniors who want to stay independent in their homes, so they may enjoy the things they love. I have never stopped liking what I do.

3. Tell us about yourself.

I was never one of those people who dreamt about living in Australia. I came to this continent from Poland for a holiday and fun. I fell in love with my now-husband and Australia at the same time. My entire life changed when I bought a one-way ticket.



Staff member shaves 60cm of hair for charity

In February, Magda Biadala-Sahingoez, ICT and Communications Manager, and her 10-year-old twin boys, donated their hair to Variety — Hair with Heart. The children's charity will turn their long locks into specialised wigs for someone who has lost their hair because of a medical condition.

"Hair can be a significant part of a woman's or girl's identity," Magda says. "I wanted to lessen the psychological effects for kids who are sick, disadvantaged or have special needs."

AMCS is proud of our supportive and caring staff. For more information or to donate, please visit:

<https://hairwithheart.variety.org.au/fundraisers/erenanddenizsahingoez>

Volunteer spotlight

Iwona Jaskulska started volunteering with AMCS in October 2018, providing companionship to older adults at risk of social isolation.

"I am a very social person. I love meeting people and helping them," Iwona says. "I was working as a kindergarten teacher for many years. Caring for others is in my blood."

In Iwona's spare time, she enjoys reading historical books, growing her own vegetables and cooking, especially for others.

"Iwona is so positive and always happy to help," says Milena Shaedler, AMCS Volunteer Coordinator. "She visits four seniors, takes them shopping and stays with them longer than the volunteer position requires."

Money Talks for Better Ageing

Ecstra Foundation granted AMCS with funding for the *Money Talks for Better Ageing* project, which aims to strengthen the financial wellbeing of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) seniors. The program provides fair access to information and resources about financial abuse for seniors to make informed financial decisions, either by themselves or with family or carers.

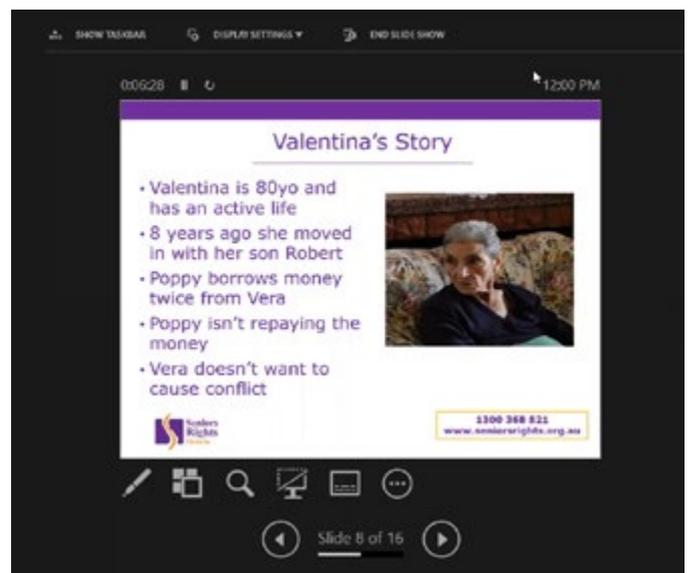
In a survey, one participant said, "Financial counselling for seniors is vital and I believe this initiative covered the importance of financial counsellors when seeking financial advice."

Facilitated by Seniors Rights Victoria, Financial Counselling Victoria and local financial counsellors, the project successfully completed two co-design online workshops with over 100 CALD seniors from metropolitan Melbourne. The first co-design workshop, *Money Talking Day*, provided a platform to:

- capture seniors' stories of financial mistreatment
- share any concerns and experiences
- explore seniors' understanding on financial risks with abuse
- discuss challenges in accessing information and resources with like-minded people.

The second co-design workshop, *Your Money-Your Safety* empowered individuals to co-create actionable solutions with financial experts.

Another participant said, "It was an interesting session. I can now educate myself on various forms of elder financial abuse."



Through both workshops, we discovered the many challenges CALD seniors face:

- No confidence to ask for help
- Technology inexperience
- Difficulty in accessing information because of language barriers
- Lack of knowledge on multilingual resources.

Currently, we are developing media resources like YouTube videos and factsheets in 10 different languages, and organising information sharing workshops for community groups.

To express your interest in our upcoming workshops, please contact, Isurika Wijewardhena, Project Coordinator, on isurika.wijewardhena@amcservices.org.au or 0432 099 369.



The Knitting Competition:

And the winner is...

Hemamala Vithanarachchi with 63 likes on Facebook.

Thank you to everyone who entered. We received 21 knitted toys, and after the competition, AMCS donated them to children in need at Launch Housing, Bob's Place Dandenong.



Staff and volunteers' anniversaries — March to April 2021

Thank you to our staff and volunteers for their incredible dedication and support to the seniors in our communities. Many of them have reached anniversary milestones with us during the months of March to April.

Staff

Farrugia, Linda	5 years in April
Hordynska, Hania	10 years in April
Przybylkiewicz, Teresa	10 years in March
Zurek, Liz	10 years in April

Volunteers

Chwasta, Fela	14 years in March
Definski, Frank	3 years in March
Driscoll, Leanne	1 year in March
Gillibrand, Stephanie	3 years in April
Jankowska, Renata	3 years in March
Jerzy, Gosk	4 years in March
Jones, Sally	1 year in April
Kabala, Jackie	3 years in March

Knight, Fran	1 year in April
Krstova, Marina	3 years in March
Kuder, Zbigniew (Zibby)	1 year in April
Leiva, Diana	1 year in April
Lipski, Danuta	6 years in March
Ostrowski, Zygmunt	2 years in March
Ozkan, Ozlem	3 years in April
Podesser, Ingrid	2 years in March
Salib, Mona	6 years in March
Stepien, Anna	6 years in March
Torres, Jessica	3 years in March
Vatta, Antonetta	3 years in March
Yavuzlar, Mehmet	2 years in April
Yeoh, Mark	3 years in April

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