

DIVERSITY MATTERS

NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2020



hmc

Hunter Multicultural Communities



Multicultural Meal Service

Hi, I'm Angela Tsolakis, a cook at the HMC, and I would love to share with the community about our very special food service we are supplying to our clients.

In Mid-March, Newcastle was on a semi-lockdown, which created chaos for everyone, including the HMC which was put into shutdown for three weeks. When we emerged later, the great team at the HMC (Annette, Milan, Jason, Mary, and Gayle) put together a project that at this time is absolutely thriving: The multicultural meal service.

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Some of our amazing team working in the kitchen to make delicious meals for our clients!

Our incredible bus drivers who have been working hard to bring meals to our clients.
Left to right: Dee, Rob, Emmy, Gus



Multicultural Meal Service

Continued from cover

Andrew – a professional chef – and I are both cooks at the HMC, and we have teamed up with the rest of the cooks and the lovely people manning the Godfather Espresso – a café that hires young adults with intellectual disabilities – to cook up delicious fresh food to be ordered by our clients. These meals are delivered daily, from Monday to Friday with an alternating weekly menu filled with classic multicultural favourites that are healthy and great-tasting.

We've been working hard to make sure these meals are high quality and good replacement for the food we would usually be serving at our health and wellness centres, and every week we have more clients requesting deliveries.

The Godfather Espresso people have been a massive help with the preparation and distribution of meals and have been keeping us good company while we're working. This project has helped us and the Godfather people keep working meaningfully during the crisis.

Deb Scott, who runs Godfather Espresso, has been instrumental in organising her people and giving them the opportunity to learn and grow with hospitality experience.

"We have two guys in their mid 30s and they came in quiet as, wouldn't interact, they started chopping vegetables," Deb said, "Their faces now light up, they banter with clients, talk to superiors, and they're getting paid to work."

Ruby and Aleisha, who both work with Deb to aid the Godfather Espresso employees, have been massive help with organising the operations while managing the café itself.

Angela Tsolakis

Cook at the HMC

If you are at all interested in our Multicultural Meal Service, please get in contact with us at the office on **4960 8248**

If you are interested in Deb Scott's Flexible Options disability program please give her a call on **0413 100 735** or email debScott@flexibleoptions.com.au

Multicultural Meal Service sample menu can be viewed on page 8.



Update on HMC Suspended Services and COVID-19 Restrictions

Dear HMC Clients, Staff and Volunteers,

The last few weeks have proved a huge challenge for everyone, and the Hunter Multicultural Communities Inc. (HMC) have not been exempt from the rapidly emerging and changing environment. However, in the face of adversity we have:

- Adapted our delivery methods in order to continue to provide quality services in a new way;
- Implemented new programs and methods to build a sustainable and reputable organisation for the long term.
- Provided meaningful engagement and maintained contact with our client's, staff and volunteers;
- Redeployed some of our staff to new program areas and as such reduced the need to "stand down" or implement large scale redundancies as a result of the suspension of group social support activities (Health and Wellness Centres);
- Successfully negotiated with funding bodies to divert existing grant monies into other newly identified areas of need and opportunity;
- Endeavoured to address the immediate needs and safety of our people, clients, volunteers and the broader community;
- Called for staff to be more open minded, creative and flexible in the delivery of services to secure longevity; and
- Reinforced that the HMC delivers beyond aged care services and acknowledged that to ensure business viability we must extend our services and be representative of all communities.

As a service provider, we have strived to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on our employees and clients as far as practicable, however, events highlighted the need for significant change. Although the journey has been difficult at times, the overall feedback received has clearly demonstrated that the HMC has done significantly better in adapting and refocusing operations than many other similar organisations locally, regionally and even nationally.

I have had the privilege of being involved in regular weekly meetings with State Ministers including Dr Geoff Lee, Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans and other key figures, groups and taskforces including: the CEO of Multicultural NSW, Federation of Ethnic Communities Council (FEECA), Newcastle City Council Action Taskforce and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission etc. These have been crucial in making informed decisions about the direction of the organisation and enabling the implementation of workable proactive strategies.

Despite the gradual easing of restrictions at a federal and state level, we are still some way off resuming "normal operations". We are all eager to return to familiar activities, the current suspension of the Group Social Services (Health and Wellness Centres) remains in place until further notice. My number one priority is the health, safety and wellbeing of HMC Clients, Staff and Volunteers. I will keep the suspension under continual review as the situation is constantly evolving and changing.

In the meantime, the HMC will continue to deliver our contingency services which include:

- Regular telephone communication from HMC staff and/or volunteers to check on client's welfare;
- Assistance with shopping accompanied by a HMC staff member or volunteer;
- Ability for clients to have their shopping or care package delivered to their home by a HMC staff member or volunteer;
- Risk assessed home visits for most vulnerable clients;
- Transport assistance to medical appointments; and
- Development and circulation of a short weekly newsletter which keeps clients informed on issues, news and tips on such aspects as health and wellbeing whilst promoting engagement to reduce the impacts of social isolation etc.

Multicultural Meal Service

The Multicultural Meal Delivery Service is available to all HMC Clients and those who have been assessed and accepted by My Aged Care. Due to the success of this program, we are now expanding the meals service to the broader community which will officially commence on Monday 1st June 2020.

Should you wish to inquire about a booking, costs, request meal deliveries, seasonal menus or how to be assessed by My Aged Care, please contact either Milan Kurjakovic on (02) 4960 8248 or your relevant Health and Wellness Coordinator.

The extraordinary circumstances of 2020 make it a year we will never forget and I would like to acknowledge our employees and volunteers for their assistance and dedication during these difficult times. I will continue to keep all stakeholders informed of any further developments as they occur and I thank you for your ongoing patience, support and patronage.



Please refer to our social media pages for latest updates and changes.

Annette Gebhardt

Chief Executive Officer

The HMC's Aged Care service response to the COVID-19 pandemic challenge

Hunter Multicultural Communities had a successful 2019. At that time, around Christmas 2019, no one expected that 2020 will turn into a very different year and more challenging than any of the years before.

The global spreading of the COVID-19 virus at the beginning of the year has changed the way how HMC operates. Having in mind the health of the staff, clients and volunteers, the Hunter Multicultural Communities (HMC) implemented all preventive measures recommended by the Department of Health and NSW Chief Medical Officer to reduce risks of contracting and spreading the virus. Posters, signage and recommendations are displayed in all centres and mailed to the clients. The sanitiser dispensers are installed in the office and centres as well.

As the situation becomes more serious, the management and the Board have decided to temporarily close our centres from Tuesday 17th of March 2020.

Majority of our concerns in supporting the centres' closure were related to the safety of our clients and staff in group-setting service delivery and in line with the Government's advice to avoid large gathering and maintain a social distancing.

It was necessary to ensure that HMC has appropriate arrangements in place for the assessment and management of risks associated with infectious outbreaks.

Our additional concerns were related to the well-being of our clients in their homes who have (or have not at all) limited access to shopping, appointments or/and poor social contact opportunities.

Our response was an urgent re-organisation of our services and transition from CHSP Group services to Individual services, such as a transition from the Social Support Group to Social Support Individual service. The new services, measures, policies and procedures, the HMC has put in place as a response to the situation caused by the COVID-19 situation are:

- telephone calls to check the well-being of our clients at home;
- taking clients to the shopping and appointments with all safety measures and procedures applied;
- producing and delivering three-course meals to our clients at home for five days a week;
- delivering grocery packages to our clients for five days a week;
- compulsory flu vaccination for all staff;
- compulsory training module re COVID-19 and Infection Prevention and Control;

- provision of the PPE to staff and clients: gloves, masks and sanitiser; and
- provision of info and updates on COVID-19 publicised by Government and media.

Thanks to a good organisation and preparedness, the HMC Aged Care Services has ordered and received on time enough toilet papers, sanitisers, gloves and masks for our staff and centres. New laptops and software installed have made possible for the staff to start to immediately start to work from home without any difficulties.

Creating and printing brochures for our new programs and services have made our clients well informed about the options and services we can provide for them in this "pandemic" situation.

Our Social Support Individual services continued to deliver services without break and delays and in line with all Government's recommendations. Clients receiving this service are very happy to have this opportunity to continue or increase the level of their independence.

The main challenge was our new service: HMC's Multicultural Meals service.

In only week-two we have organised a three-course multicultural meal production in the Waratah centre kitchen, have employed staff, created a menu for two weeks and started to produce and deliver meals to our clients.

We are very well organised and equipped and have already reached our goal to produce and deliver 30 meals for five days a week. At the end of the fifth week, we are at 65% of the plan to deliver fifty meals per day. It seems very possible for us to be at 100% capacity in one month.

We have received very positive feedback from many clients and will put into this service even more effort and enthusiasm to continue to serve our clients in this difficult time for everyone.

My respect and thanks to the management, the staff and volunteers who have contributed and made this transformation of our services possible.



Milan Kurjakovic
Aged Care Services Manager

Upcoming Project: Lean-In Newy



Here at the HMC we're working towards supporting our community even while we're supporting our clients.

The project we're looking into supporting is the 'Lean in Newy' program, an incentive for utilising technology to renew and improve engagement with the local community in a way that is fun and interesting.

It's an online platform where residents living in the Newcastle and surrounding areas sign up to be Lean in Newy members and earn points by taking challenges like helping out in their neighbourhood, volunteering for charities or supporting local businesses.

Once members have completed several challenges and built up their points, they can then go shopping online through the Lean in Newy mobile and web apps to purchase vouchers for discounts at local businesses.

www.leaninnewy.com.au/



Neighbour Aid Program

The Neighbour Aid Program during the Covid-19 pandemic provide one on one support to clients in our communities. They have shown support with training for infection control of Covid-19 and have been committed to protecting our clients when out with them by using social distancing, hand sanitiser and wearing face masks.

Our clients are very thankful for our continuing support during this difficult time when access to transport and social interaction is limited. A reassuring and caring word, a laugh and chat about how things are for them is what they enjoy the most. Some clients have serious health problems and knowing there is a friend which our volunteers become to them as support gives them peace of mind and enjoyment during the time they have with the volunteer.

Thank you Dennis, Brian, Trevor, Jenita, Janine, Rae, Robin, Laurie, Lilo, Frieda, Pat, Helen, Tania, Gus and Bryan.

We are thankful for your dedication and generosity of time and the care you provide be it with essential transport, kind words or a listening ear. We celebrate National Volunteer week 18-24 May this year with the theme "Changing communities. Changing Lives." You definitely do that.

Thank you to all of you including those who have had to stop volunteering for a short time because of Covid-19. I send a wave of appreciation to all of you.

Hall Upgrades

Since our Health and Wellness Centres have been temporarily suspended in order to protect our clients, we have decided to take the opportunity to update our hall with the incredible help of the Work For The Dole group, led by Darren.

Since our hall used to be a bowling club, there were things that needed to be removed or upgraded but most notably is the bar in the corner. For our use, the bar is very old and a bit outdated, so Darren decided that it needed a new splash of colour.

The work is still in progress since the WFD has been put on hold for now, but we can't wait to see how it turns out!

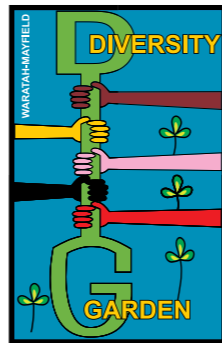


Come and see our snazzy new bar when we open up!



Come down to the Waratah Community Garden while golden sweet potatoes are in season to pick your own for a discounted price!

HMC Community Garden Report



WOW! How things can change in an instant, since our last quarterly newsletter printed in late February, the world has been turned upside down with the COVID-19 Virus and the isolation. We were extremely fortunate at the Gardens as I was allowed to keep attending the Gardens, the chickens and the bees with 1 only helper at any one time, so a roster had to be drawn up to maintain this ruling. However over the past 4 - 5 weeks there has been a steady flow of visitors to the café and garden with a lot of locals calling in for the first time while they were out walking their dogs or riding bikes and scooters with their children. Feeding and patting the chickens proved to be a great hit and many are coming back for return visits.

A big "THANK YOU" to all the new Gardeners who have joined after discovering the Garden on their daily walks or have recently moved to the area, your company and assistance is very much appreciated.

The sales of our honey (which took 3rd place in the Medium Honey at the Newcastle Show), jams, pickles, relishes (also taking out several 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes at the Show) have skyrocketed along with potted plants and seedlings plus the freshly harvested produce (herbs, salad greens, chokos, limes and sweet potatoes).

We have also been supplying the HMC kitchen and café with lots of herbs and rhubarb for the meals they are preparing and delivering to their clients who are in isolation. It is a mammoth effort and everyone involved should be congratulated. The chickens are appreciating the wonderful variety of scraps generated from all the extra cooking.

Sadly our Mothers' Day Market had to be cancelled, however with fingers crossed, we are preparing and looking forward to our "Spring Market Day" on Saturday 5th September so put the date in your diaries and keep it free!

I wish to thank Erin for putting together the HMC Weekly Newsletters to keep in touch, I hope that you have been enjoying them as much as my friends and I have.

Margaret Kenning
Garden Coordinator

HMC Garden Gift Vouchers

HMC Garden Gift Vouchers are available for purchase for any nominated amount and can be redeemed for plants, pots, novelty gift items, boxed selection of jams, pickles, mini succulent gardens and terrariums, beeswax wraps and moth repellent sachets.



Our award-winning honey and relishes. Pick yours up at the Garden!

I have recently harvested **36 KILOS** of honey and I am in the process of bottling up, this will probably (depending on weather, etc.) be the last harvest for now as the bees need their honey to survive over the winter months.



FUN FACT
When eating your toast or crumpet with 1 teaspoon of honey – that is a lifetime's work of 12 honey bees!



Strawberry, Rhubarb and Ginger Crumble

Prep: 20 mins | Cook: 35 mins | Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS

- 10g butter
- 4 rhubarb stalks, trimmed, coarsely chopped
- ¼ cup (55g) caster sugar
- ½ cup (125ml) orange juice
- 500g strawberries, hulled, halved
- ½ cup (75g) self-raising flour
- ¼ cup (33g) plain flour
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 80g butter, extra, chilled, chopped
- ½ cup (110g) brown sugar
- Vanilla ice-cream, to serve

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 180°C. Grease four 1-cup (250ml) ovenproof dishes.
2. Heat butter in a medium frying pan over medium heat and cook the rhubarb, tossing, for 2 minutes. Add caster sugar and orange juice. Cook, tossing occasionally for 5 minutes or until rhubarb is tender.
3. Remove from heat, add strawberry and gently toss to combine. Reserve 2 tablespoons of the juice from the pan in a bowl
4. Spoon rhubarb mixture evenly into the prepared dishes.
5. Place the combined flour and ginger in a large bowl, stir to combine. Use your fingers to rub the extra butter into the flour mixture until it resembles fine breadcrumbs.
6. Stir in the brown sugar, and then sprinkle brown sugar mixture over the rhubarb mixture in the dishes.
7. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until crumble is golden.
8. Top with ice-cream and drizzle with reserved pan juice, if desired. Enjoy!

Volunteering in COVID-19 Times

The personal experience of a current volunteer, concentrating on shopping with a client, and client outings:

COVID-19 presents volunteers with another challenge in integrating our clients into their normal everyday tasks, such as shopping, and enjoying outdoor life. Beginning with disinfecting your vehicle, in-between clients. My personal choice was double-strength vinegar, for no other reason, than that was what I had on hand, in a suitable spray bottle that provided a fine mist that was easily dried. The smell left behind is another challenge! All of my clients chose not to wear masks so to make them feel more comfortable, I also have not been wearing a mask.

The main challenge in conducting clients shopping and on outdoor excursions is the 1.5 meter distancing rule. In normal times I preferred to stay close enough that if a client had a fall, I may not always prevent the fall, but could certainly minimize the damage.

Most of my clients over the years have used the actual shopping trolley as a de-facto walker, so another concern is to make sure the trolley is correctly disinfected. Over the past month, the check-out rules have changed, whereby currently the volunteer has to pack the clients items into their own bags, again adhering to the infection/distancing rules. I find maintaining contact with your client, as well as giving all other shoppers the required 1.5 m, within the supermarket particularly challenging! One solution is to do the actual shopping for the client, but most clients are elderly, concentrate particularly on healthy eating, and prefer buying their own choice of fruit, vegetables, and other items. Most supermarket personnel realize clients are elderly and less ambulant so are more considerate and helpful in dealing with them, and this also extends to the volunteer from my experience!

The HMC have provided me with a letter addressed to law enforcement authorities to cover any restrictions of movement with clients, however to this point I have not had to use it. Most of the parks and outdoor venues have lifted the restrictions on using outdoor tables, chairs etc., so this is a big help in entertaining our clients when outdoors. Again at outdoor venues, the social distancing can be a challenge, some people seem to be completely ignorant of the fact that restrictions are in place.

Finally, I will conclude with my attempt at a COVID-19 humorous anecdote: a few weeks ago when the Aldi Stores weren't opening until 9.30am, after waiting for the opening I was slow to react and my client had entered the store. As I rushed to catch up, the security guard accosted me at the entrance: "Where do you think you are going?"

I looked to see a line-up of probably 50 shoppers, obviously thinking I was "jumping the queue"! Thankfully a riot was prevented when I explained, and pointed... "I'm with him!"



Unfortunately here at the Men's Shed we've been unable to proceed as normal, so we've been quietly working behind the scenes to catch up on some cleaning and painting around the shed so we'll be nice and ready for when we're allowed to welcome our boys back.



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 A Waratah Community Reserve,
 2a Platt Street, Waratah NSW 2298



Multicultural Meal Service

From June 1st, 2020 our meal menu will be open to the general public. Please contact the office or visit our website for further details.

Sample Menu 1

	Entree	Main	Dessert
Mon	Minestrone Soup w/ Parmesan	Salmon and Vegetable Patties w/ Coleslaw and Potato Salad	Sticky Date Pudding
Tue	Roasted Carrot, Sweet Potato and Pumpkin Soup	Poached Silverside w/ Mashed Potato and Vegetables + Mustard Stock Sauce	Lemon Cheesecake
Wed	Slow Braised Pork Penne Bolognese w/ Parmesan	Slow Braised Lamb, Potatoes and Vegetable Casserole, w/ Dumplings	Rich Chocolate Cake w/ Chocolate Icing
Thu	Green Pea, Vegetable and Ham Soup	Slow Baked Beef Cottage Pie w/ Roasted Mixed Vegetables	Baked Rice Custard w/ Stewed Fruit
Fri	Bacon, Onion, Herb and Cheese Quiche Lorraine	Layered Beef Lasagne w/ Garden Salad	Stewed Fruit Trifle

Sample Menu 2

	Entree	Main	Dessert
Mon	Roasted Vegetable Frittata	Slow Roasted Pork Shoulder w/ Baked and Fresh Vegetables + Gravy	Layered Tiramisu w/ Coffee, Chocolate and Mascarpone
Tue	Penne and Bacon Carbonara. Garlic, Cream and Egg w/ Parmesan	Grilled Beef Rissoles w/ Potato Mash, Roasted Vegetables, Minted Peas + Onion Gravy	Apple Crumble Cake w/ Custard
Wed	Spinach and Fetta Spanakopita	Slow Braised Lamb Moussaka w/ Mixed Garden Salad	Fruit Yoghurt
Thu	Fried Rissotto and Parmesan Balls	Slow Braised Beef Stroganoff, Mushrooms and Sour Cream w/ Rice and Vegetables	Lemon Tartlet
Fri	Wild Mushroom Soup	Braised Steak Diane w/ Sliced Baked Potatoes and Vegetables	Individual Pavlova w/ a Chocolate Peppermint Chantilly Cream

All images shown are for illustration purposes only. Actual product may vary due to seasonal availability.



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www.huntermulticultural.org.au