

The Companion

EST. 2007

OUR PEOPLE ARE WITH YOU EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

AUTUMN 2011



The beautiful Valentine's Day cake devoured at Footscray

Cupids & Leprechauns

Peering into sunny courtyards across Dousta Galla facilities, we're seeing the leaves turn from yellow to red, a colour of warmth we should all enjoy as we head into what promises to be a wet and cold winter.

As we polish off this year's haul of chocolate Easter eggs, let's (without too much guilt) look back on February's chocolate consumption during a very special Valentine's Day. Footscray led the way with 10 couples celebrating over 50 years of devoted union. Seeing so many enduring partnerships after so many years together is truly inspiring – and it seems 7 News thought so too. Charles and Jean Green became TV stars for the day as the news crew visited Dousta Galla Footscray as part of their Valentine's Day coverage.

From one Saint to another, Lynch's Bridge and Queens Park celebrated St Patrick's Day in a sea of green. Both facilities were beautifully decorated with shamrocks and leprechauns while entertainers performed Irish jigs and told Irish jokes in the name of Saint Paddy.

In January, Harmony Village Shepparton celebrated Australia Day in the company of Dousta Galla board member and facility ambassador, Marion Lau,

and former member for Greater Shepparton, Don Kilgour. Residents Joan and Colin were presented with awards for their tireless contributions and for espousing those Australian values of mateship and egalitarianism.

We recently welcomed our new singing chef at Footscray, Penny Wilmore, who, if staff and resident compliments are anything to go by, has already improved meal times. She's also a very talented singer, treating residents to a few songs each week. We think there may just be a link between the beautiful voice and the beautiful food!

While on the culinary theme, we also have to thank the Lynch's Bridge cooks for baking a record number of birthday cakes during the month of March: 13 of its 57 residents celebrating their special day.

Easter is a special time of year and, as we go to print, I hope you are all enjoying a traditional meal with friends and family.

Mark Anderson
Chief Executive Officer



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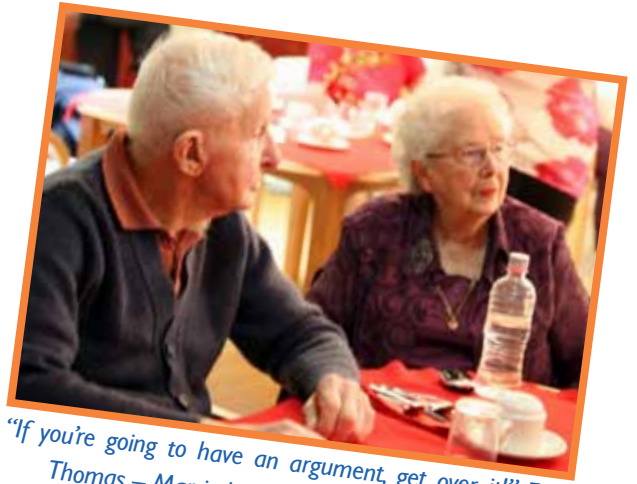
Go to www.douttagalla.org.au and sign up today!

Be my Valentine.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, every third marriage ends in divorce in this great southern land of ours. About 29% of Australians never marry at all and, during the past two decades, Australians have started to marry less and divorce more.

That's what makes it all the more remarkable, and worth celebrating, to see how many Dousta Galla Valentines are still together – and stronger for it – after a lifetime of loving union.

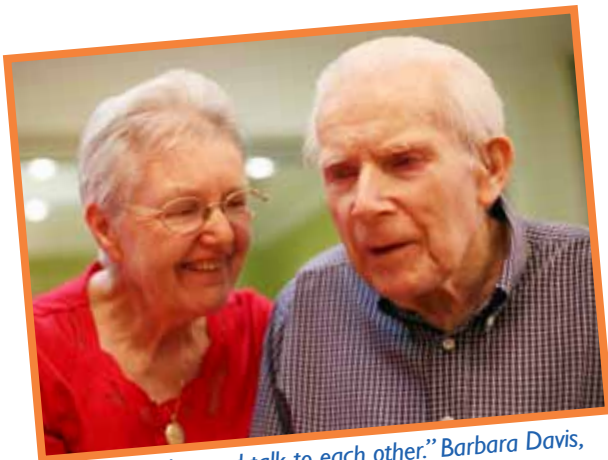
This Valentine's Day, 10 couples at Dousta Galla Footscray celebrated over 50 years of happiness together. Staff presented the residents with a beautiful chocolate cake featuring the names and wedding dates of all 10 dynamic duos. While some of the couples hit the dance floor, re-living the memories of when they first met and danced the night away, we decided to find what the secret to long-lasting love really is. Here's what some of our wise lovebirds had to say.



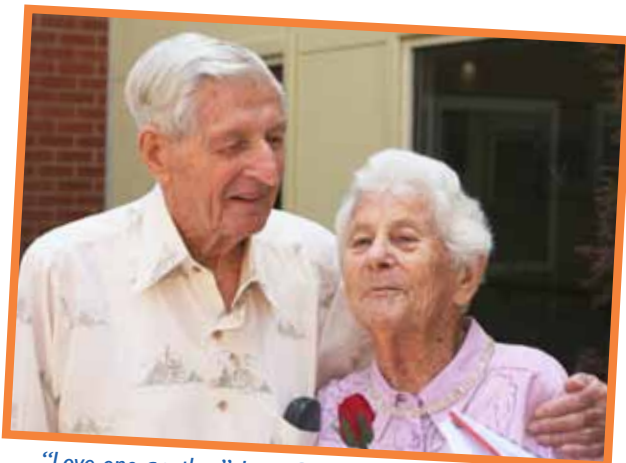
"If you're going to have an argument, get over it!" Enid Thomas – Married to Allen Thomas for 63 years.



"Just do what your wife tells you to do." Lloyd Bowen, married to Dulice Bowen for 60 years.



"Pull together and talk to each other." Barbara Davis, married to Cyril Davis for 50 years.



"Love one another", Jean Green, married to Charles Green for 70 years.



"The secret to a long marriage is to give and take. Although we women always have to give a little more! The trick is to make the husbands believe they're the ones making the decisions!" Maria Mahaly, married to Ervin Mahaly for 63 years.

Now there's some useful advice to the more capricious among the younger generation!

Served with song.



The Singing Chef - Penny Wilmore

There is no such thing as bad food – you eat, you live. But a well crafted meal is more than sustenance, it's an experience! Unlike many aged care groups, at Doutta Galla we cook food on-site. That way we control the freshness and we can change the menu for particular diets or cultural needs.

Behind every meal, is a hard-working cook. In early March, Doutta Galla Footscray took on Penny Wilmore as its new chef. Penny was first introduced to Doutta Galla during her time at Chefs on the Run and has 12 years of experience cooking for aged care homes. Working the stove since the age of 14, she now has over 36 years of cooking experience and has even handed her wisdom on to the next generation of food manipulators at Swinburne and Victoria University.

Penny has already received a lot of praise for her cooking and enthusiasm in the short amount of time she's been at Footscray. In response, she is quick to say it's the staff and residents at Footscray who should be praised.

"The staff are absolutely lovely; I couldn't have asked for a better place to work," she says with humility. "And I'm just glad that, in the short time I've been here, I've already been able to make a difference."

Upon Penny's arrival, she immediately made sure all food was sourced from fresh ingredients. Residents enjoy mouth-watering *menu du jour* of home-made chicken schnitzel, soup-of-the-day and fresh poached pears for dessert.

Penny's food philosophy is simple: "If I wouldn't serve it to my family, I won't serve it at all." Penny loves making the residents feel a little bit special and has

St Patrick's Day

"Why should you never iron a 4-leaf clover? You don't want to press your luck."

And so began St Patrick's Day celebrations at Queens Park as residents shared the best and worst Irish jokes from a lifetime of honouring the patron saint. A sufficiently emerald morning was made up from green fruits and beverages, all served before special entertainers, The Two Baldies, performed well loved Irish songs.

To finish the day, residents were served Irish stew and cheesecake with green jelly on tables beautifully decorated with green table cloths, green Maison and shamrocks.

Lynch's Bridge also took part in St Patrick's Day celebrations. Staff and volunteers from the Country Women's Association Victoria decorated the facility with pictures of shamrocks and leprechauns artfully painted by the residents.

Looking resplendent in green and orange, staff served up four-leaf clover biscuits with icing and cordial – green of course!

even cooked up some personal favourites for special occasions.

"We all have different tastes so I make sure there are meat and vegetarian options each day to cater for everyone. The way I see it, we're guests in their house – they're not guests in ours – so we should make extra effort to ensure they are happy and satisfied with their meals," she said.

If her cooking talents weren't enough, Penny is also a very talented singer, having sung cabaret at hotels in Adelaide. She now sings 2-3 songs for the Footscray residents each week and during Friday's Happy Hour.

They say the way to a man's heart is through the stomach but, by the sounds of all the praise Penny's getting, it seems food is the way to everyone's heart. Just serve it with song.

Australia Day in the Village



Joan Hall with Harmony Village Ambassador Marion Lau

On Australia Day, Harmony Village Shepparton held its Australia Day Awards hosted by Marion Lau (Harmony Village Committee member) and former MP for Greater Shepparton, Don Kilgour.

Harmony Village Shepparton was originally founded to provide aged care that is tailored to the needs of people from different cultural backgrounds. Speaking to gathered guests, Ms Lau, who is of Malaysian Chinese background, reflected on multiculturalism in Australia and the hardships that migrants face when arriving in a different country. She then presented the Harmony Village Australia Day awards to Colin McNamara and Joan Hall for their contribution to fellow residents.

The consummate host, Colin is well known at the village for showing new residents around and encouraging them to participate in activities. He's quick to slip visiting children some lollies (yes that's still a wholesome task for community elders!) and share a few tales – the looks of admiration on their faces are priceless.

Joan was awarded for being a tireless worker, helping staff by folding linen 2-3 times per day. Never one to complain and always polite, Joan encourages others to help out but is understanding if she's the only one at the bench. She embodies a work ethic to which we can all aspire.

After the torrential rains of the summer period, guests used the occasion to express their solidarity with displaced families, many of them in the local region. Father Michael delivered prayers for the flood victims and the homeless before calling for a minute's silence.

Simplifying the system - Phase one.

The Minister for Health and Ageing, Mark Butler, has announced that a new single phone number will be introduced as of 1 July 2011 to make it easier for older Australians and their carers to access and navigate the aged care system.

The government is investing \$36.8 million to establish a new 'front end' aimed to improve information, intake and assessment through a national aged care hub and the establishment of local care and assessment teams over the next three years.

"Many people who have encountered the current system have told us that there are currently multiple entry points, and information on service options and availability of services can be difficult to find," Mr Butler said.

Mr Butler said the new national phone number will consolidate the range of existing 1800 numbers, and act as a single point of entry for people seeking information and access to aged care services.

The government is also working on improvements to the aged care website to ensure that more comprehensive and up-to-date information is available for the growing number of people who like to access information online.

This is the first phase of the government's implementation of a one-stop-shop approach. The government is expected to continue to make improvements to the aged care system, using a phased approach to allow flexibility in responding to the Productivity Commission's *Caring for Older Australians* final report, due in June.

The Companion will continue to keep you updated on the progress of the Productivity Commission's inquiry and the government's initiatives to improve the aged care system.