
The Shed - A Haven

7 April 2011

Resthaven's Community Respite Services, based at Township Road, Marion, South Australia, offers centre based and in-home respite for carers, including overnight and extended day respite.

To cater for some of the male respite care recipients, a very popular weekly program was established in January 2009 as part of a three year trial project under the National Respite for Carers Program.

The Coordinator, Theresa Howard-Jones, says that *The Shed* was established shortly after the Hersey Cottages respite program commenced, as it was clear that many of the men had previously enjoyed time spent in their shed. The venue is located next door, and is a converted garage, which the participants have helped to organise into a functioning 'shed'. They gave their input as to what was required, such as tool boards and benches .

She says, 'They come up with their own projects to make and look forward to going to *The Shed*. After they share lunch together, the 'blokes' are very excited, and the feeling of camaraderie amongst the group is evident.'

'They feel like they are 'going to work' to do a job and are driven to finish their tasks. It gives them a sense of purpose.'

The Shed is one of a number of activities that aim to develop links between community respite and aged care facilities.

The Shed operates on Wednesdays from 1.30-4.30pm. Any of the respite care recipients can choose to join *The Shed*, regardless of their experience or ability. Women are welcome to join the group but, as yet, none have taken up the opportunity.

Potential participants are often identified at the initial conversation with the person and their carer when enquiring about the options available for respite. A discussion about what the person has enjoyed in the past may identify that they like to work with their hands, socialise and generally do whatever it is that men do in sheds. At *The Shed*, the projects are both large and small.

The staff working with the participants at *The Shed*, Robert and Sherry, are both experienced Home Support Workers and talented in 'shed-type' activities.

Program Coordinator, Theresa Howard-Jones, says, 'The shed program is great for people who have always enjoyed tinkering in their shed. Their carers are happy knowing that the 'blokes' are doing something they enjoy, so that they can relax and enjoy some much needed time to themselves.'

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One regular attendee is Murray Jarvis, who is 83 ½ years old (you have to add the half, it all counts, he says!). Murray's hobbies have involved woodwork since his grade 6 schooldays, during the war. One of the first things he made was a First Aid Box, which he still owns. At Croydon Technical College, he was top of his woodwork class in 1941, 1942 and 1943.

Murray's involvement with Resthaven started in a small way, with two hours of respite weekly. The staff collected him from his home and took him on outings to art galleries, museums and looking at buildings and architecture.

Every Wednesday, he joins others for lunch at the Hersey Cottages respite centre, before going next door to *The Shed* for the afternoon. Occasionally, Murray spends three or four nights at Resthaven's overnight respite service, Ridgway House, at Westbourne Park, to give his wife and carer, Mary, a break. Murray says he enjoys going, as he likes to talk to people and he knows that Mary deserves and needs a rest.

When Murray joined *The Shed*, he became reacquainted with an old friend, Tom, and both enjoy catching up each week.

Following a stroke, Murray was unable to talk for a while and received Occupational Therapy at Resthaven's Marion Community Services. His biggest fear was that he would not be able to sing in church or talk again. Now, he is almost fully recovered and his motor skills have improved, due to his activities and rehabilitation.

Murray says, "Woodwork and painting keep my mind active, they work well together. I cannot sit down and do nothing, or I will fade away."

Murray has made many things, but he has had the most pleasure from making blanket boxes. Each of his nine grandchildren has one. The boxes were fashioned on an old box that has been in his wife's family for hundreds of years. Murray is pictured with one of the blanket boxes in the photo attached.

Lionel Curran is another regular at *The Shed*. Lionel lives in Resthaven Marion's Low Care Residential facility, located nearby, and says he has returned to doing something he thought he would not be able to do anymore. The staff transport him in his wheelchair to the group each Wednesday afternoon.

Lionel says, '*The Shed* is good, because someone is with you if you need help.'

For more information about *The Shed* and its activities, call Theresa Howard-Jones, Community Respite Services Coordinator, Resthaven Community Respite Services on 8358 3173.

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Photo captions: Murray Jarvis, with one of his blanket boxes.

Being restricted to a wheelchair does not stop Lionel Curren from enjoying *The Shed*.

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