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Share the Christmas spirit with someone who needs it

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Page 1 of 1

Share the Christmas spirit with someone who needs it

Darren Birbeck



Christmas is a time for spending with the people we love. It is a time of happiness and joy; connecting with family and friends.

However, it can also be a time of sadness for those who live alone, or who have lost friends and family.

Social isolation and loneliness can have a significant negative impact. There are many people who spend Christmas alone.

Sadly, this includes many older South Australians. It is important that we make time for family members or significant others who may be frail, less mobile than in their younger years, and who you may not see very often.

Christmas is an opportune time to make a connection with your local community; to take the time to say "hello" to the people in your street, to reach out to neighbours, friends and family.

While it is the children who bring the spirit of Christmas alive, sharing special time with an elderly relative or friend can be equally rewarding.

On December 5, we celebrated International Volunteer Day, where we acknowledged the millions of



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volunteers across Australia and the profound impact that they have nationwide.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the aged care sector, where volunteers can help alleviate social isolation and loneliness by providing companionship, one on one or in a group setting.

Volunteers contribute in many ways, through a musical or artistic talent, assisting with walks, exercise, gardening or other groups.

Others volunteer by visiting with a pet, providing spiritual or pastoral support, helping with the site shop, helping with digital technology or by driving the bus.

By volunteering with an aged care provider, you can

help to alleviate the isolation and loneliness that aged care residents and clients may experience.

It is a fantastic way of complementing the work of paid staff who deliver the direct care and support for residents and clients. Christmas can be a busy time as we prepare for our own Christmas celebrations at home or steel ourselves for a multi-stop journey across the state.

Whatever you do, it could also be a time where we share the spirit of Christmas with someone who needs it the most.

Darren Birbeck is the Chief Executive Officer, Resthaven Incorporated