



Australian
Multicultural
Community
Services

Congratulations Zofia on **25 years** of volunteering with AMCS



Strength *August 2021*

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newspaper



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Introducing...
AMCS Nordic Walking
Group

We care, we support, **we empower**

Picture: Lucy Vucic (Team Leader Social Support Programs), Zofia Sztendur (Volunteer and Home Care Package client) and Milena Schaedler (Coordinator of Volunteer Programs). This photo was taken prior to lockdown.

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Welcome to Australian Multicultural Community Services' (AMCS) August edition of the newsletter. I hope you have been staying warm and safe during the winter months.

Our current newsletter theme is strength. We understand the benefit in being together and are grateful to support seniors in connecting, particularly through various group activities, online social café events, bingo and gentle exercise classes.

COVID's effects are still noticeable and shows the importance of vaccinating to help eradicate the virus. I have had my vaccination to support the community and I encourage you to do the same when this is available to you.

As always, please stay safe and remember, we are available for care and support. If we can help, we will.

We love what we do and are happy to support other people you know who may benefit from our care.



Elizabeth Drozd
CEO, AMCS

Volunteer spotlight

This August, Zofia Sztendur celebrates 25 years of volunteering with AMCS. The Volunteer Coordinator team congratulated her on National Volunteer Week in May. She used to visit clients at home and attend the office to assist with admin duties. Now, she calls two clients to keep them company and helps our Social Support Group every Monday to prepare client activities.

"I was born in Poland and speak Polish. I like to help people from Poland," Zofia says.

She is also a Home Care Package client. In her spare time, she likes walking, excursions, travelling and spending time with her family — her son, Dariusz, daughter-in-law Ewa, two grandsons Michal and Maciek, and one great granddaughter Ola. Thank you, Zofia.





Nurse's corner — Advance care planning

Your Care Advisor may have mentioned advance care planning to you. No one wants to think about the end of their lives, but this can help communicate your wishes.

What is advance care planning?

Advance care planning provides your health and personal preferences to your family and doctors at the last stage of your life. Give your family peace of mind by discussing your wishes. They can decide about your care when you can't.

Who needs an advance care plan?

Everyone should consider an advance care plan, regardless of age or health, especially if you have:

- an advanced chronic illness
- a life-limiting illness
- risk of dementia or a related illness

Like making a will, advance care planning may simply be part of preparing your future.

How to make an advance care plan?

Think about what you want, don't make it complicated and be open about your care preferences.

Talk to your loved ones. Although sometimes difficult, these conversations express your requests, including funeral arrangements, burial or cremation choice and if you wish to be resuscitated.

You may complete the required forms with your GP. For Home Care Package clients, please contact your Care Advisor.

Attention: Call recordings for quality and coaching

We are implementing call recordings on selected office numbers to enhance our services.

When you ring during office hours, you will hear, "Thank you for calling Australian Multicultural Community Services (AMCS). This call may be recorded for training and monitoring purposes. Please hold the line and advise our staff if you do not wish to be recorded."

We aim to deliver clearer communications, faster resolutions and continuous improvement.

Women Community Champions

AMCS is currently seeking female leaders to join *Women Together for Safer Pathways*. Make a positive impact in the community by preparing community members to get vaccinated.

AMCS has free educational workshops:

- Train to be a peer educator to encourage community members to get vaccinated.
- Obtain current COVID-19 vaccine information.
- Learn COVID-19 vaccination benefits.

For more information, please contact Isurika on isurika.wijewardhena@amcservices.org.au or 0432 099 369.



Accessing home care support through My Aged Care (MAC)

AMCS provide opportunities for participation and inclusion, understanding the care and support needs of older people from different backgrounds. We give seniors a voice, up-to-date information and the advocacy and care they deserve.

Addressing seniors' unmet care needs is one of our top priorities. My Aged Care is an Australian Government website and phone line to provide a first point of contact for individuals age over 65 to access information on support services.

Discussing support services and your personal situation over the phone can be challenging. Socially isolated people or those from multicultural backgrounds are most vulnerable and sometimes miss out on services.

Here are our top tips to be well-informed to prepare for My Age Care's free screening process:

- Allocate sufficient time for the call with no disturbance.
- Ensure a support person is present during the phone call if needed. This can be a friend, family member or professional like an Access and Support Worker. You may list a support person as a representative if you provide consent.



- Locate a local organisation to help you and ask if they have Access and Support or Specialised Support Services.
- Prepare information like your Medicare card number, personal situation, living arrangements, date of birth and medical conditions affecting your independence.
- If you speak a language other than English, request government funded interpreters. My Aged Care will organise an interpreter for you over the phone.
- State if you have a preferred service provider/organisation.

Based on your answers and support needs, My Aged Care will send a referral for a home assessment or comprehensive aged care assessment. The assessor may give approvals for services, issue direct referrals to service providers or generate a referral code(s) for you to contact your preferred provider directly. You can rely on our support through these processes and beyond.

For more information, please contact Sinisha Krstov, Access and Engagement Manager, on sinisha.krstov@amcservices.org.au or (03) 8371 2304, or contact MAC on www.myagedcare.gov.au or 1800 200 422.



DANIEL POCKETT

Krishna and Barbara Prakash at home in Yarraville



Staff profile

Sherene Ng
CHSP Care Coordinator

How long have you been working at AMCS?

Two years.

Tell us about your role at AMCS.

I provide support to seniors who require entry-level services under CHSP (Commonwealth Home Support Programme) to maintain their independence at home.

Everyone at AMCS is kind, friendly and supportive. Our staff are culturally diverse, and I enjoy interacting with them and learning more about their background.

I like working with people, especially seniors. They have many fascinating and interesting life stories. An old Chinese saying states, "A family with an elder has a living treasure of gold." Meaning, the elders are wiser, more experienced and can give advice to younger generations.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I was born and raised in Malaysia. In 2015, I moved to Australia to pursue my social work studies. I speak English, Mandarin, Malay, Cantonese and Hakka. In my free time, I recently started learning digital piano. I play games, read crime/thriller books and practise the ukulele.

AMCS in The Australian newspaper

For those who who did not see the story,
please find The Australian's full article:

Jab campaigns 'must target ethnic groups'

EXCLUSIVE

RACHEL BAXENDALE

Community groups in Melbourne warn that without co-ordinated campaigns to address vaccine hesitancy among older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Australia will struggle to achieve the levels of Covid-19 immunity required to return to normal life.

Australian Multicultural Community Services chief executive Elizabeth Drozd said while many older Australians from non-English-speaking backgrounds did not regularly access the internet or even have mobile phones, most did consume news from their home countries and were influenced by local community leaders.

"I think it's very important for governments to understand that the messages must come from a source they trust, and government is not necessarily the No.1 source of trust for a lot of these people," Ms Drozd said.

She said it was therefore incumbent upon the state and federal governments to work with community and faith leaders and GPs so that those trusted sources could encourage older people to get vaccinated.

"So far there has not been adequate communication through reliable sources from government," Ms Drozd said. "Seniors rely on friends and support networks for information, and GPs are also often a source of trust and reliable medical advice.

"Then there's the issue of religious and faith leaders who can play a very positive role if they're sending the right message, and the opposite if they're not.

"Ethnic communities watch news and what's happening in their home country, and for a lot of them the messaging has been mixed. In most cases, the pandemic hasn't been managed as well over there as here, so they're often aware of the numbers of deaths from Covid-19 - but media coverage of the very rare fatalities from vaccines also seems to have

stuck in some people's minds." A Polish migrant herself, Ms Drozd, 61, said she had received the AstraZeneca vaccine as early as possible in order to encourage others to do so.

Together with the North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network and Centre for Ethnicity and Health, Ms Drozd's organisation has recruited and mentored 25 community leaders and put information about vaccinations online in 80 languages.

The groups have also produced videos in Arabic, Cantonese, Greek, Hindi, Italian, Mandarin and Vietnamese, to ensure people from these backgrounds can access reliable information in their own language from people in their own communities.

All are commonly spoken languages in the inner, northern and western suburbs of Melbourne, which have borne the brunt of the city's Covid-19 cases.

Barbara Prakash, 62, and her husband Krishna live in Yarraville in Melbourne's west. A former hospital ward assistant and childcare worker, Ms Prakash, who has Polish heritage, said she and her Indian-Fijian husband received the AstraZeneca vaccine as soon as they could.

"If I had to get it, I had to get it, and that's it," she said. But she was worried many in their communities were reluctant to do so.

Among those less enthusiastic was Elizabeth Rybicki, who came to Australia from Poland in 1966 and lives in Avondale Heights in Melbourne's northwest.

She said she had always tried to avoid vaccinations, but a desire for life to return to normal persuaded her to get the AstraZeneca jab a fortnight ago. "I'm 85 so I'd like to be able to enjoy my life and socialise and go to the club again," said Ms Rybicki, who is a member of a Polish senior citizens club in nearby Essendon.

Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt on Friday announced a \$1.2m small grants program administered by the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council to help culturally and linguistically diverse groups share Covid-19 vaccination information.

Meet Ioannis Danatzis

Home Care Package client

Ioannis Danatzis was born in 1934 and moved back and forth between Greece and Melbourne. Meeting his wife, Alexandra, through friends, they then shared an apartment in Thessaloniki, Greece, the second largest city to Athens.

He worked in railway maintenance and enjoyed photographing the shorefront for extra cash. Now, he grows vegetables with AMCS gardener, Andrew, and son, Mathew.

Every week, he walks with his 4WW to the Greek community club and café and socialises for hours, especially when there is dancing or music involved.

Coming to Australia

In 1974, Ioannis and Alexandra arrived in Australia on the last voyage of a Patris ship to create wealth for five years. They had two kids, Helen and Mathew, and now have five grandchildren.

In 1979, they sold everything in Australia and returned to Greece for a short time.

"Alexandra wanted to care for her ageing parents, but she had the beginning of Multiple Sclerosis (MS). Once in Greece, her MS grew worse. Instead of helping her parents, they helped her," Ioannis recalls.

Alexandra's parents told her to return to Australia for better government help.

In 1980, they sold their apartment and bought a house in Coburg, where Ioannis still lives to this day.

"I worked night shifts at Ford for five years to pay off debt to the bank. I dislike owing money," Ioannis explains. "Unfortunately, my wife became wheelchair bound. I gave up work to look after her. I did not want her to go to a nursing home."

AMCS experience

Alexandra passed away in 2009, leaving Ioannis home alone. He relied on Helen and Mathew for every task.

Together, they managed for many years, but he needed more home care, shopping and meal preparation support. His kids worked full time and had their own families.

In 2018, he was approved for a Level 2 Home Care Package. Helen called many companies, including AMCS. Sofie, his now Care Advisor, visited his family to explain the services.

"I like Sofie could speak Greek. She's patient and helpful. The support workers are nice and treat me with respect," Ioannis says. "I've received letters asking if I would consider changing providers. I will be with AMCS until the day I die."



Staff profile

Janusz Zoltowski, Support Worker

1. How long have you worked at AMCS?

Four years.

2. Tell us about your role.

Three times a week, I visit nursing homes and help clients with shopping, cleaning and transport. I'm always busy and sometimes work after six. When I'm not a Support Worker, I make food deliveries for AMCS. As an older adult, I enjoy my job because I relate to clients. Coming from a Polish background, most of my clients are from the same culture, but I also support seniors from different nationalities.

3. Tell us about yourself.

I'm married, have four kids and two granddaughters. In my spare time, I enjoy fishing and cooking. I prepare traditional Polish meals and sauces like cucumber soup, barszcz (beet soup) and bigos (meat and cabbage stew).



Introducing... AMCS Nordic Walking Group

Nordic walking is a total-body gentle exercise using specialised poles, popular among seniors in Europe.

Who: Individuals age over 65

When: Wednesdays

Time: 10:00am – 2:00pm including transport and breakfast

Where: James Cook Children's Centre
55-63 James Cook Drive
Endeavour Hills VIC 3802

From the meeting point, the group moves to the park.

Cost: For Home Care Package clients, please speak to your Care Advisor. Your home care subsidy may cover the cost.

We offer:

- transport to and from venue
- 1-1.5 hours of exercises
- a healthy breakfast — sandwiches, fruit, coffee and tea



- information in your preferred language
- a certified instructor to teach the right techniques.

Improve your body posture, endurance, balance and strength.

To join, you require a referral to a Social Support Group or Centre-based Respite Group.

For more information, please contact Beata on beata.radloff@amcservices.org.au or 0403 165 648.

If you live in other Melbourne areas, please contact Beata. Depending on demand, we will open additional groups in other Melbourne regions.

Staff and volunteers' anniversaries — July to August 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 July to August.

Staff

July

Bendlin, Sabina	5 years
Drzazga, Malgorzata	20 years

August

Jakubowski, Regina	5 years
Karczewska, Lucja	10 years
Kouros, Teresa	15 years
Listarova, Oxana	10 years
Ramos, Estrella	5 years
Wiktor, Zdzislaw	10 years

Volunteers

July

Dimitriadis, Georgia	1 year
Falguni, Jogiya (Flower)	2 years
Karki, Aastha	2 years
Krstov, Marina	3 years

August

Anastasopoulos, Artemis	1 year
Bangara, Atish	1 year
Graczyk, Kamila	6 years
Hamrosi, Halina	7 years
Kurmus, Halenur	1 year
Lee Lar, Lei	3 years
Sztendur, Zofia	25 years
Panchvidze, Tinatin	2 years
Raphael, Elaine	2 years
Stanislaw, Okis	1 year



Newsletter feedback

What would you like to see in our next newsletter?

Please email suggestions to marketing@amcservices.org.au



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Note: AMCS prioritises the safety of clients, volunteers, staff and community groups. The majority of the photos in this newsletter were taken prior the pandemic. Therefore, social distancing wasn't required.