

Wednesday 19 May 2010.

AWARDS RECOGNISE OUR VOLUNTEERS' GREAT CONTRIBUTION

A record fifty-three nominations were received for this year's annual Volunteer Recognition Awards. They were honoured at a special celebration on Wednesday 19 May, at the North Ryde School of Arts Community Centre. The category winners are:

- **Volunteer of the Year - Miss Cynthia Dummer** began volunteering for North Ryde Community Aid in 1987 after retiring from a 40 year career in retail. Although she did not drive, Cynthia later became involved in the Visiting Program taking her special brand of care, commitment and friendship to those in need – estimated at over 700 client visits. Cynthia says “it is good to give something back to the community while your health allows you to do so”.
- **Young Volunteer of the Year – Alice Fielding-Smith** is a 17 year old student at Riverside High and Girl Guide Junior Leader. She gives her time willingly to many community events such as Citizenship and Anzac Day and volunteers for Meals on Wheels, Gladesville Community Aid and St. Charles 'Lifeteen' Mass. Alice was awarded the Defence Department's 'Long Tan Award' for leadership in 2008.
- **Group Volunteer of the Year – Easy Care Gardening Inc** is a community based, not for profit group that has been assisting the frail aged and people with a disability living on a pension in the City of Ryde with a heavily subsidised gardening service since December 2003. Teams of volunteers weed, mulch, prune and make gardens “easy care”, safe and tidy, so that these people are able to retain their independence and remain in their own homes.

The Mayor, Cllr Michael Butterworth, said volunteers help build great communities. “Volunteers generously give their time, skill and compassion to improve not only the lives of countless fellow citizens, but also the economic and social well being of our entire community.

“Congratulations to the winners and all those nominated. Our special thanks to the nominators who brought to our attention the work of the wonderful individual volunteers and groups.”

The Awards are held every year in conjunction with National Volunteer Week to honour the largely unseen army of volunteers who give their time and skill so generously to uplift and benefit the lives of so many in our community, from the youngest to the oldest.

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2010 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR CATEGORY WINNERS

Individual Award - Cynthia Dummer

Cynthia Dummer first became involved with North Ryde Community Aid in 1987, having retired after a 40 year career in retail.

In those early days, Cynthia was rostered on for weekly cleaning duties at the Centre, to vacuum, clean and scrub. By 1990 she was also helping out at the Tuesday luncheon group.

In 1994, Cynthia asked about joining the NRCA's Visiting Program despite the fact that she did not drive. Her gentle disposition and initiative made her ideally suited to this form of volunteering as does her gift in establishing common ground that she and the client can share, be it reading or a topic of interest to discuss. Her regular visits are still eagerly anticipated by her clients.

Cynthia Dummer has enriched the lives of all she has come in contact with in her two and half decades of volunteering. She has made innumerable people's day 'a little brighter' and has always ensured those in need were not alone. In fact, her colleagues calculate that Cynthia has made in excess of 700 visits to NRCA clients, served over 300 cups of tea and cleaned for at least 100 hours... just for NRCA alone.

Recently asked what it was about Volunteering that retained her, Cynthia replied: "It is good to give something back to the community while your health allows you to do so".

Young Volunteer of the Year Alice Fielding - Smith

Alice Fielding-Smith is a 17 year old student currently studying year 12 at Riverside High. She joined Ryde Girl Guides nine years ago, has gained a BP Award and is currently working on her Queens Guide Award. For the past two years Alice has made a weekly commitment to help lead the North Ryde guides as a Junior Leader as well as many other duties throughout the year.

At Riverside she is active in choirs, bands including the Millennium Band for the School Spectacular 2009 and was a representative on the School Student Union for three years.

She willingly volunteers for a number of civic duties including the flag ceremonies for the City of Ryde's Australia Day civic ceremony and Anzac Day at North Ryde RSL and always takes part in Clean Up Australia Day. .

Other volunteering works include Meals on Wheels and escorting senior citizens on day trips from Gladesville Community Aid.

At her local church, St. Charles, Alice has played and sung with the choir since she was eight years old and in the past two years took an active role with the Senior Group that plan and run the 6pm "Lifeteen" mass and Youth Group.

In 2008, Alice received the Defence Dept "Long Tan Award" for leadership

Group Award - Easy Care Gardening Inc (Monday & Wednesday teams led by Ian Norman)

Easy Care Gardening Inc is a community based, not for profit group that has been assisting the frail aged and people with a disability on a pension in the City of Ryde with a heavily subsidised gardening service since December 2003. Teams of volunteers weed, mulch, prune and make gardens safe and tidy and "easy care" so that these people are able to remain in their own homes.

Volunteer Ian Norman leads two teams of volunteers working in the City of Ryde on Mondays and Wednesdays. These two teams have worked an astonishing numbers of hours in homes of the frail and aged people with a disability in the City of Ryde. Ian Norman alone has spent about 7, 380 hours in the gardens. This equates to nearly four and a half years full time work (based on 35 hour week, working 48 weeks a year) over the seven years he has been volunteering for Easy Care Gardening Inc.

The hard working teams love the company of their clients and each other while they work, believing that they 'get' as much as they 'give'.

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