

# FUSION (Fun Unite Smile Ignite Older New) An Aged and Youth Partnership



Top to bottom: Top- New garden at SummitCare Canley Vale .2. Maree Midena Canley Vale High School and a student with one of the residents. 3. Display of activities, photos and art pieces created by the students and residents. 4. One of the students presents the residents with a gift.



The FUSION program is all about connecting secondary school students with the residents and family members at SummitCare, the program teaches the students how to comfortably connect with older people and show appreciation for different cultures, learn new life skills, and most importantly have fun.

Ampha Mammone, Head of Strategic Development at SWC commented 'FUSION encourages, supports and increases participation in volunteering at an early age. It enhances their employability skills and will assist interested students in making the transition from school to work in the community sector. This will help with the skills shortages in the aged care sector in line with Australia's aging population as well as combating the high youth unemployment in this region.' She goes on to say, 'this would not have been possible without the fantastic team at Canley Vale.'

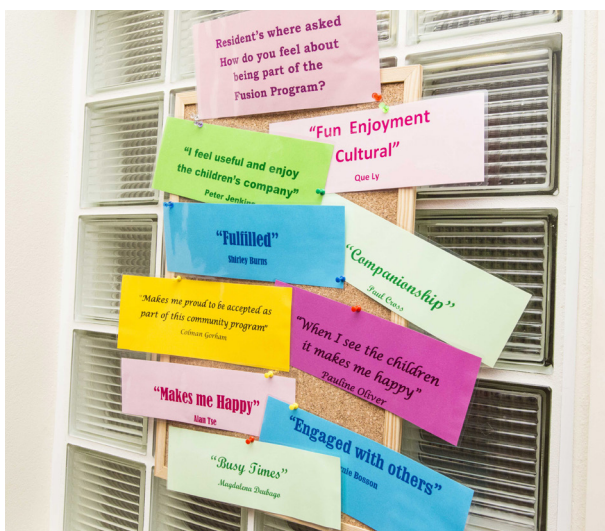
The students visit SummitCare once every two weeks for the afternoon. There is buddy system that has been thoughtfully worked through – looking at language and culture, abilities and interests. The sessions are organised by Susan Miller-Bere, Leisure and Lifestyle Officer and Maree Midena, Careers Advisor at Canley Vale High School.

Canley Vale High School student, Thao said FUSION allowed her to know how to relate with aged residents and gained an insight into the importance of supporting our aging population "we've been exposed to many jobs available in this industry and developed skills that will be useful now and in the future".

Cynthia Payne, SummitCare's CEO says, 'SummitCare is extremely proud and thankful to SWC and Canley Vale High School to have been involved in this pilot. The dedicated team at Canley Vale have made a huge success of a program that not only enriches the resident's lives but also really harnesses the importance of community and a sense of worth.'

Now in its third year the program is so successful that students are being required to submit an expression of interest to take part. The 2015/16 FUSION program at Canley Vale received funding from Clubs NSW, Fairfield RSL and St Johns Park Bowling Club. This meaningful program will be replicated at two SummitCare sites in Liverpool and Smithfield concurrently in 2016/17 thanks to the generous ClubGRANTS contribution of the Mounties Group.





*Far Left: FUSION Partners, SummitCare Canley Vale representatives, Canley Vale High School and Club representatives from St John's Bowling Club and Fairfield RSL respectively.*

*Top to bottom: Top Sue Miller and staff from SummitCare Canley Vale. Middle: Feedback from residents about the program. Bottom: A few student participants with SummitCare Chief Executive Officer Cynthia Payne.*

**FUSION** – Bridging the cultural and generational gap and promoting careers and volunteering in aged care and healthcare.

The project encourages, supports and increases participation in volunteering at an early age and will assist students in making the transition from school to work while enhancing their employability skills. Students learn about the healthcare / aged care industry, how to care for the residents and the pathways they can follow to start a career in the aged care and healthcare industry. Students can use these skills with their own grandparents or continue to volunteer in the community. At the conclusion of the project, participants will have donated 2,000 hours of volunteering time.

### Objectives:

- Bridging the generational gap by sharing values and respect for our diversity, culture and heritage (by creating a souvenir photo book)
- Encourage, support and increase community participation in volunteering at an early age
- Improving the aged resident's self-esteem, physical and mental health through regular interaction
- Providing employment pathways, skills and knowledge about the aged care and health care industry for students assisting in reducing the risk of youth unemployment
- Increasing awareness and issues related to health and the aging population
- Improving community connectedness and social inclusion

### About SummitCare

SummitCare has provided quality residential aged care in New South Wales for 50 years. With a focus on warmth, worth and wellbeing, they have built a reputation for providing the highest standards of aged care services and have received numerous industry awards. See [www.summitcare.com.au](http://www.summitcare.com.au)

### About South West Connect

The Youth Collective Impact team works with schools, community organisations and businesses to help young people discover pathways to a better future by enriching their educational, social and employment potential. SWC empowers young people to gain the skills, experiences and professional guidance to help them achieve a successful transition through school to further education, training or employment and become active and valuable contributors in the community. See [www.swconnect.org.au](http://www.swconnect.org.au)