

Media Release

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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HenPower brings smiles to Kapara

There are four very popular new residents at Kapara in Glenelg South and they've made themselves right at home.

Henny Penny, Chooky Looky, Chicken Licken and Priscilla are four hens who are bringing smiles to residents, staff, volunteers, family and a weekly group of visiting pre-schoolers.

ACH Group is the first aged care provider in South Australia and the second in Australia to introduce HenPower, a creative ageing program based around creative activities, arts, social connections and keeping chooks.

HenPower was launched in the UK by creative ageing charity Equal Arts in 2011 with the aim of using hen-keeping and creative activities to tackle social isolation, reduce depression and improve people's wellbeing. It has since been rolled out to more than 40 care homes in the UK, bringing hens and arts to older people in care settings.

HenPower Program Manager Jos Forester-Melville said: "We are delighted to welcome residents and staff at Kapara to our HenPower family. We see time and again the positive impact the hens have on residents."

"This project gives people a role and responsibility with the hens providing the catalyst for building relationships and exploring creativity. Bringing creativity into care is a fantastic way to engage people and aid communication, especially for those living with dementia."

Kapara's hens were installed in Memory Support Unit Rose Cottage in May, thanks to the Hart family and their business PetStock, who donated and set up the hens, coop, feed and accessories.

A Name That Frizzle competition was held at Kapara and residents voted on the best names for the Frizzle hen, while other residents chosen names for the Isa Brown and White Leg Horn hens.

The weekly intergenerational playgroup visits the hens and makes chickens during craft sessions. Volunteers supported residents in painting and knitting pieces which were submitted for the South Australian Living Artists (SALA) Festival in August.

Kapara staff will 'skype' the HenPower team in the UK who will offer advice with hen-keeping and how to actively engage older people in meaningful, creative activities.

Kapara Senior Manager Lyn Bertram says the chickens have settled in well.

"The residents just love them," she says. "For many of them, it brings back memories of their younger days, and they really enjoy handling them and petting them, feeding and looking after them. The kids and families from our weekly playgroup have really enjoyed having the hens around, too."

"This program is about building relationships through hen-keeping and we are delighted by the positive outcomes it has already delivered."

Resident Rhonda Fitzgerald, 92, says: "Aren't they gorgeous? You just want to pick them up and cuddle them. The chickens have brought so much joy to us all."

Resident Lena says: "When the chickens first arrived, I couldn't believe my eyes. Look at all those feathers on that funny looking one."

Resident Eunice remembers her family having chickens when she was growing up, saying: "They used to sleep in the side car of the motorbike."

HenPower is part of ACH Group's Health Ageing Approach, which aims to make it as easy as possible for people to choose to remain active, remain connected and engaged in what they love. Benefits, particularly for those living with dementia, include improved health and wellbeing and reduced depression. Ms Forester-Melville says HenPower has been shown to reduce loneliness and isolation.

End Media Release

About ACH Group

ACH Group is a not-for-profit aged care organisation that has been offering services to support good lives for older people in South Australia since 1952. As well as accommodation options across Adelaide, the Fleurieu Peninsula and East Melbourne, the group offers a range of health, wellbeing, respite and support services, help at home and social activities. Our 1700 specialist staff and hundreds of volunteers share the belief that older people should be valued and respected, connected to their communities and in control of their lives.

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