

Media Release

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Volunteers dig in for new community garden

Two volunteers are sharing their love of gardening with residents of ACH Group residential care home Milpara at Rostrevor with a community garden they established in January.

Jill Cook and Ann Murcott are neighbours at ACH Group retirement living community James Evans Court in Magill who both enjoyed large gardens before retirement.

They came up with the idea of establishing a community garden to draw people together with a common interest.

With support from ACH Group, they set up two raised garden beds with a self-watering irrigation system, fresh soil, compost and a range of plants, seeds and seedlings.

Once a week they visit the garden to spend time with Milpara residents, staff and volunteers who help with sowing, harvesting and weeding.

From chillies and potatoes to strawberries, capsicums, herbs and flowers, the garden has produced a range of edible goodies and a splash of colour to a formerly under-utilised area. There are plans to use produce in monthly community lunches held at Milpara.

Jill, who tended a large garden at Port Pirie for many years, is thrilled to be part of the project. "I've always loved gardening. There are people here who also enjoy it, but no longer have gardens of their own, who I thought could benefit from this. It's nice to be able to come out here in the sunshine. You can see that people enjoy getting their fingers back in the soil, and watching things grow."

For Ann, a former full time carer of her physically disabled son and mother living with dementia for many years, the garden is a source of relaxation. "My son and mother passed away within 12 months of each other. Adjusting to life on my own has been difficult and this garden gives me a sense of purpose, as does volunteering at the Royal Adelaide Show each year. I enjoy working with others and seeing the happiness this place brings."

ACH Group's Paul Harris said Jill and Ann may be called on to help establish similar gardens at other sites. "Both Jill and Ann are so inspiring. We're pleased that this garden is bringing together many different people from across ACH Group and the wider community. There is a host of evidence that shows gardens make a positive contribution to our health and wellbeing, extending beyond exercise and nutrition benefits. A community garden offers the opportunity to grow together as we grow our food."

Milpara resident Claire McPheat says being in the garden brings back memories of her home garden at Kadina in the Mid North. "I love it here, I really enjoy being in the garden again."

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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