



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editor's Letter	2
Acknowledgments	2
A Message from the Board	3
Maintenance Matters	4
News from the Hostel	5
Inspirational & Quotes	7
Everything I Need to Know, I Learned from Noah's Ark	8
New "Native Garden" at Christophorus House	10

## Editor's Letter

As the year draws to a close, I am grateful that although it's been an exceptionally challenging year with many changes, we've all come through to the other side, together! Life is looking much brighter with eased restrictions, allowing family and friends access again to residents living in the facility. This is timely for Christmas!

The theme for this newsletter is "gratitude". Board Member Jane Ruehmkorff expresses this most heartfully and comes at the right time as we emerge from the many restrictions and embark upon the joys of the festive season. And as the long spell of rain and cloudy weather has come to an end, we are blessed again with warm and sunny days to enjoy – just in time for summer. The coming New Year is looking much brighter!

This newsletter is a little different to past editions. Gwen has been my graphic artist for a number of years now and I'm very grateful for her expertise as she has designed the layout in a most professional manner. She rather unexpectedly moved to Mexico with her family, leaving me to my own resources but also open to some changes! I wish Gwen a fruitful and wonderful time during her stay there with her family and wish her a happy transition. I've included more photos to enjoy and a report on the new garden project two of our residents started. Featured are humorous stories and contemplative texts which are always enjoyed by our readers. I wish you all a wonderful, happy Christmas and New Year.

Monika Bebb  
*Self Care Liaison Officer*

### Christophorus House Retirement Village

ABN 32 001 781 013

Registered Office: 396 Peats Ferry Road, Hornsby  
NSW 2077 Postal Address: PO Box 3198, Asquith  
NSW 2077

Village Email: [chrhv@christophorushouse.com.au](mailto:chrhv@christophorushouse.com.au)

Hostel Tel: (02) 9476 3161

Hostel Fax: (02) 9987 0212

Hostel Email: [hostelmanager@christophorushouse.com.au](mailto:hostelmanager@christophorushouse.com.au)

Office Tel: (02) 9476 3161

Office Fax: (02) 9477 5768

Website: [www.christophorushouse.com.au](http://www.christophorushouse.com.au)

Office Hours: 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Hostel Hours: Staff on duty at all times, 7 days per week (After Hours after 5pm 0403 575 079)

Board Members: Chairman Sune Nielsen (Rev), John D Shaw, Jane Ruehmkorff, Annet van Kesteren & Denise Zhao. Interim CEO Glen Gillingham; Hostel Manager Rosa Tang; Self Care Liaison Officer Monika Bebb; Maintenance Supervisor Hayden Ibbett.

Christophorus House is a Not-for-Profit organisation and has operated since 1984.

Newsletter Editor: Monika Bebb. If you have some information, an event or an item you wish published, please contact Monika on (02)9476 3161 ext 4 or email [mbebb@christophorushouse.com.au](mailto:mbebb@christophorushouse.com.au)



**COVER:** Christmas has arrived at CHRV!

**BACK page:** Hydrangeas in bloom (photo Robyn)

## A Message from the Board



It is a privilege to be asked to write a piece for the newsletter and feel how fortunate I am to live in this village. I decided that Gratitude would be the theme of my message.

It is 4 years since I moved to Christophorus House, on the hottest day of the year, absolutely sweltering. Shortly after arriving,

Rose-Marie greeted us with a tray of glasses and a jug of cold water. A really thoughtful welcome!

The gardens always look stunning and every time I wander up the path another beauty catches my eye to gladden the heart. It is awesome how Jason manages to produce the magic of always having something in flower. The gardens really make this place *'A Little Piece of Paradise'*, as resident Jan Garland says.

It is not only the gardens that make this place so special. Our ever-vigilant Self Care Liaison Officer, Monika, pulls out all stops to assist us, always at the ready to find a solution to our problems. She has spent countless hours on the phone to Telstra on residents' behalf, sorting through red tape, bureaucracy and inefficiencies, to assist several of us through the NBN nightmare. That is only one of many challenges that Monika cheerfully overcomes on our behalf every day.

Anyone who has had a birthday recently may have missed Milan's birthday card jokes, a speciality he excelled in, and another small ritual that made this place special. Unfortunately change happens and we wish Milan well in his continued recovery and the next chapter in his life.

In the meantime, life goes on here and during the administrative challenges that have occurred since Milan was rushed to hospital, the Board and staff have worked non-stop to keep the Village functioning. On occasions this has demanded a super-human effort

from people not fully trained for the task, who have risen to the challenge and come out stronger. Gratitude to Glen, who became our Interim CEO in July. We so appreciate his steady hand as he guides us through the many curved balls that seem to have come from all angles to this tiny, unique retirement village. Fortunately, Glen has over 20 years' experience in the Aged Care industry.

Normality is slowly settling back in, and Donald has recently taken over the accounts. As a bonus to us, he is familiar with CHR V as he filled in when John went on holidays.

Whenever any of us need some maintenance done or a picture hung, Hayden is there to cheerfully do the job. His wide range of fixing skills keeps this place going and safe for us. Thank you, Hayden, for organising our carpet cleaning, pest control, window washing, gutter clearing and all the other myriad little jobs we find for you. It is really appreciated.

In Helga Forster House there have been big changes too, with Denise leaving not long after Milan went into hospital and so we found Rosa Tang, our new Facility Manager and Sandhya, our new Supervisor in HFH, who replaced Jina. Several of our staff in Helga Forster House have been here a long time and are dedicated to our residents and their care, so they are in good hands.

To thrive in life, you need 3 bones: *A Wish Bone, a Back Bone & a Funny Bone!*

Wishing you a safe and happy Festive Season.

Jane Ruehmkorff

## CHRISTMAS MESSAGE of hope



May the blessings of Christmas - peace, goodwill, love and hope - be with you all at this time.

*"In this Christmas night there should pour into our hearts the fundamental human feeling of love — the fundamental feeling that says: compared with all other forces and powers and treasures of the world, the treasures and the power and the force of love are the*

*greatest, the most intense, the most powerful. There should pour into our hearts, into our souls, the feeling that wisdom is a great thing — that love is still greater; that might is a great thing — that love is yet greater.”*

*Rudolf Steiner*

From: Birth of the Light: Thoughts on Christmas Eve  
Berlin, December 24th, 1912

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## MAINTENANCE MATTERS

Hayden Ibbett, Maintenance Supervisor

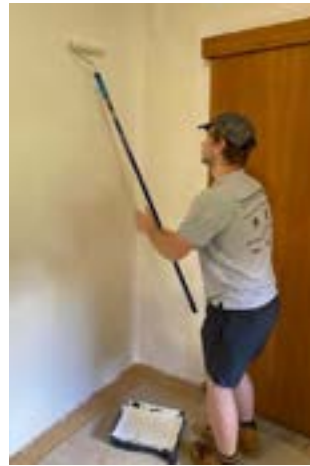
As 2021 ends we can all reflect on a very strange and challenging period of time that we will put behind us, yet never forget. The challenges placed upon CHR V were real with many changes. I'm so grateful for being a part of a team that went above and beyond to ensure the safety, comfort and wellbeing of our residents, which is first and foremost.

Noteworthy maintenance news saw some major upgrades undertaken in ILU's (Independent Living Units) which now all have modern RCD protected electrical meter boards with 7 units having boards connected by our electrician.

In the Hostel, several rooms now have new lighting; also, a new door and structures have been installed in the kitchen which has transformed the aesthetics and functionality immensely. Room 19 had new vinyl floor put down as well as being painted, and major tree works were also carried out. The nurse call system hardware rollout continues with new pendants and wall buttons being supplied. There are new chairs for the dining room, just to name a few things.

It has been great to have my son Dylan doing some workdays around CHR V this year. He has turned his hand to many tasks like pothole repairs, painting, water pressure cleaning and general duties which has helped me get on top of a few outstanding jobs.

That wraps it up for now. Have a great Christmas and New Year!



Repairs & maintenance with Dylan



Treeworks on a sunny day (remember that??)

## *News from the Hostel*

With much to be thankful for this Christmas...

The Diversional Therapy team is so grateful to have such wonderful volunteers who freely give up their time to visit and support our residents. They vaccinate, temp check, adhere to all the restrictions whilst still managing to help us provide emotional and social support to our residents.

A special thanks to our lovely church volunteers from the **Anglican Parish of Asquith**. David and his crew conduct a church service for us once a month. This year (with Covid restrictions making get-togethers tricky) the call for help was put out and David quickly responded to help with our Christmas Carols afternoon and in delivering a Christmas message.

We have volunteers that help in all kinds of ways. Helen and Paul give up their time to spend one-to-one time chatting with our residents. Karen crochets rugs, in fact so many rugs that we are now able to offer one for every resident in their welcome pack. And to my talented little helper, Beth who has helped enormously by creating the *Army of Angels* I needed this year. Thankyou!

We have welcomed back all our residents' families and friends. Even though we still have some restrictions, it brings us such joy to see our residents reunited with their families again.

A special thanks goes to my co-worker Ramana. Ramana has worked Thursdays and Fridays this year helping me. She has coped with anything that I have thrown at her. She has been a breath of fresh air in these challenging times. Her positive, determined attitude will see her go far.

Wishing all our staff, volunteers, residents and their families a very Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

Let's hear it for our volunteers, Hip Hip Hooray!!

Vicki Ferris,  
*Activities Co-Ordinator*



**Ramana at the Christmas tree**



**Anna helped make Christmas cards**



*Army of Angels waiting to perform...*



Lesley celebrates 96 years of life!



Charles enjoys a visit with his daughter



Rosemary cheerful as always –  
with son-in-law Scott



Celebrating Fathers' Day in September

## INSPIRATIONAL

*re Hope:*

*When the light becomes brighter, the shadows  
become darker.*

*The world may be horrific, but also beautiful,  
at the same time.*

*Some people are saying that we are on the  
cusp of a golden age.*

*So there is Hope!*

### Simple formula for living...

Live beneath your means.  
Return everything you borrow.  
Stop blaming other people.  
Admit it when you make a mistake.  
Give clothes not worn to charity.  
Do something nice and try not to get caught.  
Listen more, talk less.  
Take a 30 minute walk every day.  
Strive for excellence, not perfection.  
Be on time. Don't make excuses.  
Don't argue. Get organized.  
Be kind to unkind people.  
Let someone cut ahead of you in line.  
Take time to be alone.  
Cultivate good manners.  
Be humble.  
Realise and accept that life isn't fair.  
Know when to keep your mouth shut.  
Go an entire day without criticising anyone.  
Learn from the past. Plan for the future.  
Live in the present.  
Don't sweat the small stuff.  
It's all small stuff.

## QUOTES

"I don't believe in aging. I believe in forever  
altering one's aspect to the sun."

Virginia Wolf

"Inside we are ageless... and when we talk to  
ourselves, it's the same age of the person we  
were talking to when were little. It's the body  
that is changing around that ageless centre."

David Lynch

"The secret of genius is to carry the spirit of  
the child into old age, which means never  
losing your enthusiasm."

Aldous Huxley

"The older you get, the more important it is to  
not act your age."

Ashley Brilliant

"Wrinkles should merely indicate where the  
smiles have been."

Mark Twain



Albert Einstein Famous Quotes About Education

Sourced: <https://www.artof4elements.com/entry/quotes-on-education>



## Everything I Need to Know, I Learned from Noah's Ark

*Two by Two: A Pair of 10 Lessons from Noah's Ark*  
(compiled from anonymous authors, found in postings on the internet)

### Noah's Ark Teaches Us

1. Don't miss the boat.
2. Remember that we are all in the same boat.
3. Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
4. Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.
5. Always live a righteous life. Even if you are the only one; it will be noticed.
6. Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.
7. When the doo-doo gets really deep, don't sit there and complain — shovel!
8. Build your future on high ground.
9. For safety's sake, travel in pairs.
10. If you have to start over, it's good to have a friend by your side.

### Noah's Ark Also Teaches Us

1. Listen to what God tells you. Your life might depend on it.
2. Two heads are better than one.
3. Take care of your animals as if they were the last ones on earth.
4. Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.
5. When you're stressed, float a while.
6. Finish what you start.

7. Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs, the Titanic by professionals.
8. Don't forget that we're all in the same boat.
9. No matter how bleak it looks, when you are with the Holy One, there's always a rainbow waiting.
10. When the Holy One has brought you safely through the storm, don't forget to praise and thank God.

\* \* \* \* \*



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## New “Native Garden“ at Christophorus House

Since late August, for a couple of hours on a Monday morning, Anne and I have been working on a patch of garden in front of Units 7, 8 and 9, that Jason kindly granted us to transform into a native garden. We sought Glen’s permission for this project, and it was granted unhesitatingly. The aim is to reclaim some of the monoculture of the fish-bone fern area under the tall native Melaleuca trees (paper barks that don’t have the typical paper bark!), Japanese maple and Crepe myrtle and turn it into an under-story of smallish, exclusively native plants mainly endemic to this area. The idea is to attract a wider variety of native bird life and eventually to learn about the Aboriginal historical use of and their lore around these plants.

There are other parts of our original vision and one of them is to raise an awareness of what could be done to lessen the threat to the beautiful bushland and National Parks that surround us from introduced problematic plants. There are not many, so breathe easy!

Because tube-stock usually goes in the ground with less transplant shock, we have started with small plants, so the area may look bare for a while, however we are filling it as quickly as possible and intend that this area will provide some interest and variety to residents.

Anne and I have committed to clearing only a portion of that area of the existing “weed” fern, planting it out and maintaining it. We understand the need to maintain erosion control on the lower driveway side, so intend to keep a border of fish-bone fern for that purpose. “Community” comes into it by requesting anyone from the self-care units, who feels any enthusiasm for the project, to volunteer something. It could be the occasional: hands-on gardening, picking up some mulch or plants from local sources, gifting a native plant, researching aboriginal use of the chosen plants, dropping by to say hello on working days, help with watering and anything else that may come to mind.

This is an experiment: Will the well-established ferns yield easily enough? Can they be kept at bay? Will the brush turkeys overlook our new patch?? It seems like a worthy project and perhaps has the potential to bring us together as a community to focus on something creative. Fortunately, there has been a

softening towards the project, after the initial horror that was shown, and your patience is appreciated, as this is not a quick fix project. Call Jane or Anne with any questions or brilliant ideas or to offer any assistance, even if it’s tiny.

Anne Clare, resident  
Jane Ruehmkorff, resident





***The gardens offer abundant beauty all year round, thanks to our gardener, Jason, who's been tending the grounds for 30 years. Well done Jason. Thank you!***

Flowers are living beings – these magenta daisies close each night and open to the sun each morning. The may bush has been profuse this year, shining like myriads of stars. Aileen's front garden of irises, each with 9 petals, 3 x 3, with bluebells, freesias and red amaryllis or hippeastrums, emanating calm and beauty - a counterpart to the chaos and stress of our times. In Robyn's back garden, the red azaleas are lush in response to lots of care and water just at the right time. Robyn being an experienced gardener and enjoying the conversation and tips from Jason who, with his more than thirty years of experience at CHRV in creating spectacular displays, achieves so much in the three days allocated to his expert hand – Robyn and Aileen's gardens, complementing each other with the joy of spring blooms. Each year different blooms thrive, creating a living floral painting for all to enjoy.

*Rose-Marie*





**We wish all our readers a very Happy  
Christmas and a wonderful  
New Year 2022.**