



Volunteering is good for seniors and society

There comes a time in most people's lives when you consider volunteering. Sometimes it happens when you are young and unsure what you want to do in life, sometimes it's when you are at university and you need to complete a placement, or sometimes you just want to get a foot in the door to kick start your career. People volunteer for many different reasons; however, as you grow older you start to think more about things you are passionate about; activities where you can really make a difference or contribute to.

Dr Jeni Warburton from the Australasian Centre on Ageing supports the notion that volunteering is good for seniors and good for society and that there is a, 'positive relationship between health and volunteering particularly in later life'. Another advantage she sees for older people who volunteer is a 'higher life satisfaction'.

COTA Seniors Voice (COTA SV) believes that every person has a need to belong, to be valued and to make a contribution to their own physical and social environment. In recognition of this right for all people to be included in the life of

their community, COTA SV offers opportunities for volunteering across a number of programs with over 70 volunteers currently working within the organisation in a wide variety of roles.

Recently, and after a six month sabbatical, Colin Lumsden, approached COTA, after finding a volunteer vacancy through Volunteering SA & NT. Colin has experienced a highly successful career in various executive roles at a national and state level within the federal and state governments. After retiring initially, he was drawn back into a part time role with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to head a project to select and implement a new workers compensation and occupational health and safety system for the South Australian public sector.

Colin has been feeling that he still has much to contribute. He says, "I had a sense that I wanted to be doing something to help, something interesting to utilise my skills within the community". Colin is now involved with COTA SV as a bookings officer within the Peer

Education Project, liaising between the volunteer peer educators for the 'beyond maturityblues' and 'Seniors Quality Use of Medicines' projects, community groups and clubs interested in these sessions. He believes he will utilise his project management experience and in particular his excellent communication skills. Colin is keen to make this a regular, long term commitment.

Throughout our lives we grow and develop diverse skills which can be utilised through the many voluntary roles available within the community for any age. Volunteers benefit in many ways and have the opportunity to meet new people, learn new skills, share their own knowledge and skills and much more. A recent survey conducted by Harrison Research, Volunteering in South Australia 2010, revealed that 69% of South Australians volunteer both formally and informally, making a truly worthwhile contribution to the life of the South Australian community.

For enquiries regarding COTA Seniors Voice programs contact us on 8232 0422 or country callers toll free 1800 182 324