



Issue Number 12, Winter 2009

A Newsletter for multicultural older people produced by the
Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria, jointly supported by
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Our Golden Years

Editor's Note

Our Golden Years is sent to about 400 ethnic Senior Citizens Clubs. In the winter months it is a good idea to get out and join a group for some warm friendly conversation in your first language and a nice hot meal.

With this issue we are sending you the application form from the Office of Senior Victorians for the Victorian Senior of the Year Awards. You may wish to nominate a person in the multicultural community.



What kind of people won the Victorian Senior of the Year Awards in the past?

George Yianni, aged 74 in Chelsea was a winner in 2008. He has been caring for the elderly as a volunteer for more than 20 years, particularly those with dementia. Another winner was Guangtao Tang, aged 82 in Dandenong. He arrived from China in 1995 and has worked in his community promoting a healthy lifestyle, multiculturalism and assisting Chinese elderly people.

What do you need to find out about the person you wish to nominate?

If you know of an ordinary person over 60 in your community who has been doing volunteer work to help others stay healthy, happy and socially connected you can nominate them.

How difficult is the nomination form?

It is easy to fill in. All you need to do is tell the story of a person over 60 in your community who has done outstanding volunteer work and made a difference to a lot of other people. You can choose one of four different awards.

When are the Awards given out?

The Awards are presented in October 2009 to mark the United Nations International Day of Older Persons on 1 October and the annual Victorian Seniors Festival.

For more information?

Contact Violeta Krstic – Program Manager on (03) 9208 3170

There are many multicultural seniors who work very hard for their communities.

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely
Dr Irene Bouzo, *Editor*



Inside this issue

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Caring for Elderly Italians



Romantic Italian music makes a person's feet want to dance as you enter the Planned Activity Group (PAG) at the Senior Day Centre of Co.As.It. in Carlton. It is a place where people celebrate Mother's Day and Carnevale. Leading up to Mother's Day a red and white banner of individually drawn letters was hanging across one wall. It said *Auguri festa delle mamma* which means Happy Mother's Day. The smell of delicious Italian food made the mouth water. In the morning Italian seniors take part in an exercise session, craft classes and sometimes they enjoy cooking together. After lunch they play a bingo game to keep the mind active. Walking into the centre is like visiting a little bit of Italy.

Filomena Vairo, aged 98, the oldest mother at the Mother's Day Lunch at the Italian Planned Activity Group

The Senior Day Centre is a warm, caring, friendly place for older Italians to meet other people with the same language and culture. The daily program includes meals and transport can be arranged if necessary.

CO.AS.IT is a non-profit organisation for Italians and Australians of Italian descent.

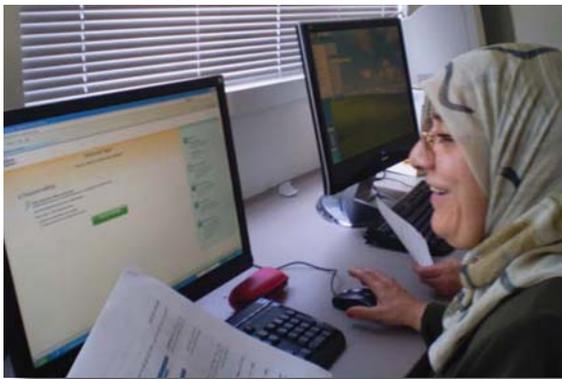
Anyone interested should contact:
**Rocchina Di Giuseppe, Co.As.It.,
Senior Day Centre (PAG), Carlton
Tel: 03 9349 9081**

Staff at Mother's Day Lunch; from left Emma Contessa, Aged Care Manager Co. As. It.; Rocchina Di Giuseppe, PAG Supervisor; Maria Fiamularo



Monday's Planned Activity Group Co. As. It., celebrating Italian Carnevale





Elderly Accessing Internet

Many people think that computers are for young people. Seniors from non-English speaking backgrounds are learning how to use the internet. They are getting help in their first language. Older people are crossing oceans without leaving their homes by surfing the net. They have found an easy way to talk to family and friends who live a long distance away.

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Senior Surfers program provides introductory internet training to older people in their language. Four volunteers started training sessions in February 2009 at the Victorian Arabic Social Services (VASS) office in Newport. Thirty overseas-born women aged between 55 and 75 who live in the North/West region came along. They learnt how to use computers and access the internet.



Senior Surfers at Victorian Arabic Social Services, Newport

Some women said:

"I feel good that now I can access the computer at home and the local library. I feel I am part of the wider community and I fit in".

"I feel that I can go to an internet café and sit down to play solitaire now. That's a great feeling"

"I am going to continue computer training at my neighbourhood house".

"I enjoyed downloading recipes and reading Arabic and English news."

"I felt empowered and informed by downloading information on Alzheimer's and other health issues in both Arabic and English."

"Now I can communicate with my grandchildren overseas and see their photos".

The women came from diverse backgrounds – Assyrian, Chaldean, Iraqi, Lebanese, Kurdish, Yemenis and Moroccan. Instructions were given in Arabic, English and Assyrian.

People said they were very excited and eager to learn. For most of the women it was the first time they used a computer. Two of them bought new computers to use at home. A few people who could not read and write found that they can still have a lot of fun using the computer. They successfully played the card game of solitaire on the screen. They said they no longer felt outside the community being illiterate both in English and their first language. It boosted their confidence and self-esteem. Plans are underway to invite men from the Islamic and Coptic communities.

This program shows that computers are not just for young people. Technology is not too difficult for older people. Lack of English is not a barrier to the internet. Older culturally diverse seniors can surf the net too.

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Nominations Open For Victorian Senior Awards 2009

2009 Victorian Seniors Festival

Be inspired!
4-11 October



Jean McKendry-Paterson and Premier John Brumby

Victorians have an opportunity to nominate an older person who has made an outstanding contribution to the community for the Victorian Senior of the Year Awards 2009.

Minister for Senior Victorians Lisa Neville has launched the statewide search for seniors who have worked to make a difference in their community.

The Premier's Award for Victorian Senior of the Year and the Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria Senior Achiever Awards celebrate seniors whose talents, achievements and contributions have significantly benefited their communities.



Joan Graves and Hon Lisa Neville, Minister for Senior Victorians

The 'Go for your life' Award recognises a senior who best personifies the key messages of the Victorian Government's 'Go for your life' initiative: to keep active, eat healthy food and maintain social contacts with friends and family.

The Veteran Community Award is a new award and will acknowledge the significant contribution of an individual to the veteran community.

To be eligible, the nominee must be an Australian citizen, a resident of Victoria, aged 60 years or more, and have achieved something extraordinary or performed exceptional service to the community.

The Victorian Senior of the Year Awards will be presented at Government House on 2 October 2009.

Nomination forms can be obtained from Seniors Information Victoria, phone 1300 135 090 or downloaded from the Office of Senior Victorians website: www.seniors.vic.gov.au. Nominations close on 24 July 2009.



Eight 2008 Award winners

Back Row I-r Guangtao Tang, Robert Mackie on behalf of Marilyn Mackie, Premier of Victoria, Minister for Senior Victorians, George Yianni, Percy Mills; Front Row I-r Isabell Gill, Lorna Hannan, Moira Waye, Phyllis Hawker.