

Off the floor ...



Dancing into the community

More than 5.4 million Australians, 34% of us, make a difference in our local communities through volunteering.

We volunteer for many reasons and in many different ways. The real reward may be just a smile or hearing a thank you, but it makes it all so worthwhile.

This month, we talk to some of the line dance clubs who have been giving back to their communities through a wide variety of activities.



Rosalie, Isabella and Tess at Palm Grove Nursing Home

Rosalie Mackay from In Line Boots in Sydney says they like to share their love of dancing with the rest of the community.

“We do 10 or more demonstrations a year. For some we have a special team, but I like to encourage everybody to join in.

“It gives us a lot of enjoyment to put something back into the community. We perform at nursing homes, retirement villages, the Manly Highland Gathering, Eurofest and fundraisers for the Pink Ladies at Royal North Shore Hospital to help raise money for cancer.

“About 10 years ago we were invited to entertain the residents at Palm Grove Nursing Home and have been back twice a year ever since.

“It makes us feel good to see the pleasure on the faces of the residents,” says Rosalie.

Many of the residents toe tap along and after the entertainment ends, the dancers often stay to mingle and chat with them.

Tess Mackern, Palm Grove Recreational Activities Officer, said the dancing is part of the Home’s entertainment and recreational program.

“We keep inviting Rosalie and her team back because our residents enjoy it so much. They like the fact that there are so many dancers dressed up in their uniforms, all doing the same steps in time to the music.

“And they really like the music because it has a good rhythm and is more upbeat than the quiet relaxing music we generally play. I think a lot of the residents would like to get up and dance with them.”



“The wonderful thing about community service is that you gain as much as you give.”

Rosalie

A Modern Bootlakes Marathon

An eight hour Line Dance Marathon this July was the culmination of a couple of months of organisation for three Newcastle line dance clubs.

The event was a fund raising initiative with the money raised being equally distributed between the Five Islands School, Booragul and the Glendon School, Hillsborough. The organisers were Cheryl and Gary Parker from Modern Country, Marilyn and Noel Bycroft from Boots Dance Company and Linda Wolfe and Robyn Groot from Westlakes Line Dancers.

This initiative came about because several members from each of the three clubs have children or grandchildren who require the expertise and extra care provided at these 'special' schools. Although the schools are government facilities, they are both involved in ongoing fund raising to top up their annual budget.



“We thought that some of our fund raising activities could be directed towards boosting the budgets of schools with which we have a direct relationship.”

Robyn

Both schools cater for students with moderate to severe disabilities, and provide individualised programs designed to cater for each student's academic and social needs. The funds raised will go towards the provision of a stove and cooking equipment for the Living Skills Room in one school and towards equipment for the Multipurpose Hall/ Gym at the other school.

“The Marathon was held at the Morisset Country Club which kindly waived the hire fee for the auditorium as their donation towards our fundraising efforts. Each club provided a DJ on a rotating basis to play requests throughout the day.

“Everyone who worked tirelessly on the day to make the event a wonderful success, gave freely of their time as well,” said Robyn. “And dancers are already asking if we can do it all again next year!”

As well as a marathon day of dancing, there were raffle and lucky door prizes galore! In total, 181 line dancers attended and raised a grand total of \$4,500. A cheque for \$2,250 will be presented to each school.



Happy Line Dancers build a very special relationship



In Sydney, Wendy Deng held the 2nd line dance fundraiser for the Sir Eric Woodward Memorial School in Sydney's northern suburbs. The school, which provides educational support for children with intellectual and physical disabilities, enjoys a close relationship with its local community.

"I have a personal association with the School and they do a wonderful job," said Wendy. "I have also seen the dedication and hard work done by the staff. Like many organisations, they are constantly in need of new equipment and facilities. So I wanted to support them by having a fundraising social."

The first fundraiser in 2009 had a multicultural theme and Michael Vera Lobos and Noel Bradey of Strictly Line Dance were special guests. This year, Mark and Kate Simpkin were the special guests and the theme was Chinese New Year. Line dancers travelled from all over Sydney to support both fundraisers.

Dr John Paterson, the School's Principal, said they appreciated the time and effort that goes into practising and getting together such a large group of people.

"The School really benefits from the support of groups such as yours because it enables us to do extra things for the children."



"I know we can't help everybody, but we can all do something. And helping others makes me feel happy in return."

May

"We are very lucky if we enjoy good health and are able to dance.

Sometimes, I believe we need to pause and think of those with disabilities, those who have been less fortunate in life."

Wendy



Wendy and students presenting a cheque to Dr John Paterson.





Dare 2 Dance Tamworth



“We like to do our bit to help the community.”

It gives a great sense of happiness to us.”

Chris

Dare 2 Dance Tamworth is very active in the Tamworth community

Chris Watson says he is very lucky to have class members who are all very eager to be involved in fundraisers and demos.

“They are all very supportive and generous with their time.

“Our activities include weekly volunteering for Meals on Wheels Tamworth and donating Christmas Hampers to the Salvation Army.

“We are also very active in community fundraising and over the last 10 years have raised over \$50,000 for charities.

“This money goes towards the Westpac Rescue Helicopter, Lifeline, Camp Quality, The Cancer Council, Ronald McDonald House Tamworth, The Childrens Oncology Fund, Interact Tamworth High School, Shout For Drought, Angel Flight, Rotary Bush Fire Appeal and more.”

One of their most popular fundraisers is The Santa Crawl. An annual event, this is a pub crawl where everyone has to dress up as Santa or with a Christmas theme.

It costs \$10 per person to participate and all the funds raised go to a charity.

“All the pubs we go to have to donate a minimum of \$250 to have us come to their pub, the more they donate the longer we stay!” says Chris.

“Last year, we donated the funds to Ronald McDonald House Tamworth, the year before we gave it to Angel Flight.”

They also do demonstrations for nursing homes, Seniors’ Week and charity events which in turn helps promote line dancing to the wider community.

Chris says it provides the dancers with opportunities to give something back, as well as make a worthwhile contribution to their community.

Tamworth has really embraced Chris for his contribution to the community. Among other awards, in 2004 Chris was awarded Tamworth Young Citizen of the Year for his community work, volunteering, dancing and charity fundraising.



Chris and fiancée Gemma

