



Southern Cross Care

live life your way

17 December 2013

Carol Stewart
Administrative Officer
Senate Community Affairs Committee
PO BOX 6100
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Carol

I am writing this letter in support of the Spark of Life program in caring for people living with dementia. I first heard about this program eighteen years ago when I began working in dementia care. I have been very impressed by Dementia Care Australia's presentations and the simplicity of implementing their strategies into everyday life. Since then, as new programs have been developed, I have continued to attend further courses and my passion for excelling in dementia care is stronger than ever.

I recently undertook the three week International Master Practitioner's Course in Perth, Western Australia and I'm very proud to now be able to educate other staff and families in the Spark of Life, within our organisation. This course has given me the knowledge and skills to understand about how people living with dementia can communicate their unmet needs, although sometimes in symbolic language. My role as Dementia Care Consultant for the organisation places me in an ideal position to be able to implement the Spark of Life across residential, home based and respite services so that our residents and clients are encouraged to reach their full potential. I am particularly interested in using this knowledge to awaken dormant abilities, including language, by bringing heart to mind which also helps to dissolve challenging behaviours.

I believe that the difference with this program in bringing true person centred care to people living with dementia, is that it is a whole systems approach to enable rehabilitation in dementia care and it is the HOW To implement true person centred care that differs from other programs. Care is able to be individualised so that each person living with dementia feels unconditionally loved, nourished to grow and their full potential brought forth through encouragement, empowerment and compassion. The program is also extremely valuable to carers as it shows them how to reignite that spark in their loved one and reduce stress levels.

Completion of the Master Practitioner course provided me with all of the resources to implement the program and I was very fortunate to discover that I could apply for some funding through the Dementia Foundation for Spark of Life. I put forward my application and was thrilled to be offered a partial scholarship which enabled me to follow my dreams. I have now commenced a very exciting journey to bring one of our residential facilities to a Centre of Excellence. I will also be introducing the Club Program to the first of our three respite centres.

Live Life With Respect, Integrity, Compassion & Excellence

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I have commenced the introductory presentations and I'm looking forward with anticipation **to the rest of my journey thanks to the wonderful support from Dementia Care Australia.** My hope for the future is that other organisations will be able to access support and funding to increase the number of Master Practitioners in the Spark of Life throughout Australia.

Everyone deserves to be treated in the way that the Spark of Life teaches us and at present Master Practitioners need to be the voice for those who cannot speak for themselves and to provide education to carer's, families and the community.

I appreciate your taking the time to consider this letter of support for such an excellent program and for caring for those who don't have a voice.

Yours sincerely

Sandy Crowe
Dementia Care Consultant
Master Practitioner of the Spark of Life