

# Media Release

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## **Clients living with a dementia illness enjoy 'home' in hospital**

Woodwork, tree planting, baking for charity and walking are just some of the activities run for people living with dementia illness or other mental health illnesses who can be cared for at home.

"A dementia or mental health illness does not mean the end of a valuable life. With help and support our clients are finding purpose and showing that older people still have a lot to offer the community," says Celine Dippie, an occupational therapist with Mental Health Services for the Older Persons. The service runs at least one group every day, covering interests such as crafts, relaxation and walking groups. A new woodwork group is planned to start next month at the Historic Village on 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

"We have people volunteering at Riding for the Disabled and working in a community garden that provides for the food bank. Another group is involved in sand dune restoration," she says.

There are often opportunities for contributions such as preserving, arts projects and baking Christmas gifts are made to charity events and the group bakes for the Merivale Breakfast Club.

"Our groups are full of people who have experienced a lot in their lifetimes and they have much to offer in terms of skills, knowledge and experience."

The service runs the groups with the aim of promoting a sense of belonging and enabling people with dementia illnesses to use their bodies, minds and spirit in tasks they enjoy. “For participants it’s about providing interesting activities that improve self esteem and confidence, and ultimately general wellbeing.”

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