



News from Engadine Community Services (July 2021)

Message from Mel – ECS Manager

As I write this, sadly we're in another lockdown with COVID-19, so no groups or outings. However, ECS staff are only a phone call away. Our services are essential to many people, so we will always continue to operate, within safety rules and restrictions. Lee and I are physically in the office; others work at home.

The staff are focused on end of financial year, which is always busy in a community centre, especially when you have government funding and grants. We appreciate the money, but not the acquittals and data reports, which are mostly online now.

ECS has been able to assist the community with the help of several funders this year:

- **Australian Government** Dept of Health [Commonwealth Home Support Programme] for Aged Services + JobKeeper to assist when all our fees stopped and our costs grew due to the pandemic
- **NSW Government** Dept of Communities & Justice [Targeted Earlier Intervention Program] for Child & Family Services + some one-off DCJ grants for organisational change and development, including IT
- **NSW ClubGrants** [specifically from ClubEngadine and Engadine Bowling Club] for the Collaborative Against Abuse of Older People in Sutherland Shire
- **Sutherland Shire Council** [Community Centre Grant] for the Community Resource Centre + Community Lease for our lovely centre + one-off Community Grant for new toys in the Toy Library and COVID measures

We have also enjoyed the skills and energy of two students on placement from TAFE and the Community College. Caitlin, who worked on the last newsletter, has just left us and Ivory is the researcher and writer of the two beautiful stories this month.



ECS Services Highlight: Men's Social Group

"Walk like a man, Talk like a man, Walk like a man, my son"

-the Four Seasons

For centuries, men had been brought up to be the tough ones, be the brave ones, and be the ones that shouldn't cry. But life has different seasons; some days, it's all rainbows and skittles; some days are grey and cold; and some days they're but a mix of everything! Though it is acceptable to soldier on with life like a man, it is undeniable that they too, require support.

A couple of months ago, the birth of the ECS Men's Social Group was made possible thanks to a dear gentleman known to the ECS family who had lost his wife to cancer and needed a new activity. The idea was to bring together a group of older men that would unite regularly to catch up, share stories, create memories, offer social and emotional support and build community network and friendship.

This group started off with a couple of men that had known each other for years, and is now expanding. Today, we have 8 wonderful members from varying walks of life and diverse cultural backgrounds, with extraordinary experiences. It has been lovely meeting and talking to some of them, and hearing their stories.

What makes this group interesting is the diversity of the member's background - their previous trade or profession, their honed skills from years of providing service to the community, their personal interests and, as a whole, what life made out of them. Their wisdom is unparalleled, their humor is playful, their shared experience is priceless.

I am humbled and inspired by how these men have faced life's adversities, such as enduring the pain of losing a loved one, yet through it all, they choose to wake up, and keep moving forward. What they have exemplified is the strength to live through challenges and still manage to smile despite that, but most of all, to reach out when the need for help is recognised.

It only takes a spark to ignite a flame, and an idea to start a brotherhood. New members and ideas are welcome every alternate Tuesday, starting at 10 am at Lorenzini's Café [next to ECS].



Sutherland Shire Toy Library

Looking for toys to entertain, but on a tight budget?
For an annual membership fee, you will have over 600
to choose from, including our new diversity collection*



Fees from \$20

Concessions
available

CLICK & >> <https://www.ecs.org.au/fun-for-kids> to join

COLLECT >> at 1034-1036 Old Princes Hwy, Engadine

SERVICE Mon 1-4pm | Thurs 1-4pm | 2nd & 4th Sat 9am-12

*Engadine Community Services gratefully acknowledges support provided by a
Sutherland Shire Council Community Grant to enrich our collection

ECS Team Profile: Meet Helen

Helen Dorman is one of the wonderful volunteers for the ECS and is assisting the operation and maintenance of the Toy Library with Keryn every Monday from 1-4pm. I had the pleasure to sit with her and chat for a while, and learning her story was nothing but inspirational.

Helen was born in Singapore in 1958 and at the age of 3, she migrated back to NSW with her parents. She is the younger of two children and grew up around the Eastern suburbs, doing her HSC years at St Catherine's in Waverley. At 17, fate led her to the love of her life, Walter, and she married him seven years later.

During her younger years, Helen worked on secretarial jobs across the greater Sydney area, before she blessed with kids, Karina and Michael. She then volunteered at her children's school, providing support to other kids with their reading. Helen also volunteered for a Chesalon nursing home, where she enjoyed time with the elderly and endless sharing of memorable life stories. [When working at Anglicare, she also attended a Home and Community Care orientation run by one Mel Paterson!]

The Toy Library is not the only ECS service that our generous Helen has helped out with. She was once the activity coordinator for the Grandparent's Playgroup every Monday and has also helped with the playgroups every Thursday, until she had to take a break due to a surgery. Currently, Helen doubles as a

social support volunteer with ECS Aged Services, doing home visits to isolated seniors and she and Walter help with deliveries from time-to-time.

Helen is a strong advocate of volunteering and the healing power of social connections. Clearly, life has thrown her some challenges with her health and losses of family, yet she is always the first to respond when Mel asks for volunteers to help with expos and information stands to promote ECS; she spoke about the joy of volunteering at the ECS Ageing Well seminar in 2019.

Helen says she has met some of her best mates through ECS: *"It is all about that interaction and friendships formed with people that you can't get from anywhere better than a being a community volunteer"*.

As well as being a longterm member of the ECS Team [more than 15 years], Helen is an active participant in other social groups, including the 50+ Club and Good Neighbours Group. She is also a proud grandmother of two, with a third on the way. [Indeed, Helen is an absolute chatterbox and does not shy away from expressing her joy talking about her grand kids and the days she spent with them.]

The name Helen is a Greek word deriving from the main light source of the world - "Helios" for sun and "Selene" for moon. It's undeniable that she delivers brightness in other people's lives through her work at ECS.

Birthday Fun fact #8

Engadine Community Services has a strong history of improving the lives of senior citizens through friendships groups, crafts, games and entertainment in the community centre, as well as bus outings.

Engadine District Neighbour Aid was formally funded by the Home and Community Care Program in 1995.

Do you have any memories of EDNA groups in the '80s? Maybe you were a volunteer or knew someone who attended?

Birthday Fun fact #9

When she was the Sutherland Shire HACC Development Officer (1998-2018), the current manager, Melinda Paterson, actually worked with three of her predecessors, Carl Piraino, Nick Haney and Christina Mannyx. *Do you have memories of any particular events they organised in Engadine over the past 30 years (including under former names of Engadine District Community Aid and Information Service or Essential Community Solutions)?*

Monday to Friday 9.30 am – 4 pm | 2nd & 4th Saturday each month 9 am – 12 noon

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