

Voices of Volunteering Podcast Series



Welcome to the companion resource for the Voices of Volunteering podcast series

Every day across Australia, volunteers are making a quiet but powerful difference in the lives of older Australians, offering connection, compassion, and a sense of community. In this series, we shine a light on those stories.

Whether it's hosting a trivia group, guiding someone on a tandem bike, or transcribing music into braille, these volunteers are proof that you don't need special qualifications to change someone's day, you just need heart.

About the podcast

Voices of Volunteering is a three-part podcast featuring Vision Australia volunteers who bring their unique skills and lived experiences to aged care and community support. Each episode explores a different theme, from conversation and connection to creativity and confidence.

This written guide brings those stories to the page. It includes episode summaries, key insights, quotes from the volunteers, and prompts you to reflect on your own path to volunteering.

This resource is designed for:

- Anyone curious about volunteering.
- Aged care providers and coordinators.
- Community members looking to get involved.
- Educators or trainers sharing real-world volunteer stories.
- Listeners who want to dive deeper into each episode.

Why volunteering matters

Volunteers are often the bridge between isolation and connection, especially for people living with vision loss or navigating the challenges of ageing. Through this project, we hope to inspire more people to see just how meaningful volunteering can be.

To listen to the full Voices of Volunteering podcast series, you can visit us online today at: <https://omny.fm/shows/voices-of-volunteering>.



Episode 1: Conversations that count: Connection through volunteering

Episode overview

In this episode, we meet three of our dedicated Vision Australia volunteers, **Johnny, Sherold, and Ian**. Through trivia, tech, history, and heartfelt conversations, they help people living with vision loss feel less isolated and more connected. Their stories highlight the joy of building safe, welcoming spaces where everyone belongs.

"You're doing something to help people. I feel like I am doing what I want to do and can get something out of it."

Key takeaways and volunteer voices

Creating safe spaces for connection

Takeaway

A welcoming environment helps people feel comfortable, valued, and free to share at their own pace.

Volunteer voices

Johnny: "I think I've built a safe space for people to feel comfortable. It's about making a nice atmosphere for people to engage if they wish."

Sherold: "We get together and just have a great time."

Think about

How can you create a safe, warm space where others feel they belong?



The power of conversation

Takeaway

Sometimes the most powerful gift is simply listening. For older Australians, regular conversation helps ease isolation and fosters a sense of being seen and supported.

Volunteer voices

Johnny: "I hear people say quite often, oh thank goodness, I have someone to talk to."

Sherold: "To help as much as you can with people, sometimes we're the only contact they have outside of their house."

Imagine

Who in your community might benefit from a simple conversation?



Fun with purpose

Takeaway

Whether you are volunteering in trivia, technology, or even mechanics, when learning and laughter come together people stay engaged and keep coming back.

Volunteer voices

Johnny: “Bringing new things to the table, I think that’s important for people who have experienced vision loss.”

Ian: “It’s really helped with their confidence, so that’s been really good to see.”

Your turn

What passion or interest could you share to make learning fun for others?



Personal growth through volunteering

Takeaway

Volunteering isn’t just about giving. It brings new friendships, purpose, and personal fulfillment.

Volunteer voices

Sherold: “It’s brought something into my life I never thought I’d have... meeting new people all the time. This is a really interesting time of my life.”

Ian: “Everyone is there to have a good time.”

Consider

What unexpected rewards might volunteering bring into your life?



Confidence and community

Takeaway

Volunteering helps people build confidence, both participants and facilitators grow as they share and learn together.

Volunteer voices

Johnny: “It’s a fulfilling opportunity to take and give back a bit.”

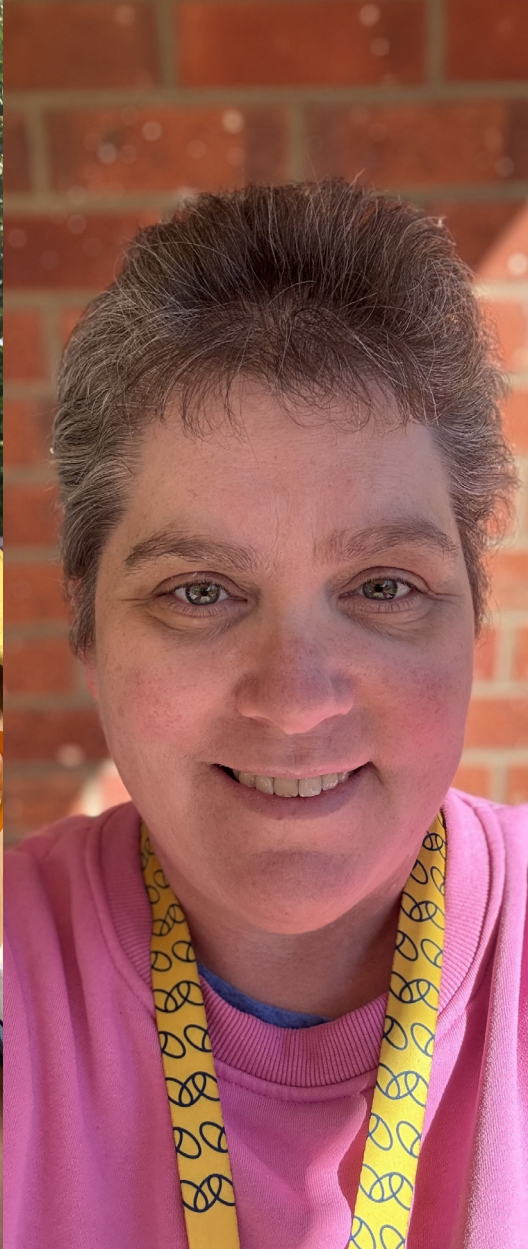
Ian: “There’s not that much needed in skills. As long as you can talk to people and not be afraid to make mistakes.”

Take a moment

What small step could you take to help someone (or yourself) feel more confident?



You can listen to the full episode of **Conversations that Count: Connecting Through Volunteering** here: <https://omny.fm/shows/voices-of-volunteering/conversations-that-count-connection-through-volunteering>.



Episode 2: From front desk to front line: Volunteering that changes lives

Episode overview

In this episode, we meet three of our dedicated Vision Australia volunteers, **Sally, Belinda, and Maria**. Through warm welcomes, practical support, and meaningful conversations, they help older Australians living with vision loss feel like a part of a community.

"I can't help but want to get involved. I have this gravitational pull to wanting to support people."

Key takeaways and volunteer voices

Creating a welcoming first impression

Takeaway

A friendly welcome sets the tone for trust, comfort, and belonging, especially for older Australians adjusting to a life with vision loss.

Volunteer voices

Belinda: "I wanted to give people who came through the doors a nice experience, a warm voice, a happy voice."

Sally: "I just saw what was going on around me, and I wanted to get more involved."

Think about

How can your first interaction with someone older set the stage for connection and comfort?



Consistency and connection

Takeaway

Showing up regularly, whether in person or over the phone, builds trust and nurtures relationships, creating a sense of family and belonging for people who can feel isolated.

Volunteer voices

Maria: "They look forward to it, and I do too."

Sally: "I'm there, showing up and helping to make things that bit easier for people."

Imagine

Who in your community might benefit from consistent, small gestures of care and presence?



Volunteering as a two-way gift

Takeaway

Volunteering doesn't just help others. It also supports the volunteer's own wellbeing, purpose, and perspective. Older Australians benefit from connection, and volunteers gain fulfillment in return.

Volunteer voices

Maria: "It makes you feel like you're doing something worthwhile."

Sally: "That feeling that you've given someone something, it's a gift... something bigger than if you're just focusing on your own stuff."

Consider

What might volunteering give back to you, beyond that nice feeling of helping others?



The impact of everyday moments

Takeaway

Simple activities like coffee chats or crossword puzzles can create significant emotional and social impact for older Australians, helping them stay engaged and connected.

Volunteer voices

Belinda: "He left with a smile on his face, and that's why we do what we do."

Sally: "It's about connection...a day without that can be a really long day for somebody."

Take a moment

How can small, thoughtful actions help someone feel reconnected, valued, and included?



Global perspective and shared humanity

Takeaway

Helping others is a universal experience. While contexts may differ, the underlying joy of connection and support transcends borders. Even older Australians benefit from the same principles of care and attention that volunteers provide worldwide.

Volunteer voices

Maria: "I've volunteered in nearly every country I've ever lived in. It's about if you're feeling alone or lonely and you're looking for a connection, this is one way to do that."

Reflect

How does helping others, even in small ways, connect you to the wider human experience?

You can listen to the full episode of **From Front Desk to Front Line: Volunteering That Changes Lives** here: <https://omny.fm/shows/voices-of-volunteering/from-front-desk-to-front-line-volunteering-that-changes-lives>.



Episode 3: Music, movement and meaning: Finding joy in volunteering

Episode overview

Meet three of our Vision Australia volunteers, **Beth, John, and Kay**. Through music, movement, and mentorship, they help people rediscover joy, confidence, and connection. This episode highlights their insights, key takeaways, and encourages you to reflect on how volunteering can make a difference.

"Just give it a go. You're not going to know if volunteering is for you if you don't give it a go."

Key takeaways and volunteer voices

Combining passion with purpose

Takeaway

Supporting older Australians through aged care volunteering is especially meaningful when you bring your own skills and passions. It's a way to do what you love while making a real difference in someone's life.

Volunteer voices

John: "If you're doing something you can enjoy, that's pretty much its own reward, the enjoyment of it."

Beth: "It's wonderful, and when it's something you really love doing it's not work, is it?"

Think about

What activities do you love that could bring joy to older adults?



The healing power of music

Takeaway

Music can help people feel less isolated, more confident, and connected to others. It's a tool for healing, encouragement, and empowerment.

Volunteer voices

Beth: "It's social connection, interaction, and confidence building."

Kay: "It's a win-win situation."

Imagine

How could music, rhythm, or creative activities help someone feel included or confident?



Curiosity and adaptability

Takeaway

Exploring different ways to help, whether that's tandem bike riding, music transcription, or teaching, keeps volunteering fresh and engaging. Flexibility and curiosity help volunteers meet the needs of others effectively.

Volunteer voices

Beth: "Developing skills of boosting confidence, taking little steps, enthusing them, building them up...Confidence they can use when they walk out the door to the rest of the world."

Your turn

What new skill or activity could you explore to help other and grow yourself?



Emotional impacts and long-term rewards

Takeaway

Seeing the long-term impact of your support, like someone performing music or regaining their confidence, is deeply rewarding.

Volunteer voices

John: "I'm just enjoying someone's company for a period of time."

Kaye: "It's a win-win situation really."

Consider

What moments of impact would make volunteering meaningful for you?



Building confidence in others

Takeaway

Helping someone rediscover their confidence often requires patience, encouragement, and small, achievable steps.

Volunteer voices

Kay: “There might be a fear that volunteering is a burden... the role of playing a useful role in someone’s life is a very satisfying experience.”

John: “It's the perfect way to contribute.

Take a moment

How can you help someone take small steps toward confidence, in a way that respects their dignity?



You can listen to the full episode of **Music, Movement and and Meaning: Finding Joy in Volunteering** here: <https://omny.fm/shows/voices-of-volunteering/music-movement-and-meaning-finding-joy-in-volunteering>.

And that's a wrap

Thank you for listening, and for reading.

We hope this companion guide has brought the Voices of Volunteering series to life in new and meaningful ways. Through these stories, we've heard from everyday people doing extraordinary things like creating music groups, sharing tech tips, hosting trivia, and simply being present for someone who needs it.

Each voice in this series reminds us that volunteering isn't about perfection, it's about showing up. In aged care, especially, that presence matters; a conversation, a laugh, or a shared skill can ease loneliness and bring comfort to older Australians.

Whether you have an hour, a week, or a wealth of lived experience to share, your time, your kindness, and your curiosity can make a real difference.

Keep the conversation going

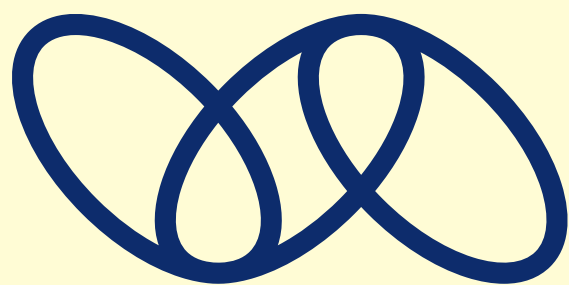
If you've been inspired, consider how you might start, or continue, your own volunteering experience. Could you lead a group, support someone one-on-one, or help behind the scenes? Every role matters. Every connection counts.

Visit www.visionaustralia.org/volunteer to find opportunities near you, or to learn more about what's involved.

With gratitude

To all aged care volunteers: Thank you for your stories, your service, and your heart. Without people like you in the sector, we would be lost. To our listeners and readers: Thank you for joining us. We hope you'll pass these stories on to help inspire others.

Let's keep building a more connected, compassionate community, one voice at a time.



**Vision
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Blindness. Low Vision. Opportunity.