

WYNDHAM

Make a wheel change

Natalie Savino

AGED SERVICE SEEKS VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

A VITAL community service keeping elderly and disabled people socially active and independent desperately needs volunteers to keep its wheels in motion.

LINK Community Transport, a not-for-profit organisation based in Campbellfield, helps frail and elderly people and those with disabilities attend social and recreational activities through its Out and About Program.

It covers nine municipali-

ties, including Wyndham, and plans to expand.

The service is on the lookout for about 20 volunteer drivers to help its door-to-door transport service.

Volunteer co-ordinator Briony Hamilton said it was an important program, particularly for those who no longer had family nearby to drive them to shopping centres, senior citizens' clubs, cultural groups, holiday programs

and outings. The organisation has a fleet of about 25 vehicles, ranging from sedans to minibuses with wheelchair hoists, and has been providing much-needed transport since 1995.

"We're starting to really notice a few gaps, which means that we've got a few drivers who are taking on extra days to fill those gaps," Ms Hamilton said.

"Generally we tend to attract retirees but we're

very, very open to and happy to take on drivers of any background, any age."

Ms Hamilton said it was a good way for people to upskill. "Our volunteers absolutely adore the work that they're doing," she said.

"It's not just being out in the community and helping out clients - it's also, I find, really good for them in terms of forging new friendships and networking."

According to 2011 Census data, there were almost 10,000 people between the ages of 65 and 84 living in Wyndham, 1105 aged over 84 and 5390 with a disability.

Ms Hamilton said LINK's work fitted in with Home and Community Care's mission of helping people age independently.

"The ageing population is obviously increasing and keeping them in their home is a goal we'd like to achieve," she said.

Details: 8358 8000.

fast lane

Free family show

Families can attend a free show at the Wyndham Cultural Centre on Saturday. *The Owl's Apprentice* follows the story of a young owl named Poot Poot who is sent to study at owl school and on his journey meets other animals who share their wisdom with him. The show is at 177 Watton St, Werribee, at 11am and 2pm on Saturday, September 26. Details: wyncc.com.au

History made

The fun and scary historical theatrical tour *Down to Earth* will be performed at the Werribee Park historic farm on Saturday, September 26. The show is at Werribee Park Historic Farm, K Rd, from 8pm. Wyndham residents can get a discount. Tickets: essenceproductions.com.au

Young achievers

People can nominate young achievers in Wyndham for the 2016 Victorian Young Achiever Awards. The awards recognise the achievements of young people aged up to 29. Nominations close on December 11. Details: awardsaustralia.com.au

Green survey

Greening the West is running a survey to help shape the development of a marketing and communication program for the initiative. The initiative plants trees and vegetation and creates quality green open spaces. The survey will close on October 4. Details: greeningthewest.org.au/have-your-say

CAMPBELLFIELD

Volunteers are driving force for all

HELPING others has given Laurie Dunn a new lease on life.

The Coburg man has spent the past year generously volunteering his time at LINK Community Transport, helping elderly, frail and disabled clients access social and recreational activities.

But he insists it has been as valuable for him as it is for those he helps.

Mr Dunn began volunteering after his wife died. A year on, he is loving every minute of his job transporting those in need for the Campbellfield organisation.

"You feel like you are doing something for the community," he said.

"There's so many people out there that need it."

Details: linkcommunitytransport.org.au



LINK community drivers Laurie Dunn and Naomi Hatch (inset) love helping the elderly and disabled. Pictures: DENNIS MANKTELOW