

Resident Testimonial

Residential Aged Care

“BaptistCare is like family to me.” Cathy’s twenty-two-year journey from volunteer to employee to care home resident.

Cathy’s relationship with BaptistCare has been a part of her life for over two decades.

Starting out as a volunteer in residential aged care during the 1980s, she was later employed by BaptistCare as a Recreational Activities Officer. Now a resident herself, she’s still supporting the aged care home community to live well.



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Taking a tour of BaptistCare’s Dorothy Henderson Lodge, you might be mistaken for thinking Cathy is one of the BaptistCare team. She has a natural ease around aged care home staff and residents, and knows every nook and cranny of the aged care home. You

might even catch her writing up the activities schedule on the whiteboard or taking another resident under her wing with an encouraging word.

And you wouldn't be far from the truth. Cathy worked for BaptistCare in both a paid and volunteer capacity for over twenty-two years - in the very same aged care home where she now resides.

We sat down with Cathy to unpack her journey with BaptistCare and discuss the key benefits of residential aged care for older people in the community.

You've certainly had a long history with BaptistCare! Was it inevitable that you'd one day become a resident yourself?

I loved working here but never thought it would one day be my home!

I suffered a fall eighteen months ago while walking down my driveway and fractured my wrist. My husband passed away years ago, and without anybody at home to support me once I was discharged, I was brought here instead.

Of course, the place was familiar and already felt like home.



Cathy's room in BaptistCare's Dorothy Henderson Lodge is just down the corridor from her old office where she worked as a Recreational Activities Officer for many years.

My Aunty Glady used to be a resident at the neighbouring Residential Aged Care Home – BaptistCare Shalom Centre in Macquarie Park – in the 1980s, and I used to come and visit her. She was a very small lady but sharp as a tack, and passionate about supporting her fellow residents.

I'd help her organise and run various activities and programs, and I got a taste for the work. After two years, when they offered me a paid position as a casual Diversional Therapist (now referred to as Lifestyle Coordinator or Recreational Activities Officer), I grabbed the opportunity with both hands.

I'd been a part-time conveyancer before that, but the work never fulfilled me as aged care did.

Can you tell us about your lifestyle in residential aged care?

I'm still very much involved in the resident community here. I like to support the staff – many of whom are my old colleagues! I help arrange activities for residents and write up the schedules on the whiteboard.

It feels like divine providence that the room which became available at just the right moment is situated next to my old office! I like to occasionally pop my head in there and see how I can help.

“I still love caring for others – there is a real sense of purpose in giving.”

I don't need that much care myself, which allows me to support others who are struggling. That might mean walking down to the shops or writing a letter for someone – easy tasks that don't cost me anything but may mean a lot to somebody else.



Cathy says residential aged care offers older people a sense of community and belonging in later life while receiving the proper care they need.

What are the benefits of living in a residential care home?

For older people living on their own, isolation and loneliness are always a risk. In residential aged care, there's still time for yourself, but there is also a strong sense of community, knowing there are people to connect with throughout the day.

I've made good connections here – just like in any neighbourhood, there are people you click with and others not as much. But I've made meaningful relationships with both staff and residents, and that's helped me to feel settled and at home.

“I think it's also essential to get the proper care you need in later life. I feel secure here knowing there is 24/7 support available when I need it, as well as good hearty meals each day and an interesting program of activities.”

Have you been able to keep up with your interests and hobbies?

Very much so.

I suffered from a severe illness in my youth, and as part of my rehabilitation, I was advised to take a morning and afternoon walk daily. Well, I've never lost the habit. I still walk a fair distance every day. There's lots of freedom - I just let the girls know I'm popping out. I've never felt like a canary in a cage.

I also love to write poetry – I've created poems all my life. I've got hundreds of them lying around – they are a bit of an antidepressant for me and offer a creative way of expressing myself.



As a Recreational Activities Officer, Cathy was responsible for organising engaging activities for care home residents at BaptistCare.

My son was born with an intellectual disability but could still recite my poetry. When he was a young boy, I wrote a poem about how wonderful he was. He read it out loud at a competition and won the top prize – I was the proudest mother there!

He lives in a local care facility but comes to visit me every now and again. It's lovely to see him when he comes.

Have there been any challenges?

It was challenging to move to a new home without much notice. After I fractured my wrist, I thought they'd wrap it up in plaster and send me on my way. But instead, I came straight to Dorothy Henderson Lodge residential aged care home from the hospital, which was a bit of a shock.

“The move was needed, and I'm glad I'm here, but there was definitely an adjustment period.”

Overall, I feel very much at home here at Dorothy Henderson Lodge. This place has always been such a fixture in my life, and the BaptistCare staff are like family to me. I am so thankful to be somewhere so homely and familiar, and with such a caring community of people to share it with.

Find your nearest care home

If you would like to know more about life in residential aged care, why not chat with one of our friendly team – we'd be happy to talk with you about your individual care needs and organise a tour around your nearest BaptistCare home.

Use our simple online search tool to explore [BaptistCare Aged Care Home locations across New South Wales and the ACT](#).

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