

Here's what Northside can offer...

Opportunities

Northside Community Service (NCS) has a range of volunteer-specific roles involving working with the aged in our community through to the mentoring of young people. The services we provide that are suited to volunteer involvement include:

- working with the aged to support them in meeting their everyday living needs,
- enhancing the lives of people in our community living with a disability,
- taking part in activities to involve those in our community who would otherwise be socially isolated,
- working with families who experience obstacles to full participation in their neighbourhood,
- helping young people in a tutoring and/or mentoring capacity,
- transporting people who have difficulties accessing publicly available transport.

More detail of the work involved is contained in separate flyers. These should be read along with this introduction to volunteering at Northside. Following is some extra information about our volunteering principles, the type of people we are looking for and what's involved in joining NCS as a volunteer.

Our volunteering principles

Our approach to volunteering is guided by the following principles.

- Volunteering is a legitimate way to participate in the activities of the community.
- Volunteering must be of benefit to the community *and* the volunteer.
- Volunteering is always a matter of choice.
- Volunteering is a way for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs.
- Volunteers work only in designated positions.
- Volunteers do not replace paid workers nor constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers.
- Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others.
- Volunteering promotes human rights and equality.

The people we are looking for...

- recently retired or semi-retired individuals who have some spare time on their hands and who enjoy the company of others,
- second- and third-year tertiary students who have an interest in working with young people between the ages of 12 and 18 in a tutoring and/or mentoring capacity,
- people who enjoy driving,
- people who may be between jobs,
- people in employment who are looking to make a contribution to their community.

The skills, experience and attributes we are looking for...

- an ability to facilitate group activities,
- skills you can pass on to others,
- a talent for teaching others,
- an ability to meet and mix with a diverse range of people,
- good listening skills,
- enjoyment from working with children,
- evidence of a safe driving record,
- reliability, a sense of humour and compassion.

What's involved in joining?

- completing an application and undergoing police and referee checks,
- having a short interview with us,
- undertaking a formal induction into the organisation.

You may find your time as a volunteer more enjoyable if you are clear about why you want to be a volunteer. Northside will always aim to get the best fit between your motivation, skills and experience and the role you are recruited to. However, how well this meets your expectations depends very much on the clarity with which you approach volunteering in the first instance.

Interested?

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer with Northside, please complete both an application form and the police check form and return it to us at the address shown below. If you have further questions contact our Volunteer Coordinator on 6257 2255. If you didn't receive an application form as part of your initial enquiry we will post one to you or you can access it from our website at — www.northside.asn.au/volunteers.html

You should post your application to:

The Volunteer Coordinator
Northside Community Service
PO Box 453
Dickson ACT 2602

We will be in touch within five working days of receiving your application to arrange an interview.

Working with children, young people and families

Northside Community Service (NCS) runs a number of programs for children, young people and families that rely on the participation of volunteers.

Playgroups

We run two, weekly playgroups for children under four years of age. Volunteers are encouraged to:

- interact with the children through songs, reading books aloud and, where possible, dancing,
- discuss different parenting techniques or approaches to parenting,
- initiate discussion during information sessions and encourage participation of parents.

The Breakfast Club and Food Bank

We provide breakfast three times a week to give a healthy start to the day for young people between the ages of 12 and 25 and their families. In addition, a 'food bank' is maintained to provide for emergency food and household needs. We look to volunteers assisting with the Breakfast Club and Food Bank programs to:

- help buy the ingredients and prepare, or cook the food for the breakfast,
- assist in the delivery and unpacking of food bank stock,
- spend time, share a meal and enjoy a chat with the various people who access the program.

The Homework Club

Students between the ages of 12 and 18 have the opportunity twice a week to study in a quiet and supportive environment at Northside's Youth and Family Hub. Our volunteers play a vital role in the success of this initiative — we look to them to:

- guide and assist students experiencing difficulty completing school assignments,
- help students develop time management skills, research techniques and editing skills.

What our volunteers experience...

- The reconnection of a parent and child after a period of separation or the empowerment of a parent to address parenting issues they may have been struggling with.
- The development of friendships and support networks through the Breakfast Club — a program that aims to assist those in need not only through the provision of food, but also by encouraging community connectivity among the participants.
- An increase in confidence among students receiving assistance, the development of mentoring relationships and the gradual reconnection and increased school participation of a young person identified as 'at risk' of leaving school early.

Activities for the elderly and people with a disability

Northside Community Service (NCS) runs a number of programs throughout the year aimed at encouraging participation in community activities by people who might otherwise be house-bound and/or socially isolated. Volunteers play an important part in the running of these programs. A volunteer may:

- help people with their shopping,
- provide social contact for lonely or isolated people in the community in the form of home visits or our coffee-in-the-community initiative,
- share their knowledge, skills or interests with others in community on things such as scrap-booking, art, cooking, needlework or other craft activities,
- encourage clients to access community activities such as sports groups, and attending these groups with the client if necessary,
- give practical 'handyman' help,
- support and mentor older persons and people with a disability in home management skills,
- assist in the facilitation of NCS community groups including meal preparation and cooking and encouraging client participation in activities.

What clients have to say...

"I find all the staff (including volunteer 'staff') very helpful and kind. I would be lost without your assistance with shopping, outings and medical. Thank you for all your help."

"I can only walk the length of one or two houses before my legs 'go'. I couldn't do (my banking) without you. Everyone (the volunteers) that comes here are fantastic."

"In the past I didn't go anywhere — (this provides me with) an opportunity to be away from the isolation of my own home and to have company of others in the community."

What our volunteers have to say...

"I'm retired and have more time, so I feel I can contribute something to the community. I enjoy interacting with people, and knowing that I'm using some of my time for others. Clients say 'thanks', for the bus ride, or 'that was a great meal today'." (*Volunteer who provides transport and assistance for social groups.*)

"It's very satisfying when you're assisting in an activity that clients really want to do. It's clear they're enjoying it." (*Volunteer who plays piano and leads a sing along for social groups.*)

Driving and assistance with social activities

Northside Community Service (NCS) has a constant need for drivers. While we employ a number of drivers, we are always looking to volunteers to meet specific needs associated with various social activities.

On most occasions you will be driving an NCS vehicle. We have small and large station wagons, two 12-seater mini-buses and a 20-seater bus. On those occasions where the need is urgent and there are no NCS vehicles available, we will look to the volunteer to use their own vehicle provided they have comprehensive care insurance and an appropriate vehicle. More detail on this is contained in the Volunteers Handbook.

In the main, volunteer driving is associated with our social activity programs. NCS runs a number of programs throughout the year aimed at encouraging participation in community activities by people who might otherwise be house-bound and/or socially isolated.

We look to our volunteer drivers to transport people to and from these activities, as well as assist in the preparation and running of the activity.

What our clients say...

“I can only walk the length of one or two houses before my legs ‘go’. I couldn’t do (my banking) without you. Everyone (the volunteers) that comes here are fantastic.”

“(These social occasions provide) an opportunity to meet and talk to other old ladies in similar circumstances.”

“Without this opportunity I would just sit here looking at four walls all day.”

“In the past I didn’t go anywhere — (this provides me with) an opportunity to be away from the isolation of my own home and to have company of others in the community.”

“You (the volunteer) are a life saver!”