



GEM VOLUNTEER POSITION SUMMARY

The GEM role and requirements



GEM is an acronym for (Genuine, Empathic, Motivator). We are currently inviting students studying a health and wellbeing discipline from the University of Newcastle and our local TAFEs to participate in the role of a GEM volunteer. The main role of a GEM volunteer is to provide companionship, engage with and learn from an older person affected by Loneliness (OPAL), then support them to gain confidence to socially engage and create their own meaningful social networks.

GEM volunteers are not asked to use their clinical skills. In fact, they are asked not to.

GEM volunteers are provided an opportunity to develop and strengthen interpersonal and soft skills such as empathy, active listening, effective communication, accidental counselling, rapport building, problem solving, critical thinking, time management, boundaries and much more within a supportive, non-academic, interactive group setting.

Your role as a GEM volunteer is to

- Follow the guidelines of the OPALs and GEMs Companionship and Support Program with guidance and support from your Volunteer Co-ordinator and Program Manager.
- Provide your allocated OPAL with weekly face-to-face companionship for the duration of the program.
- Use learned interpersonal and soft skills to build rapport and demonstrate that your OPAL is valued, listened to, in a safe and trusted space to share their story without judgement.
- Observe, listen to, and learn from your OPAL what they need or want to socially engage within their community.
- Assist your OPAL to identify the leisure and social activities that they would enjoy.
- Transport and accompany your OPAL to the leisure and social activities they choose to participate in.
- Facilitate opportunities for your OPAL to develop new social networks to continue connecting with at the completion of the program.
- With guidance from the Program Manager, provide your OPAL with the information and resources they request for ongoing confidence and wellbeing.

Training and Support

GEM volunteers play an integral role to the success of Charlie's Gift's OPALs and GEMs community programs. To ensure your enjoyment and success of our programs, successful volunteers will be invited to participate in our GEM Education and Mentoring Program. This program is designed to provide an opportunity to:

- Learn of the possible issues and challenges people may experience as they age.
- Learn, practice and strengthen interpersonal and soft skills in an interactive, supportive group setting.
- Apply and refine learned skills when engaging with your OPAL in a practical and purposeful setting.
- See older people as diverse individuals not too dissimilar from yourself

GEM volunteers are integral to the success of our Companionship and Support Program and will be asked to commit to providing between two and five hours a week face to face time over the 24-week duration of the program. This includes 2 hours a fortnight to participate in group education and mentoring sessions.

The OPAL and GEMs Companionship and Support program is broken into 6 week blocks. Hours spent with your OPAL will vary as they progress through the program.

Download Volunteer Hours Breakdown Sheet

We appreciate that GEM volunteer roles require a huge commitment on your part. To acknowledge your generosity and commitment we have designed this program to provide as many personal and professional benefits as possible.

Benefits Include:

- Opportunity to engage with an older person in a non-academic environment.
- Opportunity for you and your OPAL to learn from each other and mutually benefit from the experience.
- Opportunity to de-myth any preconceived assumptions of older people
- Develop, increase and strengthen Interpersonal and soft skill education and development in a practical not competitive setting.
- Opportunity to explore and implement personal wellbeing strategies
- Opportunity to engage with peers in an interactive, fun group setting.
- Ongoing mentoring and support to succeed in your companion role.
- Opportunity to increase PD hours
- Invitation to attend OPALs and GEMs end of program farewell and presentation.
- Receipt of End of Program Gifts and Certificates
- Provision of Personal Reference
- Increased employment qualities.



You will find more information on the OPALs and GEMs Program on the *Our Programs* page of our website. Alternately, contact admin@charliesgift.com.au and request a recruitment pack.