

The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne
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Welcome to The Royal Children's Hospital Volunteer Service

As a member of a dedicated team, Volunteers are united in a single aim of doing everything possible to support us to make a positive difference to the hospital experience for our patients and families.

The work of the Volunteers is varied but each activity contributes to The Royal Children's Hospital vision "To be a great children's hospital among the world's best, leading the way."

We expect you will follow in the tradition of past members of the Volunteer Service by winning the affection of our patients, the gratitude of their families and the respect and appreciation of our staff. Volunteering here at The Royal Children's Hospital can be a most rewarding and satisfying experience.

Volunteers work in a wide variety of roles to:

- Support and assist professional staff in providing and promoting the highest quality of patient care, both in paediatric and adolescent health.
- Support the hospital staff in making the patient's stay at The Royal Children's Hospital as comfortable as possible.
- Assist and support families and friends of patients.
- Provide a channel through which members of the community can contribute their resources, energy and ideas for the benefit of the hospital.

History of the Volunteer Service

In 1960, the Manager of The Royal Children's Hospital, Mr. W.C. Feint, returned from an overseas visit and recommended the establishment of a Volunteer Service.

Coincidentally, Miss Carmen Winter (founder and patron of The Royal Children's Hospital Volunteer Service) also returned from a visit to the USA. There, she had seen Volunteers in action in hospitals.

The President of the Hospital, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch (then Lady Murdoch), and the committee of management, agreed to implement a Volunteer Service at The Royal Children's Hospital.

On the 29th June 1961, this new service was launched, and by December 1962, there were seventy volunteers working in the hospital in Carlton and in the orthopaedic section in Frankston.

In January 1963, the hospital was moved from Carlton to Parkville. Approximately 350 Volunteers now work in many different areas of the Hospital. The Volunteers are part of a dynamic movement growing and changing to adapt to the increasing needs of the Hospital.

The Pelican

The pelican is known for the caring of its young and living in groups – all working together for the good of the community.

It was for these reasons that the pelican was chosen as part of the coat of arms for The Royal Children's Hospital, and the symbol of the Volunteer Service.

Volunteers who have given 20 years of service are presented with a silver pelican brooch.

Management of the Volunteer Program

The staff of the Volunteer Service are here to share your experiences and concerns as well as to support and help you through a range of training opportunities. Do ask if you are uncertain about anything at all.

Volunteer Service Staff:

Coordinator, Volunteer Service	(03) 9345 5880
After Hours Volunteer Recruitment & Training Advisor	(03) 9345 4366
Recruitment & Support	(03) 9345 5879

The Volunteer Service is part of the Family Services Department. This department brings together four family focussed support services:

- The Family Respite & Resource Centre
- Safety Centre
- Volunteer Service
- Kids Health Info
- Main Street Reception

Volunteer Rights

Volunteers have rights as do Staff and Patients. Volunteers can expect the following at The Royal Children's Hospital:

- ✓ To receive a Position Description that will aid volunteers to perform their duties competently and confidently.
- ✓ To experience job satisfaction, and inform the Volunteer Service office if an assignment is unsatisfactory.
- ✓ To receive training, initial and ongoing.
- ✓ To ask for a new assignment when ready for a new challenge.
- ✓ To feel free to consult the appropriate staff member regarding suggestions or concerns.
- ✓ To work in a safe environment.
- ✓ To work in an environment safe from sexual harassment.
- ✓ To receive medical attention whilst on duty if they become ill.
- ✓ To be kept informed of new developments at the hospital.
- ✓ To receive communications via regular Volunteer Newsletters, the Notice Board in Volunteer Room and email where necessary
- ✓ To know whom they are accountable to and to have clearly defined channels of communication.

Volunteer Responsibilities

Commitment – A minimum of 3 hours per week (fortnightly for After Hours Program) for at least 12 months.

Accountability and Punctuality – All volunteers are expected to arrive punctually and have a responsibility to staff assigning volunteer tasks.

Absences – Volunteers unable to report for duty should advise the Volunteer Service office on 9345 5880 or email volunteer.service@rch.org.au. After Hours Volunteers should advise their Family Services staff support person of any absences.

Registration and Identification – Staff and volunteers are issued with an identity badge and lanyard. This must be worn at all times while you are in the Hospital as part of your Volunteer role. This strengthens security in the hospital and enables easier identification of staff and volunteers when interacting with patients, families and other staff members.

Volunteers are required to register at the beginning and end of each shift. Barcode readers are located within the Volunteer Service Office and the Emergency Department.

Appearance – Volunteers are expected to wear suitable clothing to minimise infection transmission but also to dress appropriately for their roles. We ask that you wear and maintain a clean neat appearance with a navy polo shirt, either smart casual trousers or skirt/shorts (mid length) with your identity

badge clearly displayed at chest level. This does not include torn jeans, short shorts, tracksuit pants or running shoes. For safety reasons the wearing of open toed shoes on the wards is discouraged. Jewellery should be kept to a minimum for security, infection control and safety reasons. Strong perfume is not to be used. Long hair is to be tied back. For those who are working directly with children you may consider adding an apron. You can purchase navy polo shirts from the Volunteer Service office. In line with Infection Control Guidelines we ask that you not wear stoned rings or false fingernails.

Change of Details – We ask that you notify the Volunteer Service office.

Resignation – If you wish to resign, please notify the Volunteer Service office and return your identity badge.

Fire and Emergency Procedure Training – All Volunteers are required to complete Emergency Procedure Training annually and be familiar with fire and emergency procedures. These are summarised on a card attached to your identity badge.

Security – To protect your belongings, all personal items should be left in lockers in the change room. Do not bring valuables to work, as the hospital cannot be responsible for losses.

Immunisation – Whooping Cough and Influenza vaccination is recommended for Volunteers. Any female volunteer of child bearing age should discuss immunisation against Rubella with their Medical Practitioner.

Patient Confidentiality

When a patient enters The Royal Children’s Hospital, the hospital assumes an obligation to keep in confidence all that pertains to the patient and his or her affairs. This obligation is shared by all staff and Volunteers. You must refrain from discussing any patient or information regarding a patient with any person in or out of the Hospital, except in the course of your duties. Failure to do so is not only a breach of confidence but may also involve you, and the hospital, in legal proceedings.

Under no circumstances may any unauthorised statement be made to the press, radio or television. Any request from the media should be referred to the person in charge of your work area.

Some examples of breach of ethics and/or confidentiality:

- Repeating remarks overheard about the hospital, other hospital workers, volunteers or patients
- Answering questions about a patient’s condition
- Comparing similar medical conditions
- Reading a patient’s case notes or chart

- Performing duties outside your area of responsibility
- Giving advice on any matter
- Being critical of or interfering with hospital routine
- Accepting money or gifts from a patient or family
- Imposing your own beliefs (including religious) or attitudes on anyone in the hospital
- Becoming personally involved with patients and families
- Taking photographs of patients and families
- Allowing volunteer's own family and friends to attend the hospital and become involved in your work
- It is most important that all volunteer concerns are dealt with by the appropriate staff member prior to any volunteer leaving hospital.

Awards

Service by Volunteers to the hospital is greatly appreciated by members of The Royal Children's Hospital Board, Executive and staff.

Specific awards for hours and years of service are presented at the Annual Volunteer Recognition Day.

An award in the form of a plaque was inaugurated in 1971 and is presented to those volunteers who have completed ten years of continuous service.

A further award in the form of a silver pelican brooch was inaugurated in 1981 in recognition of volunteers who have completed twenty years of continuous service.

A Life Governorship Certificate was inaugurated in 1989 and is awarded on completion of twenty-five years of continuous service.

Awards are also given for thirty, thirty-five, forty and to date forty-five years of continuous service.

Amenities

Volunteers are offered onsite car parking, but are reminded that space is very restricted. Therefore parking in the hospital car park is permitted only whilst on duty at the hospital. Volunteers should present their car park ticket to the Volunteer Service or Family Resource Centre staff office for authorisation.

Drinks, snacks and meals may be purchased from various food outlets. Tea and coffee is provided in the Volunteers Area.