

# GOCo NEWS

Summer Edition, December 2016



## From the GoCo Team

Welcome to the Summer Edition of GoCo News.

Volunteers are often the lifeblood of our communities and services providing the 'glue' or social capital essential to maintaining wellbeing.

It was great to see two of GoCo's volunteers, Jill Woodhead and Hope Cahill, recognised for their wonderful voluntary contribution.

Many thanks also to GoCo's other volunteers for their invaluable contribution during 2016.

The two customer stories featured illustrate the positive impact well co-designed support can have on the quality of life of our customers.

Sadly, GoCo farewells two of our staff, Jenni and Sharon, who are moving onto the next stage of their respective careers. Best wishes with your new adventure.

Let me take this opportunity on behalf of GoCo to wish you and your loved ones a happy and safe festive season.



[gococare.com.au](http://gococare.com.au)

# NSW/ACT REGIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AND COMMUNITY AWARDS

We are proud to announce that Gunnedah's GoCo has been awarded the Volunteer Award in the '1st Choice Rentals Volunteering category' for the 2016 NSW/ACT Regional Achievement and Community Awards. GoCo was also awarded the "Social Impact Award" as an organisation.

GoCo was nominated for the work of two outstanding GoCo volunteers, Jill Woodhead and Hope Cahill, who made an amazing community contribution by spending time comforting a dying man who was without family in his final days. We have highlighted this story in a previous newsletter, however it is such a lovely story we couldn't help but share it again.

Out of the kindness of their hearts, Jill and Hope regularly visited the man in Gunnedah District Hospital. When the man's condition deteriorated and he was transferred to Tamworth Base Hospital, Jill and Hope travelled every day to visit him, do his washing, and sit with him.

When his condition deteriorated further, they brought his dog to his bedside, and he could spend his final hours with his beloved pet before he died.

GoCo Volunteers make an exceptional contribution to GoCo and to the wider community. They assist with everything from general lifestyle support to more dedicated medical support. Over



the years, the Volunteers have done everything from laundry and mowing lawns, to dressing changes and wound cleaning. GoCo prides itself on offering tailored packages, with as much or as little care as needed, with their aim to preserve and maintain their clients' independence.

GoCo's services extend to not just the aged but many different areas, including disability support, Aboriginal support, assistance for those with dementia, and community transport – vital for those in towns with limited services. On top of this GoCo's Community Hub provides guidance for all members of the community, not just those in need of specialised care.

Always looking to do more for the community, GoCo constantly seeks new volunteers to expand and reinforce its capabilities.

If you or anyone you know can spare as little as a few hours a month, or needs care or assistance, please contact Suzi on 6740 2240, through the form on our website at [www.gococare.com.au](http://www.gococare.com.au), or drop in to our office at 80 Marquis Street, Gunnedah.





# CAROL + ALEX'S STORY

Alex and his grandmother and primary carer Carol live in a lovely townhouse on the edge of Tamworth and together, with the support of GoCo's Barbra Heath have made lifestyle adjustments to their home so that Alex can continue to live in the comfort of their family home.

Alex is 26 years old and has a disease called Pelizaeus Merzbacher. Alex requires high level support with general functions such as eating, showering, and getting about and his condition often leaves him in discomfort and pain.

With the help of GoCo, Carol and Alex's home has been equipped with a hoist to help Alex get in and out of bed, slings in the bathroom and bedroom, a 'Seahorse Shower Chair' and a scooter board used to help with physiotherapy treatment.

Alex is also a lover of music, writing and technology and with the assistance of various funding options including Flexible Funding, is well equipped with an iPod, iPad and iTunes cards to keep him entertained, occupied and happy.

Carol has been Alex's primary carer for many years and has been instrumental in ensuring Alex's happiness and wellbeing. Carol is now in her 60's, and has health concerns of her own. With the support of twice weekly in home support and fortnightly respite for Alex, Carol continues to be her grandson's greatest champion.

GoCo's Barb Heath also worked with Carol to prepare for the family's future needs and assisted with the application for immediate needs supported accommodation so that if anything happens to Carol, there are plans in place for Alex's care.

In Carol's own words: "Alex has to have a special moulded wheel chair for his bent back and when I called the equipment provider to have it repaired



*I didn't feel that they understood that it needed to be fixed straight away. (The wheelchair) is a must - it's his legs. When I spoke to Barb about it, she got onto Epps Engineering and the next day it was picked up and fixed".*

*"Barb has been my bible - I know that I have someone I can always ring who knows where to and who to ask. I hope I don't (ever) lose GoCo because they have been my backbone - they have been there no matter what."*



# SERVICE IN FOCUS: GOCO COMMUNITY HUB

GoCo Community Hub is the quiet achiever in the GoCo Services Team. Headed up by Kate Mackley and kicking goals for many in our community, the services provided by Community Hub Support are as broad as they are valuable.

In its simplest form, GoCo Community Hub Support provides information and support to individuals and families, young people, parents, and carers who are disadvantaged or in crisis. From helping to purchase health equipment, to completing job applications or organising legal advice; the Community Hub Team is focused on providing critical support to those in the community that need a helping hand.

GoCo Community Hub provides a range of services to the Gunnedah community to help you stay connected to your community. The Community Hub Worker can

- Link you with services and information;
- Help you make appointments;
- Help you to fill out forms and understand documents;
- Listen to your needs and concerns, and provide support options;
- Write resumes and cover letters;
- Assist you to organise a community event or program.

GoCo Community Hub partners with a range of local organisations to deliver targeted programs

to help build skills, meet new people and access any support you might need.

## SOME OF OUR PROGRAMS:

**Junior Brain Games** is an after school program for primary school children, held each Wednesday at the Gunnedah Shire Library. Each week explores a new theme through reading, puzzles, activities and craft to build fine motor skills, critical thinking skills and social skills.

**Lay-By Your Bond** helps to save toward a rental bond. Participants can access a range of support to help maintain their tenancy, including financial counselling and a \$500 contribution to their bond.

**Being Broke Financial Literacy** is a four week interactive program to build money management skills and learn more about budgeting, cooking, reducing household costs and managing income. Participants are linked to long term support if needed, and are supported after completion of the program to achieve their financial goals.

**Gunnedah Community Roundtable** is an opportunity for services, community groups and individuals to share knowledge and information to the wider community. The Roundtable is a great resource for people in the community who want to know more about the support available in Gunnedah, or who want to promote any upcoming programmes, events and opportunities."

Most recently, GoCo paired with Northern Inland Community College and Gunnedah Shire Council launched the Young Access Program to provide an opportunity for young people with a disability to gain skills, socialise and try some new hobbies in a nurturing and supportive environment.

One of the most popular activities was a series of visual arts workshops that encouraged participants to create art using canvas, paints, and a good dose of creative flare.







**HARRISON AND HIS MUM, JULIE FREND.**



**BEST BUDDIES!**

## HARRISON'S STORY

Like all young men, Harrison Neader enjoys nothing more than having a laugh with his mates, and since joining Young Access, Harrison has a whole new set of friends to joke around with. Each Saturday morning local youths with disabilities meet to catch up with friends and try new hobbies; building their social circle as they build new skills.

Harrison has quickly emerged as the joker of the group. His broad grin and infectious laugh are hard to resist, and before long Harrison has the whole room laughing.

"He just loves to laugh" says Harrison's mother Julie Frend, "He's very visual, he loves slapstick humour. He has really good receptive language, so he gets verbal humour. He just loves to be around happy people, it's infectious."

Harrison doesn't use many words, making his brand of humour particularly unique. Transcending the barriers of language with a well-timed giggle, shrug or single word, Harrison proves laughter really is universal.

Many of the Young Access students have limited verbal capacity, and the opportunity to engage with a group through activity, rather than conver-

sation, has proven to be a winning formula for the young Gunnedah locals.

"He loves the group, continued Julie. "It's such a friendly, happy environment and that's why they all enjoy going. The happiness and the social side is what Harrison really loves. It's just fun."

Young Access is delivered by GoCo, Gunnedah Shire Council and Northern Inland Community College in a series of units. Each unit is dedicated to a particular capacity building activity, including mosaics, photography and giant jigsaw cubes. In 2017 the units will be designed to meet the skills, goals and interests of the young participants in response to the feedback and success of the first term of Young Access.

Expressions of interest for Term 1 2017 are now being taken; contact Northern Inland Community College on 67425630 for more information.



## ON THE ROAD AGAIN

In the past few months, GoCo MSO has been clocking up the kilometres with community trips cross the region and further afield. Here are a few happy snaps of our wayward travellers!



WATERWAYS WILDLIFE PARK IN OCTOBER.



HAPPY HOUR! - THE GOCO MSO TRIP TO MOREE TO VISIT THE ARTESIAN BATHS IN NOVEMBER.

## FAREWELL JENNI + SHARON

We would like to make special mention of two much loved GoCo team members who are leaving GoCo, Jenni Carlin and Sharon Tibbs.

Jenni Carlin will be leaving GoCo in 2017 to take up a sector support and development position with Multi Service Outlets (Like GoCo) across the New England area.

Jenni first joined the GoCo Team in 2008 and quickly made her mark as a driven and talented community care professional, with a real passion for providing support and guidance to our elderly and disadvantaged clients and particularly those living with dementia.

Some of Jenni's achievements have included The Dementia Memory Walk, Strength and Balancing exercise classes, Brain Training, and other leading programs.

We will miss Jenni dearly, and would like to wish



her every happiness and success in her new position.

Sharon Tibbs has been with GoCo for 4 years, she started as front desk reception and then was employed as Community Transport Coordinator. In that time she had a lot to learn, and adapted to it quickly. Sharon proved to be a great coordinator for Transport. She was then given the team leader position as well and showed the business that she was very capable of grasping any task that was put in front of her.

It has been great working with Sharon and she will be sadly missed by us all but is only a phone call away.

Farewell and good luck, Jenni + Sharon.





# FOR THE DIARY

**Tuesday, December 20** - Evening Christmas Lights Tour - FREE.

**Thursday, December 15 and 20** - Christmas Shopping Bus Trip to Tamworth - \$10.00 per person.

**Friday, January 20** - Country Music Festival Bus Trip - \$20.00 per person.

*Seats are limited for these events. Call GoCo Community Care on (02) 6740 2240 to book your spot!*

## RUDOLF CUPCAKES

With the Christmas count down well and truly on and a hint of Christmas in the air, there could be no better time to spoil family, friends, and neighbours with this super sweet, super cute Christmas treat.

- 200g plain flour
- 180g caster sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon bicarbonate soda
- 40g cocoa
- 175g unsalted butter, softened
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 150ml sour cream, room temperature
- 200g milk chocolate
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 12 large milk chocolate buttons
- 24 white chocolate buttons
- 12 red Smarties
- Black icing pens
- 6-8 pretzels, broken into halves

1. Preheat the oven to 180C. Line a 12 hole muffin tin with brown or red patty cases.

2. Place the flour, sugar, baking powder, bi carb soda, cocoa, butter, eggs, vanilla and sour cream in a food processor. Process for 1 minute or until a thick batter forms. Divide the batter evenly between the patty cases until they are each full.

3. Bake for 20 minutes or until the cupcakes have risen and a skewer inserted comes out clean. Remove from the oven and allow to cool in the tray for 5 minutes, before transferring to a cooling rack to cool completely.

4. To make the icing, place the chocolate and sour



cream in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water. Stir with a metal spoon for 3 minutes or until the chocolate melts and becomes smooth. Remove the bowl from the heat.

5. Place a large milk chocolate button in the center of each cupcake. Place two white chocolate buttons on top for eyes, using a little ganache to stick them on securely. Add a red Smartie for the nose, again using the ganache to help secure the Smartie. Use the black icing pen to draw eyes in the centre of the white chocolate buttons, and then insert two half pretzels in the cupcake for antlers.

[www.taste.com.au](http://www.taste.com.au)





ON THE **GO** COMMUNITY CARE

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