



**ST VINCENT'S
PRIVATE HOSPITAL**

BRISBANE

A FACILITY OF ST VINCENT'S HEALTH AUSTRALIA

St Vincent's Health & Aged
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National Volunteer Week

This National Volunteer Week (9 – 15 May 2016) St Vincent's Private Hospital Brisbane recognises the amazing work volunteers perform and wishes to thank them for their ongoing dedication and service.

Volunteer helps young people with chronic pain

St Vincent's Private Hospital Brisbane volunteer artist Venus Ganis is connecting with and inspiring young people who take part in the Hospital's *LEAP into Life* pain management program.

The program runs for two weeks every school holidays and helps young people from 14 years who live with chronic pain to better understand and manage their pain. It is the only adolescent pain management program in Australia designed specifically for young people with some participants travelling from interstate to undertake the program.

LEAP into Life includes physical and social activities such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, exercise, relaxation and the art sessions lead by Venus who has 40 years teaching experience.

"It's wonderful to be able to use my skills and experience as a teacher and an artist to help young people express themselves and have a creative release while they are working so hard to learn techniques to understand and manage their pain," Venus said.

"With each new group it's a creative, collaborative journey. I love finding out what each young person enjoys doing whether it's painting, drawing or collage and tailoring the art sessions to those likes."

63 'Blue Angel' volunteers generously donate their time daily, weekly or monthly to Give Happy and Live Happy (the National Volunteer Week theme first introduced in 2015) at St Vincent's Private Hospital Brisbane.

Volunteers like Ms Ganis, who enjoys being able to share her skills and knowledge.

"To see young people engaging with art is wonderful, especially when we do something fun like 'splat' art where they throw paint at a canvas, they just light-up," Venus said.

"It's incredibly rewarding to see that enjoyment on a young person's face who is living with chronic pain. The whole experience gives me so much satisfaction."

St Vincent's Private Hospital Brisbane Manager Volunteer services Toni Leahy says volunteers work hard to support staff, patients, families and visitors.

“Volunteers are a valued and important part of St Vincent’s. They perform so many different services and dedicate themselves to doing the best job possible,” she said.

The St Vincent’s Private Hospital Brisbane ‘Blue Angels’ include students to retirees ranging in ages from 22 years-old to 91 years-old, but Mrs Leahy believes they all have one thing in common.

“People who volunteer are really genuine people. All our volunteers are happy, friendly, open, giving people,” she said.

- Ends -

Media contact – Flo Turnbull 0409 489 605 or 3240 1399.

Available for interview/photos are:

- Volunteer artist Venus Ganis
- St Vincent’s Private Hospital Brisbane Manager Volunteer Services Toni Leahy



Image: Volunteer artist Venus Ganis in the LEAP into Life art session room.