

Media statement

10 December 2019

Christmas cheer benefits Parkinson's sufferers

Parkinson's Support Group Caloundra and Maleny Movement Disorder Clinic Parkinson's Disease patients have teamed up with well-known Australian musician Tim Hall, to form the Tremble Clef Parkinson's Choir, a social singing group for people living with Parkinson's Disease and their loved ones.

The choir of around 15 Sunshine Coast residents have been rehearsing for the past 10 weeks in preparation for the Christmas concert, directed by Tim Hall who was the former guitarist for The Whitlams.

"Each week I've seen an improvement in the confidence of participants, and their willingness to belt out the tunes. We don't focus on getting it right, we focus on the therapy of singing," Mr Hall said.

"The huge positive for singing for Parkinson's patients is the science behind being involved in music and an increase in dopamine production, which is very important for Parkinson's Disease patients.

"It's also a great opportunity for them to get together socially, have a sing and have a laugh.

"The Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service Nurse Navigators (registered nurses who assist patients in our community with complex health conditions) initially helped me tap into relevant Parkinson Disease support groups and community members, from there the Tremble Clef Choir has snowballed," Tim said.

Parkinson's disease causes the cells that produce dopamine to die, which leads to issues with movement and speech.

Community Speech Therapist Louise Williams says singing is a great form of therapy for Parkinson's Disease patients, where communication impairment is common.

"Singing has a range of benefits for people with Parkinson's Disease. Singing helps to strengthen the voice and improve respiratory support for speech," Louise said.

"Involvement in a group activity like a choir may also enhance the mood and help to boost confidence of the participant in social situations. Singing is a great activity for anyone with Parkinson's Disease."

Graham, who suffers from Parkinson's Disease, and his wife Sue said they have enjoyed getting into the Christmas spirit and seeing other members open-up.

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“It has been heart-warming to see some of the choir members, who have been struggling with their disease, really get into it. Some of them have had trouble speaking and felt quite shy, now they are getting their confidence up,” Sue said.

Graham said: “Tim is an extremely talented musician, the opportunity to work with him is phenomenal. He really has a special gift, he takes the time to listen to everyone, even when they may be having a tough time communicating.

“It feels so good to be supporting each other and getting to know other people going through the same thing, especially at this time of year,” he said.

The group will present a Christmas Concert with residents at IRT Parklands for an hour-long performance.

Tremble Clef will continue in the new year on a weekly basis. For anyone living within the Sunshine Coast region and able to travel who is interested in joining, contact tremble.clef.choir@gmail.com for more information.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

Media are invited to attend the Tremble Clef Christmas Concert.

When: Wednesday 11th 1:20pm

Where: Meet at the front reception. IRT Parklands, 242 Parklands Blvd, Currimundi

ENDS

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