

Media statement

18 February 2019

Helping our youngest patients feel better this February

'Feel Good Feb' is celebrated across the country during the month of February.

It was created to encourage and inspire people to initiate random acts of kindness for fellow community members. Established in 2015 by a Sydney Mum who was teaching her children about empathy, it's now a national annual event.

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) is lucky enough to have a team of more than 260 active volunteers who show their kindness and empathy all year round, not just during the month of February.

The volunteers contribute more than 5000 hours of their time to the health service each month. They include Hospital Chaplains, Justice of the Peace (JP) and 'Sunshiners'.

Volunteer Colleen Whittaker has been coming into Sunshine Coast University Hospital regularly since its opening.

Outside of her work as a volunteer she has spent many hours sewing paediatric surgical gowns for the littlies and vests for the volunteer team who escort children and their families to and from surgery.

The brightly coloured vests mean the volunteers are easily identified and add a little friendliness and fun to what can be a scary time for all.

Ms Whittaker said: "I've seen first-hand that the surgical gowns make a difference. When parents can easily recognise our team, it takes pressure off the clinical staff, they can just get on with their jobs and let the volunteer team do what they do best.

"Surgery in hospital for our littlies is often overwhelming. Being able to bring a little bit of fun for these brave kids makes me so happy, especially when they recognise the characters on the vests. They forget about what they are in hospital for," she said.

There has been extensive research to prove that 'giving out good' not only benefits the receiver but also increases the happiness of the giver. There's mental happiness and physical benefits for all involved. It is a win-win situation!

ENDS

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service

Media statement

Colleen Whittaker can be available for interviews and photographs on request.

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Volunteer Colleen Whittaker and Acting Executive Director Finance, Business and Operational Services, Andrew McDonald



Volunteers Brenda and Petah in the paediatric surgical gowns