



Media Release

TUESDAY 22 OCTOBER, 2019

MARGARET YOUNG, EASTERN PALLIATIVE CARE VOLUNTEER LIVING WITH MOTOR NEURON DISEASE, WINS PREMIER'S 'VICTORIAN SENIOR OF THE YEAR' AWARD

It is with great pleasure and pride that Eastern Palliative Care Association Incorporated (EPC) announces EPC volunteer Margaret Young has won the 2019 Premier's Victorian Senior of the Year Award.

Margaret is a simply outstanding volunteer who has made a huge difference to her clients' and colleagues' lives. She is widely respected and loved by all in EPC for her work, and has inspired countless others in Palliative Care Victoria, and the wider community, by her passionate volunteerism and selflessness.

Margaret, 80 years' old, has volunteered for EPC since 2007. Over those 11 years, she has embraced a wide range of roles to support people at end of life, working as a grass roots home support volunteer, training volunteers to deliver in home support, mentoring new volunteers and leading EPC's innovative Ambassador program called "Let's talk: Palliative Care explained".

Everyone who meets Margaret is inspired by her vivacity, energy and enthusiasm and her extraordinary commitment to enriching the lives of others, particularly those who are dying.

Rather poignantly, after such outstanding personal community service, Margaret is now dying herself of Motor Neuron Disease (MND). Rather than withdraw, she has chosen to tackle her death head on, by educating others about the progression of this terrible disease.

What a courageous and profound parting gift!

PHOTO/STORY OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

Margaret Young – Available for interviews.

Peita Carroll – HR & Communications Manager – Available for immediate comment.

Kylie Draper – Acting CEO – Available for immediate comment.

See more information [here](#) about the 2019 Victorian Senior of the Year Awards

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ST VINCENT'S
HOSPITAL
MELBOURNE



Premier's Victorian Senior of the Year Award speech by Margaret Young

Your Excellency,

Good morning and thank you for this honour.

I love speaking in public. I have been known to wrest a microphone from a colleague and, as an ex-TAFE lecturer, I could speak for 3 hours non-stop. But that voice has been taken from me by motor neuron disease and now I must use another's voice, but I still have a lot to say.

At my secondary school, the Principal would regularly say, "Girls, from those to whom much is given, much will be required." I confess I thought he was an old fossil. Now I find that I am of the same mind.

When I retired, I decided to volunteer and work for and with people who are frequently marginalised: people with disabilities, people who are financially disadvantaged and people who are dying. So I volunteered at Vision Australia, The Smith Family and at Eastern Palliative Care (EPC).

Volunteering is often seen as selfless, and indeed one does give a lot of oneself to it. In that regard, I guess I was echoing the philosophy of my school Principal: that is, giving back some of the blessings I have received in my life.

But there were other important aspects: I wanted to be challenged; intellectually and ethically. I did not want to be on the margins of society. I wanted to be engaged and still involved. And I have been.

To single out one of my volunteering roles – sitting with people who are dying is often challenging and sad, but I have found during my 11 years of being a home visitor, that most people in palliative care are getting on with life, often with enthusiasm and joy. I have also found that it is a privilege to be invited into a dying person's life and to walk a little way with them.

And now I find myself in the same position. A friend asked me the other day "in your situation, where is the gold?" this was a searching question.

Indeed, there is gold to be found: in family, friends, nature, music, art, literature and in my continuing volunteering.

Thankyou

Margaret Young