**Involvement (role)**

For the past thirteen months I have volunteered at my local aged care home, ABC Aged Care. I have undertaken many activities with the residents throughout this time, including; spending time speaking with residents who do not often have other visitors, playing games such as scrabble and participating in “wheelchair walks” around the local park with residents who are unable to push themselves. As well this, I have assisted residents to operate technology such as an iPad, in order to stay in touch with their family and friends.

My volunteer role at the facility has seen me volunteer on a weekly basis for two hours after school. I have attended my visits alone and it has been a non-compulsory commitment, whereby I have given up my time during the busy school terms, as well as holidays over the past thirteen months.

**Impact (on self and community)**

Volunteering has been an extremely fulfilling experience. By having this opportunity to engage with the community, I have developed; improved listening and communication skills through my interactions with both the elderly and staff, greater empathy towards others and I have bettered my time management skills through ensuring I share my time between residents during my visits. I feel honoured to have been given the opportunity to hear about life experiences that the residents have had, and to have been the recipient of much appreciated life advice from people with great wisdom, who I have great respect for. Volunteering has benefited my personal development and has improved my confidence and broadened my knowledge.

There have been many occasions when I’ve visited residents who’ve been having a bad day, but I feel privileged to have the opportunity to brighten their mood and offer them a distraction from their sadness or worries. As I’ve been visiting many of the residents on a regular basis, I have formed strong trusting relationships; it’s been extremely rewarding hearing them acknowledge my efforts with remarks like, “you’ve made my day”. The staff at the facility have acknowledged the impact I have made, even recognising my commitment to the residents in an article in their quarterly newsletter.

I’ve really loved my time with the residents, and intend to continue volunteering at the facility into the future.