

Jenny McGuirk

Rosie Bray



Jenny McGuirk loves people and loves volunteering, and that's the way that I met her in 1980, when doing a course and learning to crochet and she was President of Contact (operating from Bundoora Hall).

Actually Jenny just followed her parent's example by giving back to the community.

Jenny smiles when she remembers her mother, well into her 80's volunteering at the OP Shop at Strathallan Macleod. Such is Jenny's legacy?

Jenny grew up in Strathmore with a younger brother. She attended Strathmore Primary

School and Strathmore High School before going on the Coburg teacher's college. After graduation Jenny taught at Glenroy North and Coburg West Primary Schools.

Jenny married Michael McGuirk in January 1969 and after 2 years in Coburg they moved into their house in Bundoora and have lived there ever since.

Cameron was born in 1971 and sadly died 2008.

Kathryn was born in 1973.

Using her teaching skills in 1972, Jenny joined the Church of All Nations migrant English programme. She went to the home of a young Turkish woman to teach English, while her husband sat across the room watching and listening. It was then that she was introduced to Turkish coffee.

Jenny says that she has a passion for helping people and the time line of her volunteering work since then would take your breath away.

Volunteering Time Line	
1972	joined the Church of All Nations migrant English programme. I went to the home of a young Turkish woman to teach English while her husband sat across the room watching and listening. I was introduced to Turkish coffee !!!
1976	Began with Citizens Advice Bureau in Greensborough. Volunteer and served time on the Board.
1976	Began Contact Community Centre in Bundoora. Served 13 years as President.
Conducted Parenting Programmes and an Empowering Women course.	
1985 - 1990	Director on the inaugural board of the Victorian Women's Trust
1988	Pastoral Care training at Austin Hospital
1989 – 2004	Chaplain for Pastoral Care and Counselling to the Victorian Liver Transplant Unit
1992 – 2015	Pastoral Supervisor for Clinical Pastoral Education at the Clinical Pastoral Education Centres for Austin Health and Council for Christian Education in Schools
1990 – 2007	Marriage and Funeral Celebrant
ongoing	Funeral Celebrant
2011 -	Emergency Services Chaplain with VCC Emergencies Ministry (Victorian Council of Churches) Banyule area coordinator for VCC Emergencies Ministry
2013 Services	Returned to Austin Health as a volunteer in the Olivia Newton John Cancer
2014 -	Became a volunteer Community Ambassador for Advance care Planning Australia at Austin Health presenting community education on Advance Care Planning

In their retirement Jenny and Michael have done some travelling, sometimes meeting up along the way with Kathryn when she was able to join them.

Their last two trips were crossing of a 'bucket list' when they went to the Golden Eagle Festival in Mongolia for Michael and to the Galapagos Islands in South America for Jenny.

Jenny sums the future up in her own words.

“I think the future for the young will be very different to anything I know. I think the speed of change in the world robs the younger generations of space to stop and reflect. Life is more immediate and waiting seems a lost concept. That said, I believe the world opens up to them in ways that seemed impossible when I was young. For those of us at the other end of the spectrum, I think the world is our oyster. We are healthier in the main than our parents at the same age, which gives opportunity to be involved in our neighbourhood, our state, our country and maybe the wider world if the means allow. There are many opportunities close to our homes to invite us to engage with our community in ways that give life meaning and purpose and a reason to ‘get out of bed in the morning’. I think I am of a blessed generation. Born after hardships of war and depression, which shaped our parents into a time when I was taught the value of everything and the importance of giving back and counting blessings.”



Jenny with Michael and Kathryn and beloved dogs, Bonnie (black) and Clyde (white).

