It is hard to imagine a well-functioning community without volunteers. We are lucky to have a strong tradition of volunteering and looking out for one another in Benalla Rural City. This issue of Volunteer Connection aims to highlight the volunteer work of young people in our community. There are many volunteering opportunities for teenagers and young adults across the Council’s volunteer programs. Youth specific programs auspiced by the Council include FReeZA and Live4Life. Young people also volunteer to help with community events, such as the Benalla Festival.

The volunteer contributions of 28 young people were recognised in a celebration on 15 August. The event took place as part of National Student Volunteer Week, which is celebrated annually across the country to highlight the efforts of student volunteers.

Let’s invest in our next generation of volunteers. Take the opportunity to chat with a young person you know about your own volunteering activities and encourage them to seek out volunteering activities that interest them.

On behalf of the Council and staff, I offer a heartfelt thank you to our many volunteers of all ages whose time and efforts help make the Rural City a safer, better place to live and enjoy.

Tony McIlroy
Chief Executive Officer
What does being a Mental Health Ambassador involve?
Live4Life Ambassadors meet weekly at the Council offices to organise activities to help break down the stigma associated with youth mental health.
In April we organised the Live4Life program launch and more recently a competition and celebration to raise awareness about youth mental health.

How did you get involved in the Live4Life program?
I first heard about the Live4Life program at a school presentation by Council Youth Officers and jumped at the opportunity. I volunteer a lot both at school and in the community. I am also a volunteer member of the Council’s FreeZA committee.

What skills do you think are important in this role?
Leadership is a big one. Being a leader is something that I love doing and where possible I will take on leadership roles wherever I can.

How do you think volunteering might help you with future study or career pathways?
I think volunteering will lead me a long way in the future. Volunteering can help me as it is something extra to put on a resume and may lead to employment itself.
COMMUNICATION ACCESS FOR ALL
Did you know that one in seven Australians will have a communication difficulty at some stage in their life? Communication access training aims to raise awareness of communication difficulties and explore a range of simple steps to improve how we communicate.
During July, the Council’s Rural Access Officer organised a number of Communication Access training sessions for Council staff, volunteers and interested community members. The interactive sessions, conducted by trainer Meredith Lane from the Regional Communication Service – East Hume region. Participants were provided insight into communication difficulties associated with disability and age-related conditions and explored simple strategies and equipment to improve communication channels.
To read more about communication access, download the booklet Communication Access For All from Scope Victoria’s website at www.scopeaust.org.au/service/communication-access or contact the Council’s Rural Access Officer on 03 5760 2600.

JESS AND TOMMY LEND A HAND
Thanks to Jess and Tommy, morning show presenters with @hitgv 96.9FM, for volunteering to help keep Lake Benalla litter free. Did you know that the Litter Gatherer volunteers carry out litter patrol from hotspots around Benalla? It is a great way to get out and exercise while making a difference to the community. If you have 1-2 hours per fortnight, contact the Volunteer Development Coordinator on 03 5760 2600.

Want to know more about volunteering opportunities?
Visit our website: www.benalla.vic.gov.au
Email: council@benalla.vic.gov.au
Contact the Customer Service Centre on 03 5760 2600
VOLUNTEER VACANCIES

We are currently looking for people who have the passion, skills and time to help with the following programs:

Visitor Information Centre (VIC)
Volunteers help provide information to tourists and visitors (four hour shifts weekly, fortnightly or monthly). Contact the VIC on 03 5762 1749

Meals On Wheels
Volunteers deliver meals and provide a regular check and social interaction for clients who may be socially isolated (one hour per week, fortnight or month). Contact the Customer Service Centre on 03 5760 2600.

Benalla Art Gallery
Volunteers play an important role assisting staff with public programs, special events, research and social functions. (four hour shifts weekly, fortnightly or monthly). Contact the Art Gallery’s Customer Relations Officer on 03 5760 2619.

BAG A BARGAIN AT REDB4 BOOKSHOP

The RedB4 Bookshop, an initiative of the Friends of Benalla Library, continues to raise valuable funds used to enhance the Sir Edwards ‘Weary’ Dunlop Learning Centre. The Bookshop offers an interesting range of quality second hand books for sale and is open six days a week thanks to a dedicated team of volunteers. Drop in to 111 Bridge Street to bag a bargain and ask about becoming a volunteer.

Jane Rushworth is one of more than 50 bookshop volunteers

Newsflash VOLUNTEER CONNECTION NEWSLETTER NOW AVAILABLE VIA EMAIL.
Simply email jane.taylor@benalla.vic.gov.au and type SUBSCRIBE VCN in the subject line.

L2P - FAST FACTS

Volunteers with the Council’s Learner Driver Mentor Program (L2P) during the past year have collectively:

- supervised over 1,100 hours of driving
- clocked up more than 48,000 kilometres
- supported 18 young drivers to gain their Probationary Licence.

The L2P team would like to thank the generosity of major sponsor, Value Auto Group Benalla, for continuing to provide the program with a vehicle. The continued confidence and support of John and his team at Value Auto Group is essential for the program to continue helping young people get their 120 hours of driving and become safe drivers.

Volunteer! Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.

The Volunteer Connection newsletter is distributed three times a year to volunteers and partner organisations. We invite community groups with volunteer programs to share their news, events and stories.

For further information about Volunteer Connection, contact:
Jane Taylor, Volunteer Development Coordinator on 03 5760 2600 or jane.taylor@benalla.vic.gov.au

Want to know more about volunteering opportunities?
Visit our website: www.benalla.vic.gov.au Email: council@benalla.vic.gov.au
Contact the Customer Service Centre on 03 5760 2600

Facebook.com/BenallaRuralCity Twitter.com/BenallaRuralCty