
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO GIVE A HELPING HAND TO VULNERABLE FAMILIES

Connections UnitingCare is seeking more volunteers to assist socially isolated families in the local community, through its Home-Start program which offers support to parents with children under the age of eight.

The program aims to connect families to support networks and help parents build stronger relationships with their children. Success relies on volunteers with parenting experience, who offer friendship and practical support.

Home-Start Program Leader, Monica Robertson, understands the impact volunteers can have when assisting families through the often difficult early periods of raising children and how it can impact the wellbeing of both children and families as a whole.

“We know that parenting can be difficult at times and when families are isolated and have little support the challenge can be greater. The purpose of Home-Start is to provide support to the most isolated and vulnerable children and families with volunteers providing reassurance, so that parents can build on their strengths, enhance their parenting skills and enjoy family life,” said Ms Robertson.

Volunteers are often parents with mature children or grandparents, who understand that sometimes just a small, helping hand can make a big difference at home. They can help with things like attending appointments, shopping, reading to children, and connecting to other support networks such as play groups or kindergartens.

All volunteers attend an information session followed by an eight-week training program, followed by placement with a local family if successful. This is on a one-to-one basis and only requires two hours of the volunteer’s time each week with the family, for a twelve month period.

Local Member for Eildon and Shadow Minister for Communities and Volunteers, Ms Cindy McLeish MP, lent her support to Home-Start and echoed the call for volunteers in the area.

“Volunteers provide vital services to ensure the ongoing strength of our community. The Home-Start program enables people with the right skills to provide assistance to local families in need,” Ms McLeish said.

“I know that people who put their hand up to assist with this worthwhile program will not only make a difference in other people’s lives, but will also derive a great deal of personal satisfaction.”

To find out more about how you can help, please contact Home-Start on 03 9724 2222 or email home-start@connections.org.au

Media: Community Relations Officer, Jason Harris 03 8792 8999