

Sally's Volunteer Story

My name is Sally, and this is how I became a volunteer at Fresh Start.

It all began when I was studying Community Services Alcohol and Other Drugs Certificates 3 & 4 at Mt Lawley TAFE.

To complete my studies, I needed to do what is called Field Placement or hands on experience. In other words, I had to perform more than 250 volunteer hours to finish both of my certificates.

I was fortunate to be accepted as a student at The Perth Naltrexone Clinic - now Fresh Start Recovery Programme.

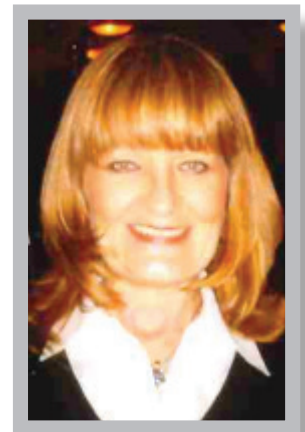
During my Field Placement I experienced firsthand the great work being done at the clinic to help people with addiction. I enjoyed the work and supporting patients. I am very much a "people person", so decided to become a volunteer.

Becoming a Fresh Start Volunteer was one of the best decisions I have made in my life.

Working at Fresh Start for the past 16 years has been a truly rewarding experience. I have gained so much insight into the world of addiction. How it destroys people's lives and the affect it has on their families, loved ones and friends.

Over the years I have worked in the male and female rehabilitation houses and medical house - not the current ones. For many years I was a Volunteer Supervisor in the recovery room when we had treatment day on Saturdays.

For the past couple of years, I have been volunteering on Wednesdays which is our Recovery Support Team treatment day. I thoroughly enjoy the interaction with the patient's, their parents and partners.



It's very rewarding to see the patient's post-implant treatment, return for Doctor and Counselling appointments. They tell me how good they feel that they made the decision to contact Fresh Start for treatment. They have hope for the future. I see how happy they are and there is life in their eyes, rather than despair.

"There are many reasons I enjoy working at Fresh Start. The main one is I hope I can make a difference to someone's life - even if it's just for one day."

www.freshstart.org.au

My Story of Recovery - Bevan Donnelly

Since the age of 13 I have been using different types of drugs. I am now 55!

By the time I turned 18, I was using heroin. Although I was a heroin user I continued to work, traveling around Australia with carnivals and shows. My drug lifestyle revolved around the work I was doing. Most people working in the carnivals and shows used drugs and or alcohol.

When I turned 20, I met my future wife. We had our first child in 1985 and another in 1987.

Meeting my wife-to-be made me realise I had to stop using heroin. I did this before my 21st birthday. Luckily my wife was not a drug user. This helped me enormously. I also realised I couldn't be a good father to my children and use heroin.

To be completely honest I continued to use pot. Things I had masked from my childhood continued to play in my mind and I used pot for the next 25 years.

In 2004 I had work accident. I fell from scaffolding and ruptured two discs in my spine. As a result of this injury, doctors prescribed morphine. In no time at all I was back addicted to heroin after being clean it for so long.

Over the next 12 months I was prescribed morphine tablets, and I found it too difficult to come off the tablets, and again I started to inject heroin. Which spiralled into "a full blown" heroin addiction for the next 12 years.

During this time, I committed crimes to support my habit. This ended up with me being imprisoned several times, as I

was dealing as well as using.

In the end this destructive lifestyle made me very depressed. I did not want to go on and attempted suicide. I spent the next month in hospital to improve my mental health.

By this stage I was so sick and tired of my lifestyle. That's when my daughter suggested I try rehabilitation. My daughter contacted several rehab providers and got me an appointment with a Doctor at Fresh Start. This was the beginning of a massive change for me.

I had a naltrexone implant and two weeks later I went to the Fresh Start Northam Recovery Centre. Within five weeks I became a leader of this therapeutic community rehab.

To be honest, the first two weeks were hell for me. I was ready to leave at least once a day.

Staff members Steve and Dave encouraged and supported me to keep my eye on the prize which was being drug free!

Being a Leader helped me realise the example I could be setting for others, especially the younger guys who had no idea what a serious drug lifestyle could lead to.

Family day is for rehab residents to catch up with family and help mend often broken relationships. On my first family day at Northam rehab, I realised my daughter had not seen me sober in more than 10 years.

My grandchildren were also a big part in my resolve not to use drugs again.

Thankfully, I have now been clean for 26 months. I have been volunteering for Fresh Start for 20 months.

Before submitting my story, I sent it to my daughter. She said there were bits missing including when she searched the internet looking for help for me and rang Fresh Start.

"I spoke to a lady at reception who spent nearly one hour explaining to the detox process, the implant process and residency at the Fresh Start Northam Recovery Centre.

"Dave, the Manager at the Northam Recovery Centre then took Dad under his wing and along the way, myself and my family too. Fresh Start does amazing work!"

Without the help and ongoing support from all Fresh Start staff I would not have found and continued my recovery. I get a lot of satisfaction helping on a Wednesday, encouraging new and old patients to seek recovery.



500 Not Out!

In April 2019, staff at York Street Lodge proudly welcomed Guest Nedol, the 500th admission to the facility.

This is a significant milestone for York Street Lodge, which has only been open since January 2018.

York Street Lodge provides accommodation for Fresh Start clients before and after treatment at the Clinic.

Nedol travelled to Perth for the first time from his home in New South Wales to access Fresh Start's unique range of services. Nedol said he wished he had made the trip sooner, describing the service he has received as being, 'beyond all expectations.'

With the help of kind and generous supporters, Fresh Start was able to purchase York Street Lodge. With further investment it was transformed to create a safe and welcoming environment.

York Street Lodge is officially registered as a Lodging House with the City of Subiaco and is subject to an on-going regime of rigorous inspections.

York Street Lodge Manager Russell Hudson has been working at Fresh Start for eight years.

During this time Russell has witnessed, first-hand, the commitment, dedication and resources Fresh Start has committed to improving residential facilities.



"We are all extremely proud of what has been achieved at York Street Lodge in such a short space of time." Russell said, "It has been a great team effort, stable, well-managed, quality accommodation is paramount to achieve the best outcomes for our clients."

These thoughts are echoed by Daniel, a current resident of York Street Lodge. Daniel is waiting for a place to become available at Fresh Start's Rehabilitation Facility in Northam.

"Staying at York Street Lodge has changed and maybe even saved my life," Daniel shared.

"It has helped me make the difficult transition from addiction to recovery".

As we look forward to the next Fresh Start milestone, the words of Nelson Mandela come to mind "We can change the world and make it a better place. It is in our hands to make a difference."

You can help

Volunteer your time

Consider joining the Fresh Start team. For more information please contact our Volunteer Coordinator on (08) 9381 1333.

Fundraising

To find out how you can be involved with future fundraising events visit www.freshstart.org.au

Become a financial supporter

To donate, please call (08) 9381 1333 or go to www.freshstart.org.au All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

Make a Bequest

For information about including Fresh Start in your Will, please contact CEO Jeff Cloughton on 9381 1333 or email makingabequest@freshstart.org.au





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A Thank You from a Family

I need to express my gratitude and thanks in relation to the way all staff, including Dr George O'Neil, approached my daughter's outburst recently.

I have nothing but love for you all in what you do and how you continue each day, not knowing what the day brings. You showed compassion, love, understanding, peace and action.

Thank you is not enough to express how I feel at the moment.

Once again, thank you is not enough, but my love and respect for you all is huge.

We have decided to support Fresh Start financially on a monthly basis and will be in contact soon in regard to this.

Warm Regards and God's richest blessings.

A message from the CEO:



One of the questions I am asked most often is "why do we have some many people struggling with addiction?" I have thought hard about it and still don't have any real answers but I am sure that the question becomes much more pointed when it's someone we care for rather than society at large. At this point the question is often formed around behaviour that

is out of character, abuse or violence, trouble with the law or an employer. The question then becomes "what can I do?" or "how can I help this person?" Whether it's a partner, a brother or sister, a son or daughter, an employee or associate there's always a level of concern and uncertainty about how to approach the problem. Fear of an unknown response, alienation, shame and anxiety are often experienced when you find out or suspect their drug use. It's important to talk honestly at this point, rather than making assumptions. There are different reasons why people use drugs and it can be hard

to understand why they are doing this. When someone uses drugs, their behaviour often leads them into conflict with the people who care about them. A person using drugs may do things that you think are unacceptable, particularly if they happen in the home where you or other family members live.

Caring for someone who has a drug abuse problem can leave you feeling frustrated and isolated. Let me encourage you to be patient and non-judgmental. Let them know that support is available to them and encourage them to seek help. Be as understanding as possible that you know how difficult it is for people to change. If they choose to seek help for their drug use, you can support them by understanding how they're feeling, while encouraging them in the changes they've chosen to make.

The journey to recovery can be difficult but reach out for help along the way. As we say at Fresh Start, relapse is part of recovery. Our goal for someone in recovery is to make the relapses shorter each time, and the periods between relapses longer.

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