

Blog

When Doreen Denny's sister-in-law died suddenly from heart disease she was, in her own words pole-axed by the loss. Doreen's way of dealing with such overwhelming grief and initial sense of hopelessness however was to turn it to an extraordinarily positive and valuable contribution for the National Heart Foundation and a cathartic, meaningful experience for herself.

Doreen's sister-in-law was only 50. She was the loving wife of Doreen's brother, mother of their three daughters and a young grandparent. Hers and Doreen's friendship was special and the need to do something, to find some positive way of remembering her was a powerful impetus for Doreen. She eventually settled on the Heart Foundation with their *My Marathon* campaign. This campaign highlights the importance of physical activity whatever your age, fitness level or ability and raises funds for the ongoing research of, education about and promotion of heart health.

Doreen herself raised \$2,800 as well as assisting the Foundations' fundraising team with fundraising efforts, communication, documentation and administration – all the critical stuff involved in running a successful campaign.

Throughout her volunteering efforts Doreen has continued her paid role as a receptionist for health professionals and maintained her family. She was able to change her work hours to free up a day for volunteering at the Heart Foundation on an ongoing basis.



Emma Short and volunteer Doreen Denny at the Heart Foundation.

Doreen's story is just one of the many of people who volunteer at the Heart Foundation where Emma Short, the Foundation's Volunteer Development Advisor, supports staff getting volunteers on board. She says that Doreen brought more than her considerable skills to the organisation and the worthwhileness of the work - she brought her positive energy and a valuable connection to people most affected by heart disease.

Well co-ordinated volunteering, where the person fits the role and the organisation can be of such benefit to both the volunteer and the organisation and is an integral practice of many organisations. The role of the Volunteer Manager cannot be underestimated in ensuring that the experience is a positive one for all concerned.

Emma is one of the many Volunteer Managers and Leaders who will be attending the Volunteering Victoria 2019 State Conference on June 20 and 21 at Pullman Melbourne on the Park. As well as attending the conference Emma will be participating in a Great Debate wherein representatives from the volunteer management profession get to debate some of the more contentious aspects of their role. This year's debate will be 'A great Volunteer Manager attends weddings, funerals and everything in between'.

Committee for Melbourne is partnering with Volunteering Victoria to deliver a panel discussion as part of the conference agenda. The panel, moderated by the Committee's Clive Dwyer will focus on the future of volunteering, volunteer management and the expectations organisations will have for their Volunteer Managers and Leaders.

The two-day conference will also feature a range of Keynote Speakers (including Susan Alberti, AC), panel discussions, workshops and presentations. The conference is a great opportunity for managers and leaders of volunteering to get together to energise, enhance and connect and ensure that stories like Doreen and Emma's continue to unfold.