

To the Pain Management RE-CHARGE for life Group,

"It is impossible to describe in words how much you all have helped me through this course.

In the future, the previous tentative step, will be a bold step into a world that I can control, and that has unlimited potential.

You all make the course very enjoyable and you are individually and collectively a great bunch of people.

You should be very proud of the job you are doing.

Heartfelt thanks."



"My family did not find out till I was 19 or 20 that I had Spina Bifida from birth. And through my childhood I would play sport and end up limping the next day. They thought it was growing pains. When I was about 19 I had a rather serious horse accident that pulled the muscles and ligaments around my spine, my spine became destabilized. Now I live with chronic pain everyday."

Dear Friend,

Imagine not been able to sleep at night because you have significant back pain. Pain so severe you cannot get comfortable in bed. Imagine not being able to get out of bed the next morning because the pain is **so severe** the only relief you can get is from just lying there.

This is what the last 34 years have been like for Helen Magill. After more than eight operations over 34 years nothing seemed to work to help alleviate Helen's pain and give her back a normal life.

A while ago Helen was referred to a Pain Specialist at St Vincent's Hospital Brisbane. Her Specialist recommended Helen start treatment on a new type of medication at the Hospital. It was whilst here Helen was referred to our new **RE-CHARGE for Life Pain Management Program**.

"I found the program reconfirmed a lot of things that I figured out myself the hard way over the years. But it also gave you a different way of viewing some problems that you encounter and it gave you other skills to help manage."

"12 months down the track I would not be anywhere as well if I had not done the program. It has certainly made a big difference to my outlook on life."

One core element of the program is the need for exercise. Helen knew exercise was important but some days the pain was so bad she was just not motivated.

"The RE-CHARGE for Life Program taught me that I needed to get out and get more exercise - this has had a positive impact on my long term health."

Helen used to have about 6 serious episodes of pain a year. Pain so severe that she would have to stay in bed for days.

Over the period of the program Helen's motivation and attitude improved greatly resulting in a better quality of life. A year later, after attending RE-CHARGE for Life Program at St Vincent's, Helen has not had one severe pain episode.

I write to you today as we look to expand our **RE-CHARGE for Life Pain Management Program** at the Hospital. Equipment is always a need in any Hospital. There are always demands to replace older equipment and to add newer more up to date technology and equipment to help our patients in their every day lives. For our **RE-CHARGE for Life Program** it is important that we simulate real life situations for our patients.

One real life environment we hope to recreate is a simulated office. Many **RE-CHARGE for Life Program** patients lead active busy lives, so it is important we have an office environment that simulates their everyday situation. Here, they can learn how to best perform their jobs living with a persistent pain. Your gift of \$50, \$100 or a very generous gift of \$250 can help us purchase this equipment.

To further enhance our program we would like to create an outdoor garden area. Just like you, many of our patients may have a garden to tend to at home. Gardening is an activity many of us take for granted. With your support we could purchase the necessary tools to help teach our patients how to garden with the least impact to their pain. Access to a raised garden bed, gardening equipment and wheelbarrows for example can help us add value to a patients every day living situation.

The journey that St Vincent's has been on over the last 4 years with the opening of the new building is testament to your support. We have always been here to care for those living with a chronic illness. Indeed in the days when we were Mt Olivet Hospital we provided a unique service to care for the terminally ill and still do. Health trends are shifting; people are living longer and living with more complex illnesses.

This is why I ask you to support our Christmas appeal with a gift of \$50, \$100 or a very generous gift of \$250. Your support helps us to introduce new programs like **RE-CHARGE for Life Program** to address the health care needs of Queenslanders and give them the coping strategies they need to live life to the fullest.

As Helen said: "When I had my operation, there was no such thing as a Pain Clinic or a RE-CHARGE for Life Program and this was the time I really needed a program like this."

Living with pain can impact on every part of your life. Helen feels she is now in control of her disability with the skills she learned at St. Vincent's Brisbane. Helen's story is why it is so important we continue to receive your support. With this income we can research and implement new programs, buy new equipment and ensure that St Vincent's is here long into the future caring for our community.

Your gift of \$50, \$100 or a very generous gift of \$250 will help us have the necessary funds to develop additional programs that will benefit our community. Your support helps us to introduce new programs like our **RE-CHARGE for Life Program** to address the health care needs of Queenslanders.

Yours sincerely,



Daniele Doyle
General Manager

PS, In 2007 it was estimated that 3.7 million Australians would experience chronic pain in their lifetime; Helen is just one of these Australians we are helping. You too can help us by supporting our Christmas appeal, please make your donation to us by January 15th so we can promptly send your thank you letter and tax receipt.