



23 September 2013

Mental Health Month

This October is Mental Health Month. It's an opportunity to focus on our mental health, and ask if we are feeling good about ourselves and our lives. This year's theme is *Kindness: little acts, big impacts*. The theme reminds us of the importance of kindness and generosity to our mental health and wellbeing.

Almost one in two people in Australia will experience a mental illness in their lifetime.

People living with a mental illness can become disconnected from their friends and the community around them. Some people end up socially isolated and spend a lot of their time on their own. This makes recovery from their illness challenging.

Compeer, a Special Work of the St Vincent de Paul Society, addresses this isolation by matching someone who is lonely and living with a mental illness in a one-to-one friendship with a volunteer. Compeer aims to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness by encouraging social inclusion and community education.

Volunteers are matched in a friendship with someone of the same gender and similar age living in their local community. Friends meet up regularly for a coffee, a walk in the park, or to watch some sport. This friendship can have a big impact on the life of someone who is lonely, helping build confidence and a sense of connectedness to the community.

Compeer volunteers are in great need across Sydney. This Mental Health Month, make a difference to someone's life by becoming a Vinnies Compeer volunteer.

For further information go to www.compeer.org.au, contact compeer@vinnies.org.au or call 02 9568 0295.

Media Contact: Sophie Bawden (02) 9568 0278 sophie.bawden@vinnies.org.au