



Annabel

Bubbly Annabel joined *With One Voice* Melbourne this year and her generous spirit shone through straight away when she volunteered to support other participants.

“I have cerebral palsy and walk with elbow crutches. I also use a mobility scooter to get to where I need to go,” Annabel said.

“I come to choir to meet new people and improve my networks. I also come to choir because I am passionate about singing! I even sing along to my music on my iPhone when I’m out walking!”

So Annabel had a lot of singing time recently, when she walked 500km in 90 days for charity!

“The *With One Voice* choirs enable members to meet other people who they wouldn’t normally meet. Singing also has a lot of positive benefits, including improving self-esteem and encouraging people to do things that they may have been told they can’t do.”

I volunteered as choir member support officer because I wanted to give back to a community that has given me so much.

“If I met someone who was struggling with something, I would encourage them to come to the *With One Voice* program because it will help them to forget their worries for a short time each week.

They will find people in the program who will accept them for who they are and could even help change their lives for the better, even in the smallest way.”

Through the Wish List, Annabel (pictured left, with fellow volunteer Bianca Nolan) has received help with her resume and is seeking work as an Administration Assistant.



Diana

Diana, a retired child psychologist, makes a seven hour round trip from Lithgow to attend *With One Voice* Sydney every Tuesday!

“The choir has a great energy. It’s a community where people are caring towards each other and look out for each other,” Diana said.

Diana’s academic career involved music therapy for children, and as volunteer choir secretary at *With One Voice* Sydney she is now sharing these passions with people of all ages.

“Liz asked me to volunteer and I felt so spiritually devoted to it... I was committed to help out.

“Everyone is welcome, including many disadvantaged and homeless people. It’s a lovely concept, especially in big cities.”

Diana’s favourite choir songs are *Somewhere Over The Rainbow, Imagine* and *You’ll Never Walk Alone*.



Leo

“I have been looking for some way to give back to the community and I have found it in my much-loved community choir.

It is really good therapy for me to meet so many different and wonderful people - people who are homeless or who have a disability or who are recovering from depression and other illnesses. People who have businesses and big jobs and office workers..

I was born in Sri Lanka and lived in a small village. During college in India I used to take my guitar and go out to the lake to sing songs by myself.

I have always been passionate about music and sing a lot - in those days it was Tom Jones, Englebert Humperdinck and The Beatles. I still do a great rendition of *Please Release Me!*

After a strict Catholic upbringing I left college in my early 20s and went travelling around India. I spent several years living in an ashram in Rishikesh and learnt yoga and meditation from spiritual leaders.

I also walked through the Himalayas, sleeping in temples and meditating lots, and taught English to young monks in a Buddhist monastery.

In 1989 I met and married Deb in Goa, where I was teaching yoga and meditation, and moved to Australia. We have two beautiful children, Alex and India Rose.

I absolutely love being part of *With One Voice* Sydney.

I have met so many people from all walks of life. Even my daughter’s school principal comes to choir! Every Tuesday I look forward to seeing my friends and singing together and bringing happiness to us all.

I talk to the other participants and they have gone through so many hard things in their lives. Their stories really move me.

Singing is something that comes from the heart - it is good for the soul! You don’t have to have a good voice. It comes naturally. Singing with my friends makes me feel very happy.

At choir I’m in a different world, completely. It’s amazing.”

*Leo’s family and friends all flew to Melbourne for the *With One BIG Voice* concert last September and supported the choir from the front row!*



“I have social anxiety, PTSD/bipolar and lupus, and a lot of the time it’s hard for me to commit to anything due to my health/mental health. But this choir is amazing. The energy is amazing, the people are amazing, the singing is amazing! Every time I go to choir I am reminded of what happiness feels like.”

Elizabeth, *With One Voice* Melbourne