

**Con**

*Age range: older*

When he was first referred to us in 2020 by a community health agency, Con (not his real name) was lonely and socially isolated after years of chronic pain and caring full time for his terminally ill wife. In his own words, prior to connecting with Living our Best Life he was *“Feeling lost, worthless, had no drive, I had no purpose. “That’s all happened not due to Covid, it was pre Covid, Covid added to it, it was due to wife passing away. I’d see a friend once every couple of months and I just sat at home.”* He had poor sleep habits and mental health issues.

It was a bit of a slow start with his community connector as Con wasn’t sure why someone who wasn’t being paid would care about his wellbeing. However three months after being referred to the Living our best life project, Con was involved in three different community activities and said that he now has a reason for getting out of the bed in the morning.

*“I feel life is a lot better, so much so that I have been able to stop some of the anti-depression meds. It’s actually changed my life. I feel like there is a purpose to my day where before I wouldn’t bother hardly getting out of bed before 2-3 o’clock.”*

*“My health has changed greatly, its chalk and cheese, everybody needs some kind of purpose and I had nothing, and now I have found one or a few! Making some good friends out of this, meeting some nice people.”*

Con slowly started rebuilding his life, fixing things that needed fixing, repairing house and gardening – stuff he hadn’t done in 15-17 years. He genuinely described the project as “a life saver”.

After a year or so of attending a Talking Café group, and gradually becoming more engaged and taking on responsible roles in his other interest groups, Con decided he’d like to join the project as a volunteer and commenced assisting with two of the Talking Cafes. He then trained as a Community Connector with the support of his former Community Connector.

Con is now a confident, connected member of the community who is dedicated to assisting others to find their place in their community.

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Community Houses Association of the Outer Eastern Suburbs (CHAOS)

A network of 30 Neighbourhood Houses and Centres based in the Outer Eastern Suburbs of Melbourne.

**Contact:**

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CHAOS Network

**Link:**

<https://livingourbestlife.org.au/>

**Report:**

<https://www.chaosnetwork.org.au/media/attachments/2021/07/20/lobl-project-report-proof-2.pdf>

