

Pam

Pam began volunteering at Kensington Neighbourhood House in 2018 in our Family Literacy Program. As a retired English as an additional Language Teacher she was well suited to the role. Pam had previously worked in out of school programs supporting students with refugee backgrounds. Pam has spent most of her life living in Melbourne's west. She moved to Kensington in 1985 and recalls in the early years, on the opposite side of Westbourne Rd, there were only a few of the old drovers' houses. A very different site today.

Volunteering at Kensington Neighbourhood House.

'I was keen to volunteer in the Family Literacy Program. The one on one plus family support can make such a difference.' In 2019 Pam wanted to extend her volunteering time so offered herself as a volunteer in our Form Filling Program. This program helps people with low levels of English and literacy to fill out government documentation and other forms. "It's been a steep learning curve for me, as there are so many forms that I have had no previous experience with, from Housing to Citizenship." When it comes to helping with forms Pam is very patient and thorough. She'll give anything a go and tries to ensure it's all done in one appointment. "People really appreciate the support and I no longer put off filling in my own forms now either."

Pam tell us a bit about her childhood

'My mum told me I was amongst the first babies born at Footscray Hospital. Aside from a short time in Middle Park, I grew up in Yarraville West. Growing up in the 1950s and 60s meant strict schooling in big classes. However, kids had a lot of freedom outside and played on the streets. So long as you were home for tea (dinner). We played lots of games such as, ball games, hopscotch, hide and seek, marbles and swap cards. Autograph books were quite the thing. I remember horse and cart deliveries of milk and bread.'



'The greengrocers had a row of coloured drinks at the top of shelves. No one ever seemed to buy them. I loved going to the pictures on Saturday at the Sun in Yarraville and the Grand in Footscray. We lived near Sam's Coffee Pot, a diner, which had the best sundaes with exotic names like Tutti Frutti and Cupid Special. Mum would take us into the city to the dentist and then we'd go to Hillier's Soda Fountain in Collins St for a frosted chocolate!'

Moving to Kensington

'I moved to Kensington in 1985. Kensington was very different. For example, on the opposite side of Westbourne Rd, there were only a few of the old drovers' houses. The scene from our front verandah consisted of a house and in its front yard was a lemon tree, a horse, a kelpie and chooks.'

What do you love about Kensington?

'I love the friendly, community feel of Kensington. I particularly love the Victorian and Edwardian houses, as well as the parks, plus the local shops and cafes. I love the diversity of the neighbourhood and it's a great area for dog walking.'

When Pam's not volunteering she loves to walk her dogs and spend time with friends and loved ones. She also loves the arts and nature. Leisure time is also spent at KNH where she's currently enrolled in two of our Painting & Drawing classes and outside KNH doing yoga and Pilates. "When I retired I had planned to join U3A but I have gone no further than KNH!"

Sometimes there are special moments when her volunteering and participating cross over each other. "One day in the early stages of my art class, I collected my self-portrait, inspired by Picasso's, Weeping Woman. My student's little brother saw it and exclaimed, 'that's so ugly!' I asked why he thought so and he replied that he didn't like the yellow and you're skin's not purple!"

"The thing I like most about volunteering is helping people. Kensington is such a great area to live."