

Home cook to professional caterer



Organisation:

Multicultural Services Centre WA

Website: www.mscwa.com.au

Focus: New Migrants



Multicultural Services Centre WA (MSCWA) supports new migrants and refugees with their settlement, welfare, education and training, cultural and legal needs. During a volunteering awareness workshop with the Persian community, a retired woman Esther* expressed her interest to volunteer. However, she was unsure of the kind of volunteering she would like to do. Of concern to her was her age and physical ability, as she worried they may be barriers to doing volunteer work. Esther was also worried that volunteering in a new organisation would be too overwhelming and stressful.

APPROACH

MSCWA introduced Esther to their volunteering buddy system and she happily joined the program. Through the program, MSCWA discovered that she enjoyed cooking at home. After being matched with one of the MSCWA mentors, Esther began her volunteering journey.

OUTCOME

Esther's mentorship was more than successful, as was the four months she spent in the volunteering program. During this time, she was able to convert her interest in cooking to a professional catering business.

LEARNINGS

- A volunteering buddy system that includes mentors who are familiar with cultural backgrounds, interests and languages of potential volunteers will be more likely to encourage, connect, and involve new migrant community members.
- Many new migrant participants expressed an interest in volunteering with volunteer involving organisations, after hearing from their representatives (with the use of translators). Many said the experience provided the motivation, encouragement and confidence they needed to volunteer.
- Sharing different volunteering opportunities can encourage more new migrants to volunteer. It's important to cater for a wide range of lived experience, education levels, qualifications and English proficiency.