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Media Release

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Hospital Host Volunteer Service to be Launched at Dunedin Hospital

Do you enjoy meeting new people and want to make a contribution to the wider community?

If the answer is yes, then how about becoming a Hospital Host Volunteer?

Southern DHB and St John are launching a hospital host volunteer service to provide a more positive experience for patients, outpatients and visitors to Dunedin Hospital.

The two organisations hope to recruit about 20 host volunteers to assist with a range of tasks including greeting patients and visitors on arrival, providing directions and/or escorting people to various departments and wards.

Hospital Hosts will also be able to give patients and their families tours of relevant ward areas and deliver flowers and gifts to patients during out of hours' visiting times.

Diagnostic and Support Services (Otago) Group Manager Sonja Dillon said the DHB and St John identified a need for a hospital host service some time ago and were keen to have it established by the end of June.

"We are proposing this service to really enhance the experience of a patient or visitor's stay at the hospital," said Ms Dillon.

"For example there are lots of patients who arrive for appointments feeling quite anxious. Add to this being uncertain as to where to go and it can be very stressful.

"Having a hospital volunteer who can greet them with a smile and a friendly face and provide some assistance could make all the difference."

St John Dunedin Area Executive Officer Pam Hall said the plan was for volunteers to be rostered on to shifts between 9am – 4pm in the hospital foyer from Monday to Friday.

"Our volunteers will be walking about the hospital visible in their uniforms, and ready to help create a more positive experience for patients and their family and friends", says Mrs Hall.

"This programme is an extension of the service we currently provide in the Emergency Department and Oncology Outpatients where St John volunteers provide non-clinical assistance to patients, family members and medical staff.

“It’s the perfect week to launch this unique service as it is also the Flash a light for St John Annual Appeal and we are also celebrating our 125th anniversary. The funds raised during our Appeal will help support this initiative and we are grateful to the public for their support.”

If you are interested in becoming a Dunedin Hospital Host Volunteer, please contact Pam Hall at St John on 474 3208 or email pam.hall@stjohn.org.nz for a job description and an application form.

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