

Living with dementia

Active Living Story: Roger lives with dementia and still enjoys a life with meaning and purpose



May 2020

Roger is living with dementia and needed 24x7 care so his family brought him to St Louis on Sea, our new shared home in Victor Harbor. After a few months of care, he improved so much that his wife decided to bring him back home for a trial stay, and they are doing well so far.



About Roger

Roger lives with dementia and as someone who was always healthy, fit, active and a keen fisherman, he found some of the limiting factors of dementia very frustrating. His wife Marion was finding it more challenging to care for him. After a long stay in hospital due to an illness, his family decided to move him into a traditional aged care nursing home where he could be cared for professionally. They felt this was the only choice they had.

The family was told that the illness had sped up the development of his dementia and that his worsened condition had become permanent. He would not be able to come back from it.

He also needed more attentive care and was not engaging in activities, spending many hours of every day idly sitting while his skills in living his life were quickly diminishing. He became more unhappy and frustrated, and was deteriorating quickly, so the family decided to look at St Louis on Sea in Victor Harbor.

Dementia is still misunderstood in our community, and the reason why Dementia Australia is going to great lengths to educate the community about living with dementia. They offer free courses for carers and families (www.dementia.org.au/education/list/general) to learn how to care for people living with dementia. They have a dementia friendly community initiative which aims to educate the general community about acceptance and creating better environments for people living with dementia.

Stories such as Roger's are an inspiration to us, so we wanted to share it with you. To be able to make a difference in someone's life which has had a positive impact on not just Roger, but his family as well, gives us great personal satisfaction.

It never ceases to amaze us how much personalised and attentive care can help someone. We helped him to remember that even with dementia, he was indeed quite capable of living a life with meaning and purpose.

Read on for the rest of the story and what Roger's wife has to say about his care.

"It was the care. They just put the care in 24x7 and they had him for three months. It was virtually one on one care – that's what he needed and could not get that anywhere except somewhere that had a smaller number of residents like St Louis on Sea. He started playing table tennis, he was eating well and sleeping through the night." Marion, Roger's wife.



Tailoring care to his specific needs

When Roger's and his family came to visit St Louis On Sea, they were impressed with the warmth of the home, our philosophy and approach to care and the location of the shared home which is across the road from the beach.

Roger was able to do much more than what was obvious on first glance. We just had to look beneath the surface a little along with some direction and guidance and a focus on meaningful living.

The family appreciated that he was not going to be left to sit for hours but would be supported and assisted to do what he capable of doing.

We are a dementia-friendly organisation, so we don't only care for people living with dementia, we actively seek to support all who come to St Louis on Sea to be as active and engaged in life as possible. We adopt the Montessori approach with an underlying premise that every human being has the right to be treated with respect and dignity and to live their life with meaning and purpose, regardless of their age and ability.

"He needs to feel useful and the staff had him doing work, he loved it. Now I'm finding it possible to have him home for a while which I never thought was possible. They concentrated on things he loves like fishing. It's made him happy and relaxed and he recovered some of his former self." Marion.

With attentive care, we helped Roger remember that he had skills that could be put to good use. When he first arrived at St Louis on Sea, he was unhappy about living away from Marion. But he gradually improved, and after a few days he was participating and happily contributing to house activities and daily chores.

"The staff at St Louis were incredible. They cared about what he ate and asked him what he wanted to eat every day. I am so grateful to them because I watched him get better and better under their care." Marion, Roger's wife.

In about a week, he was:-

- Always smiling
- Bringing us flowers
- Looking forward to his family's visits with their pets
- Enjoying helping with the chores around the house which included sweeping, vacuuming, gardening, hanging out the washing, and helping to prepare meals
- Appreciating the outdoors and strolls along the beach
- Playing table tennis
- Listening to old LP's on an old-fashioned record player we keep at the residence and tapping his feet away!



“ We assist people to live, not to exist ”

Sherrill Bickmore, Care Manager at St Louis on Sea

After a few months at St Louis On Sea, Roger’s wife brought him back home for a trial stay, adopting some of the approaches we took with Roger to help him stay engaged in home life. They’re managing well so far, and we wish them continued blessings.

We reminded Roger that he was still capable of many things by helping him reconnect with what he was good at and what he enjoyed. He remembered there was a purpose to living and so he began to enjoy life again, lifting a great strain not only from his own shoulders but also from his family’s. It never ceases to amaze us how far a little bit of support and encouragement can go. Roger also plans to continue his relationship with the friends he made by joining in the Day Respite Program offered at St Louis on Sea on a regular basis.

“I’m able to have him home now because of the support and encouragement that he received there. They showed him respect and this was so important and made him feel human and worthwhile. This made a great difference.” Marion.

Call us to find out how we can help your loved one with dementia.

If you need day or overnight respite care, a short trial stay or want to move in permanently, please call us on **08 8552 1481** to arrange an onsite visit of our shared home.

St Louis on Sea is an eight-bedroom home, each room with an ensuite. The home has state of the art facilities but feels like any traditional Australian home with warmth and love. It’s located across the road from the beach at Victor Harbor.

Call us on **08 8552 1481** to arrange a visit, or to talk to us about the care needs of your loved one. Our office in Victor Harbor is located centrally at 31 Victoria Street, Victor Harbor. We’re a friendly team and you’re welcome to drop in for a cup of tea and a chat, and meet some other locals too!

Call St Louis Home Care to discuss any of your home care needs.

St Louis Home Care Victor Harbor
 Call 8552 1481
 31 Victoria Street, Victor Harbor, SA 5211

St Louis On Sea
 Call 8552 1481
 20 Esplanade, Victor Harbor SA 5211



www.stlouisedcare.com.au