



ST. PATRICK'S

COMMUNITY SUPPORT CENTRE
Serving - Supporting - Caring



Billie Edwards (pictured on the left) is one of St Patrick's Community Support Centre's (St Patrick's) longest serving volunteers.

This is her story:

"I came here in 1980. After my husband died in 1979, I spent 12 months overseas with my daughter and upon returning I started working in what was the soup kitchen then. I met one of the original ladies that started up with Brother Hannick and told her that I had previous experience of working at St Vinnie's and she suggested I volunteer at St Patrick's.

I've been coming ever since, getting up early in the morning and coming in to cook on Thursdays. It (St Patrick's) has grown to be so big now whereas it used to be just a soup kitchen. Now there are so many more services but I'm still in the kitchen. Getting used to the quantities has been a challenge – I was used to making meals for one! Now it has grown to three course meals, adding sweets to the list. We've had some funny times along the way. I remember we once mistook rainbow chard for rhubarb and made an apple and "rhubarb" crumbles with chard in it!

There have always been lots of lovely ladies to work with, generally older in age. We all share a love of cooking so we talk about it a lot and share recipes. I really enjoy the companionship; we talk, we laugh – it's like one big happy family! All your troubles become their troubles, and all their troubles become yours. We've watched



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each others' families grow. I've now got 11 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren! I'll be 90 in December.

Volunteering gives me something to do, especially since becoming a widow in 1979. It's something to get you out of bed. And you always see someone worse off than you. You get to know the clients over the years. We've never had any problems with the clients. We know what they like and don't like and love getting feedback that a meal tastes just like their mother used to make them!"