

Spiritus' Shannon snowboards after hours and enjoys Tai Chi at work

Shannon Bailey is an Occupational Therapist.

One of the rewards of her job at Spiritus Community Care Gold Coast is seeing the difference small changes can make to people's lives. Her latest project is the start of a Tai Chi for Arthritis program which is bringing relieving gentle exercise and social contact to Spiritus clients at the Gold Coast.

Enthusiastic about her work, Shannon has a wide array of practical tools at her fingertips to make a lot of improvements in people's lives. She said

"Often, quite simple adjustments to the home can have a big impact on how people are able to live their lives. Rails, shower chairs and practical advice on safety and falls prevention can be all some people need to maintain their ability to live well in their own homes."

Her warm, open-hearted, thoughtful and relaxed manner, combined with her skills and experience, make her a significant asset to the Spiritus team which also includes a physiotherapist and social worker. All are geared to making life better but often find that people are reluctant to ask for help. Perhaps they have been caring for a child or spouse at home and are finding the whole situation too difficult. Equally, they may be dealing with some of the challenging aspects of ageing such as reduced mobility due to arthritis and declining eyesight. She said

"People needn't be so worried about seeking assistance. Depending on the circumstances, we are able to arrange for hearing and vision aids, things like talking clocks, different lighting, walkers and in some instances, complete bathroom refits. Prevention is better than cure so we are keen to prevent injury and minimise the struggles people have."

She caught the occupational therapy 'bug' when studying at Sydney University and made the move to the Gold Coast a few years ago. Her hobby, though, takes her to cooler climes. She's a dedicated snowboarder and heads off to Thredbo or the New Zealand snowfields when she can and is planning a trip to the next Winter Olympics in Canada.

Her Tai Chi classes are becoming very popular with her Spiritus clients. The program, with its emphasis on breathing, relaxation and gentle exercise, not only improves flexibility, muscular strength and fitness but also greatly assists mental concentration. She said

"This safe, gentle exercise is marvellous on a physical and mental level and for those with arthritis, it helps maintain their mobility and often relieves their pain. All those who participate enjoy the benefits to their health and general wellbeing. It's just great to see people feeling better and more relaxed - it's a very satisfying aspect of my work here."

To enquire about Tai Chi for Arthritis, please contact Spiritus on 1300 785 853

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