

**Civic awards citation for Yvonne Stirling
Convention and Function Centre
Tuesday 30 October**

Yvonne Stirling is someone who walks the talk, and makes a difference in people's lives while doing it.

Praised for her reliability, every Tuesday for about 15 years, Yvonne has given up her time to support and encourage Sport Manawatū's Green Prescription programme walking activity group.

A Green Prescription offers a programme of physical activity to complement or replace prescribed medication, and Yvonne contributes enthusiastically to helping others on their fitness journey.

She says her reasons for being involved are simple:

"Helping other people was instilled in me, and it's something I'm able and willing to do."

Yvonne's community volunteer journey began in 1977 when she identified a support need for patients at Palmerston North Hospital.

While visiting her hospitalised husband, she realised that many long-stay hospital patients who had no nearby friends or family members, became quite isolated.

In co-operation with senior hospital staff, Yvonne with the support of several others, established the Hospital Volunteers to perform various support functions for patients.

Over the years, these have changed according to the needs of the hospital. Activities have ranged from handicrafts, hairdressing, helping in the children's ward and visiting the elderly, to sorting and delivering waiting-area magazines, gardening, helping with patient surveys, and refreshing patient flowers.

At one point, there were over 100 volunteers performing these roles.

By far the most popular and enduring Hospital Volunteers' activity is the hospital Mobile Shop. Known as the Trolley Run, the shop was launched in September 1978 with volunteers taking trollies

stocked with food, toiletries, magazines, and newspapers around the inpatient wards every weekday morning.

For the first few years, Yvonne took a leadership role with the Hospital Volunteers, before handing it on to others. However, she continued visiting wards on a weekly basis, and while flowers were still permitted on the wards, working with the flower group.

41 years later she is still an on-call Hospital Volunteers member, and over those decades, Yvonne's vision, drive and dedication has helped made a huge difference to countless thousands of patients and hospital staff members.

A member of St Matthew Anglican Church in Awapuni, Yvonne has been an enthusiastic and constant member of the parish EZZE Meal Shop team since it began distributing frozen meals to the elderly and infirm some 15 years ago.

She is a strong supporter of the annual church fair, regularly turns up for working bees, and is a

dependable member of the Sunday service greeting team.

Yvonne is a shining example of how ordinary everyday voluntary contributions can grow into extraordinary undertakings.