

Gratitude prompts garden offerings

FOR Jan Heapy, four hours' sleep is a good night's rest since surgery for cancer.

Daily doses of morphine and the love of her family help keep her pain under control but the simple hobby of gardening now gets her through the tough times.

Mrs Heapy, 67, of Miranda, wants to give thanks to the support she has received for almost 40 years and will hold a plant sale on Saturday with profits going to Reverend George Capsis's Community Outreach Ministries at Caringbah.

"When I was diagnosed, I asked him to arrange my funeral but he just said, 'Come on, you're not a quitter'," she said.

Mrs Heapy had her larynx removed a week after a biopsy revealed cancer in 1970 after a sore throat would not heal.

"I had a feeling something was not right," she said. "It was 18 months before I could talk after the surgery."

Mrs Heapy, who breathes through a hole in her neck and speaks through a plastic prosthesis, endured 32 treatments of radiation which she described as "a killer".

She developed an interest in gardening to while away restless nights.

"I had never gardened before in my life, but now I'm out there in the backyard shed all the time," she said.

Her daughter, Michelle Adams, said the hobby surprised the family.

"To see this tiny 40-kilo woman carrying plants around," she said. "She's completely turned her life around." Mr Capsis, a Sutherland Shire councillor, said: "It's been a very difficult time for her but she's always been one of my helpers.

"This is helping her, but it is also a good example of someone who, despite defying death, can bounce back and contribute to society and enjoy life."

Article from The Leader



Blooming spirit: Jan Heapy shows her support for long-time friend, George Capsis. Picture: John Veage



Fun fitness for kids

WITH more than half the Australian adult population overweight, a Brighton-Le-Sands based fitness team will spend these school holidays helping children stay lean and keen. NSW health authorities estimate 67 per cent of Australian men and 52 per cent of Australian women, aged 25 years and over, are overweight or obese.

With this in mind, Transformers Fitness For Kids School Holiday Fitness Programs have been designed to help parents keep their children busy and active as part of a new three hour morning program of physical activity.

Marissa Stathopoulos, a Transformers fitness instructor and teacher at Brighton-Le-Sands Public School, said the program emphasised all-round fitness for children.

"The fitness programs have been carefully designed to improve cardiovascular, strength, co-ordination, speed, agility and endurance within the three critical age categories that we are working with," she said. Developed in conjunction with training programs by Fitness Australia and the Children's Hospital Institute of Sports Medicine at Westmead, the holiday fitness programs mix social interaction with a daily dose of exercise. Registered fitness instructors and teachers from Brighton-Le-Sands Public School will run the program. Parents are welcome to participate and assist, or to leave their children in the program under strict supervision.

The program runs from 9am to 12 noon from October 5 to 17 in the main hall of Brighton Public School, Crawford Road, Brighton-Le-Sands.

Registration is essential on 1300 KIDS-FIT (1300-543734) or Fitness for kids

Article from The Leader

AUSTRALIA has the second best quality of life in the world and could pip Norway for top spot next year, the author of a UN report on migration and development says.

Australia was ranked second among 182 countries on a scale measuring life expectancy, school enrolments and income in the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Report 2009, published yesterday.

The US slipped a spot to 13 and Britain was steady at 21, based on the latest internationally comparable data from 2007. Niger ranked lowest, followed by Afghanistan and Sierra Leone.

"It pre-dates the global financial crisis," the report's author, Jeni Klugman, said. "You can look forward to next year's report."

In Australia, life expectancy rose three months and income rose 4 per cent on a year earlier, Dr Klugman said. But the scale does not account for inequality within a country and is not a representation of its allure to migrants.

Instead, the human development index ranks countries into tiers of development. Most international migration is contained within those tiers. For instance,



The new Oslo Opera House, opened by Norway's King Harald last year. Photo: Reuters

less than 1 per cent of Africans have moved to Europe, and just over a third of the world's 200 million international migrants moved from a developing country to a developed one.

For the majority, the move is a more subtle one in search of greater opportunity.

"Most migration, internal and international, reaps gains in the form of higher incomes, better access to education and health and improved prospects for their children," the report said.

Generally, this did not heavily compromise destination countries. "Migrants boost economic output at little or no cost to locals. Indeed there may be broader positive effects," it said.

Where migrants fill labour shortfalls in childcare, for instance, mothers in the domestic economy were

freed up to work, it said. But where migrants presented economic and security concerns, they reinforced each other in a vicious cycle.

"Migrants who are marginalised - due, for example, to temporary or irregular status or high levels of unemployment - may resort to antisocial or criminal behaviour, confirming the security fears of locals," the report said.

Dr Klugman said migration was a natural phenomenon. "It's not something to be feared or which is growing out of control."

As a proportion of the world's population, the 3 per cent moving across borders has been stable for 50 years.

In Australia, attitudes to migration were positive as long as jobs were available. This was in line with most of the 52 countries surveyed.

By contrast, 90 per cent of Malaysians were hostile to migration, whereas most Vietnamese welcomed anyone who wished to work.

Across the developed world, the tussle between nations to attract the world's most educated migrants is like a sports draft.

Dr Klugman said: "There's competition at the top end where countries like Australia do well relative to some countries in Europe which have had difficulties in attracting skilled people."

But she argued for more permanent positions for low-skilled migrants, too.

"The need for low-skilled people is just as significant. There are very large parts of the economy that require the services of people in childcare, aged care and a whole range of services."