

COMING HOME

A LARA MAN SHARES A STORY OF COPING WITH BRAIN INJURY, WRITES **JULIA MILLARD**

Australia-wide, more than 6000 people under the age of 65 live in nursing homes. Lara's Russell Bramley knows that only too well. His wife Evelyn lived in a nursing home for two years from the age of 49.

One day in 2010, Evelyn was at work when an aneurysm in her brain ruptured, causing a haemorrhage and stroke. The couple's lives changed in an instant.

Ten years earlier, doctors had told Evelyn she had an inoperable arteriovenous malformation on her brain stem. They knew it would rupture one day, but they didn't know when. When it did, Evelyn ended up in The Alfred hospital's intensive care unit for six weeks.

"She then moved up to a ward and was at the hospital for a total of six months, where she underwent various operations to stop the bleeding and to make her response better," Russell says. "In May/June 2011 she moved down to Wallace Lodge at the McKellar Centre in Geelong. She was there for about two years."

During that time the Bramley family received support from Slow To Recover (a Victorian program to support those with catastrophic brain injuries), the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the Summer Foundation. The foundation is working to change the system so that young people with disabilities have choices other than nursing homes.

Things started to look up in 2013 when Evelyn moved from the nursing home to rehab. With the help of a speech therapist, she spoke for the first time in two years and she returned home in October that year.

Russell, now her full-time carer, says having Evelyn at home has made family life a lot easier.



"EVELYN WILL NEVER BE BACK TO THE WAY SHE WAS, BUT SHE IS IMPROVING"

He and Evelyn have three adult daughters. "The family is back together again. Evelyn will never be back to the way she was but she is improving," Russell says.

"Since coming home, she has been able to drive her wheelchair, she is using her hands, talking more and she is more responsive with yes, no and nodding her head."

Russell has made a video of Evelyn's journey for the

Together:
Evelyn and
Russell
Bramley.
(MICHELLE
KELCEY)

Summer Foundation's *Home to Home Digital Story Exhibition*, on show in Geelong from September 8-15.

"The Summer Foundation does a great job in raising awareness," Russell says. "You don't realise how many young people out there have disabilities and they don't belong in nursing homes."

Foundation campaign manager Carolyn Finis says the exhibition tells the personal stories of young people with disabilities, and the stories of their families.

"Some storytellers are currently living in nursing homes, others have moved out and others have been at significant risk of entering a nursing home," she says.

"[All] are motivated to share their stories in the hope that in doing so, they are contributing to the movement for change."

Carolyn says research into the issue is vital. But the personal stories are compelling and engaging.

"[They] often deliver the same key messages as our research findings, but in a way that is memorable and engaging," she says. "They convey the real challenges and achievements of young people who've been touched by the reality of living in nursing homes."

jmillard@theweeklyreview.com.au

» Watch Russell and Evelyn's story at: [youtube/k2Qrqr9UoI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2Qrqr9UoI)

» View the Home to Home Digital Story Exhibition at Deakin University Waterfront Campus, 1 Gheringhap Street, Geelong. September 8-15, open daily 9am-6pm. Free admission. www.summerfoundation.org.au/whats-on/events/

ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA

MEMORY WALK & JOG

THE RACE AGAINST DEMENTIA

RAISING FUNDS AND AWARENESS FOR DEMENTIA

SUN 13 SEP

REGISTER NOW

GEELONG

EASTERN PARK

ALL AGES AND FITNESS LEVELS ENCOURAGED

Adult \$25 • Concession \$15 • Family \$60 • Corporate \$85

Call 03 9816 5746 or visit MEMORYWALK.COM.AU



specialist aged care
MAJOR SUPPORTER



STATE SUPPORTER



CITY SUPPORTERS



CITY SUPPORTERS



CITY SUPPORTERS



PRINT MEDIA PARTNER

Geelong Performing Arts Centre in the Arts Precinct

2015 Bethany Arthouse Film Festival

Living is Easy

(with eyes closed)

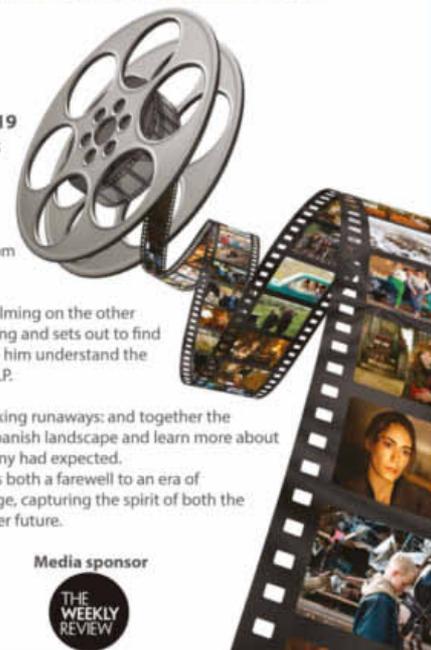
Tuesday 8 Sept 2015

8pm. Tickets adult \$23 conc \$19
Spanish with english subtitles

It's 1966: dedicated schoolteacher Antonio is an obsessive Beatles fan – a passion that carries through to his classroom where he uses the lyrics from "Help!" to teach his pupils English.

When he learns that John Lennon is filming on the other side of the country, he drops everything and sets out to find the location, hoping Lennon can help him understand the lyrics to the newly released Revolver LP.

En route, Antonio adopts two hitchhiking runaways; and together the trio travel across the sun-drenched Spanish landscape and learn more about each other – and themselves – than any had expected. This funny and deeply affecting film is both a farewell to an era of repression and a welcome to a new age, capturing the spirit of both the '60s and of a nation aspiring to a better future.



Major sponsor



Geelong Performing Arts Centre

Media sponsor



BOOK NOW

PHONE 5225 1200
IN PERSON 50 Little Malop St
ONLINE www.gpac.org.au

OUTLETS FOR



follow us



CREATIVE VICTORIA



gpac

Geelong Performing Arts Centre