

Interview with a Volunteer

We sat down with Jessika and Iris, participants in the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS), to learn more about the two of them and how their lives have changed since the meeting.

Q.1 What is your name? Where are you from? And how would you describe yourself?

J: My name is Jessika Rodriguez, and I am from Bogotá, Colombia. I came to Australia to study English. I am a friendly, honest, and talkative person who is passionate about making the lives of others easier.

I: My name is Iris Zimmermann. I was born in Glatz, Poland. I have travelled worldwide and spent 11 years of my youth living in Brazil. I now live in Australia at Tabulam and Templer Homes for the Aged. I would describe myself as having a strong faith in God and always wanting to help and encourage others.

Q.2 What inspired you to participate in the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS)?

J: I spent a lot of my youth with my grandfather; we used to go and visit elderly members of our community together. I enjoyed hearing their stories and being in their company. These memories made me want to volunteer in an aged-care setting.

I: I was feeling lonely, and I wanted to share my faith with someone. I like to talk about God with Jessika, and it's nice to have someone just here for me.

What's changed in your life since meeting your ACVVS companion?

J: Iris has written a book about her life, allowing me to read and share many of her stories through her writing and photos. This has inspired me to do the same with my life and story. We live in an age where so much is digitalised; it's nice to document our stories on paper. Iris has made me appreciate living in the moment and preserving the past. I want to have my stories to share with future generations, as Iris has.

I: I now have someone to share my world with; discussing simple things like the trees outside my window or the birds in the garden is lovely.

What's your favourite thing about your companion?

J: Iris is so kind; she cares about others and is very gentle with me. She always makes sure I'm okay. It's nice to have someone so excited to see me; every time I visit, it's an excellent experience. '

I: Jessika is down to earth and accepting of me. I like that she goes to the activities with me. I miss her when she's not here, but when she visits, I feel happy that we are back together again.

If someone else was thinking about participating in the ACVVS, what would you tell them?

J: It's an excellent opportunity to help the community and yourself; there is lots of support. I've gained much knowledge, and my questions are always answered. It's something you must experience for yourself. I never have to wonder what to do; something is always going on to be a part of, whether it's just talking with Iris or joining an activity together.

I: It's a beautiful experience.

If Iris and Jessika's story has inspired you to volunteer or request a visitor, please contact volunteer@ttha.org.au or call 8720 1333 and ask for Elise (Recreation & Volunteer Coordinator).

