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Creating bonds of friendship and support

- [People](#)

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Irene Nolte from Sunbury Citizen Advocacy Program with her client Darren. Picture: CHRIS SCOTT N24SR604.

JUST as there is a wide variety of people with a disability, there is a wide variety of people who are needed to support them, including offering friendship.

Last Wednesday was International Volunteer Day and Sunbury citizen advocate Irene Nolte took the opportunity to discuss her volunteer role.

When her protege Darren joined her for a photograph his face lit up.

Ms Nolte said that was what her experience in the program had been about, being a friend to a person with a disability and a voice when he needed one.

For the past 15 years she has made regular visits to his home and talks to him about his day, she celebrates special occasions with him, and when he needed a new wheelchair or rest from a busy schedule she was his voice.

She said while Darren has family and supportive staff around him a citizen advocate is another community connection.

Citizen Advocacy Sunbury and Districts covers Hume and parts of the Macedon Ranges and co-ordinator David Abela said a variety of volunteers especially outside of Sunbury were always needed.

He said, for example, there were two proteges currently waiting for advocates with very different needs: one is a high school student with autism the other is a man in his 30s who needs support in filling out job applications.

Details: casunbury.net or 9744 7378.