



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Lotus Support & Counselling Services Incorporated

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PLEASE JOIN US IN ACKNOWLEDGING THE
BINDJAREB PEOPLE AS THE TRADITIONAL
CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND ON WHICH WE
WORK AND LIVE, IN ADDITION TO
HONOURING THEIR ELDERS PAST,
PRESENT AND FUTURE.

Statement of compliance

This report accurately reflects the activities and financial status of Lotus Support & Counselling Services Incorporated for the year ending June 2024, according to the provisions of the ACNC Act 2012.

Signed:



Chairperson
Vanessa Maverick



Treasurer
Rachael Van der Vlist

CHAIR REPORT

Our Vision

To end persistent homelessness in Mandurah, in collaboration with other services. To be recognised as a gold standard provider of affordable, professional counselling services in Mandurah and surrounds.

The past year has been a period of significant progress and achievement for Lotus Support & Counselling Services Incorporated (Lotus). Since commencing operations in May 2023, we have successfully established ourselves as a key provider of essential services for individuals experiencing homelessness and disadvantage within the Mandurah community.

Lotus offers our services from Tuesday to Fridays between the hours of 9am-5pm.

Initially operating from a private residence, we offered outreach services by meeting participants in accessible public locations, such as the Mandurah Library, and provided complimentary counselling services in-person, over the phone, and online. On 26 February 2024, we were pleased to relocate to our dedicated office space at the Anglican Community Centre, located at 2 Leslie Street, Mandurah.

Our new premises have been furnished through the generous donations and support from volunteers, the Mandurah community, and Christ's Church. This has enabled us to continue delivering high-quality, compassionate services, with a stable base that enhances our ability to engage effectively with participants.

In the early stages of our establishment, our CEO engaged with local government representatives and key stakeholders to assess the potential role Lotus could play within the community. The feedback we received was encouraging, with clear endorsement to continue our efforts. Despite some overlap with existing services, our provision of fee-free counselling was recognised as a vital and much-needed resource in the Mandurah community.

Acknowledgement and thanks to internal teams

Lotus would not exist but for the commitment and caring efforts of the entire team. Lotus is extremely privileged to have people providing their time and dedication to support clients in any way that we are able.

Informal acknowledgement of our volunteers takes place on a daily basis, in addition to all-of-Lotus meetings where we take the opportunity to thank each person on the team for their ongoing commitment.

Our heartfelt thanks go to everyone in this amazing team of volunteers whose time and generosity makes a huge contribution in our community. Many of our team go above and beyond what is

asked of them, and the camaraderie within the office is a joy to be around.

In December 2023 Lotus acknowledged the amazing contributions of our volunteers at an End of Year celebration, with certificates presented to all volunteers, distributed by the Department of Communities in recognition and celebration of International Day of the Volunteer (5th December). In May 2024, with funding from Volunteering WA, we gathered to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of our volunteers to the success of Lotus Inc. Each of our volunteers received a personalised gift and certificate in recognition of their support.

Students on Placement

Lotus is proud to provide opportunities for students to complete their placement hours as part of their qualifications in Diploma Community Services, Bachelor of Community Services, and Master of Counselling. This year, we have supported 15 students from Insight Training, Stotts College, and the University of Canberra. We are actively engaging with local educational institutions, including: TrainSmart Australia, Murdoch University, South Metropolitan TAFE, Lead College, the Australian College of Community Services and Care, and Fremantle Education Centre with a view to arrange future placement opportunities. We are also in discussion with the McCusker Foundation regarding potential internship opportunities.

Students on placement have become an integral and valued part of Lotus operations. With our work primarily driven by volunteers, we often have different volunteers each day. Most students commit to attending all four days that our office is open, providing the essential continuity of care needed for our participants.



Students on placement taking a rest at our first venue, a home office

The contribution of students enhances our ability to serve the community effectively and ensure that our participants receive consistent support.

Corporate governance

Lotus is a not-for-profit, registered charity, operating as an Incorporated Association. We are formally registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), hold Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status, and are registered for Goods and Services Tax (GST).

We extend our sincere gratitude to our founding Chairperson, Chris Webster, and Deputy Chairperson, Shannan Marano, for their dedicated service. We were pleased to welcome Gavin Maverick, who assumed the role of Deputy Chairperson, while Vanessa Maverick-Phillips transitioned to the role of Chairperson in October 2023, having previously served as Deputy Chairperson.

On closing of the financial year ending June 2024, our Management Committee consisted of:

Chairperson:	Vanessa Maverick
Deputy Chair:	Gavin Maverick
Secretary:	Jennifer Marcinkus
Treasurer:	Rachael Van der Vlist
CEO:	Doreen Jones

Lotus operates in full compliance with its Rules of Association. The organisation maintains all necessary insurances, including Public Liability, Association Liability, and Volunteer Personal Accident coverage. Our policies and procedures are up-to-date and readily accessible. As part of their induction, all volunteers and students are required to review and acknowledge these documents.

Additionally, all volunteers and students working within the community have current Police Checks and Working with Children Check (WWC).



Out and about in our beautiful City of Mandurah, ready to engage with potential participants

Stakeholder engagement

The City of Mandurah hosted a Grant Makers Workshop, which provided valuable insights despite the extensive information presented. Notable grant opportunities identified include those offered by Alcoa, LotteryWest, Rio Tinto, and Rotary.

The City of Mandurah also invited Lotus to participate in the development of their upcoming Homelessness Strategy by gathering lived experience stories. We conducted interviews with several participants, each of whom received a gift card from the City of Mandurah as a token of appreciation for their contribution.

Lotus participated in the Preventing Homelessness event, alongside other agencies and real estate professionals, to explore strategies to prevent eviction escalations. An idea was proposed to develop an information pack for tenants at the first breach of their lease, encouraging them to seek support earlier in the process.

Further discussions have been initiated with local services, government agencies, and experienced stakeholders to explore the potential for Lotus to offer support services for families in crisis. This service could resemble the former CLAN program, which lost funding several years ago, and would involve volunteers visiting families in their homes. Additionally, our CEO Doreen has been actively involved in the planning of Homelessness Day, and co-facilitated the creation of a Community Action Working Group for Safe Sleeping.

Donations

Lotus has been fortunate to receive generous donations from the Mandurah community, including essential hygiene products, clothing, and bedding. These contributions play a vital role in supporting our efforts, and we are deeply grateful for the continued generosity of the local community.

The Future of Lotus

As we look ahead, Lotus remains focused on securing sustainable funding to support our ongoing operations. A key priority is the establishment of salaried positions for a four-day work week, which will enhance continuity of care for our service users and foster improved communication and teamwork among our dedicated staff. To facilitate this, we are strategically defining key roles and refining our organisational structure to better support our mission.

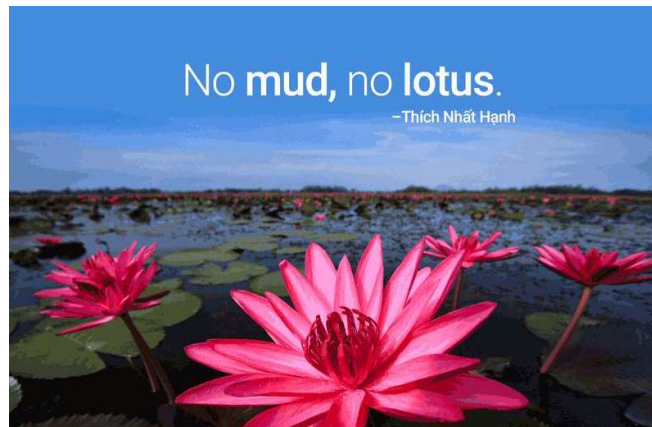
We are pleased to announce a new lease agreement with the Anglican Community Centre, effective from 1 January 2025 through 31 July 2026. This partnership provides an exciting opportunity to expand our reach and deepen our impact within the community.

To further improve our service delivery, upgrading our electronic equipment is essential. We will actively pursue funding opportunities to address this need, ensuring that we are equipped with the necessary tools to continue delivering high-quality services.

We remain committed to collaborating with other local services to support individuals experiencing homelessness or hardship. As we move forward, we are excited about the future of Lotus and the positive developments on the horizon, as we continue striving to create a brighter future for our community.

Vanessa Maverick

Chair
Lotus Support & Counselling Services Incorporated



LOTUS IN THE COMMUNITY

Collaboration for Community Impact

Throughout our work, we have cultivated strong relationships with community members, agencies, services, and government departments to enhance the support we provide to our participants. Our collaborative efforts involve numerous partners, with cross-referrals, information sharing, collection and distribution of supplies, all with the purpose of ensuring participants are provided with the best possible support. The following is not an

exhaustive list of people and organisations we work with:

- Anglicare
- Atwork Australia
- Bethanie Housing
- Bluebird Mental Health
- Bridge Builders
- City of Mandurah
- City of Mandurah Rangers
- City of Rockingham
- Cr Amber Kearns
- Department of Communities
- Goldfields Rehab

- Halo
- Hands Up Team
- Headspace
- Healing Smiles
- Housing Authority
- John's Vision
- Kingsway Global Care
- Legal Aid
- Matchworks
- Mayor Rhys Williams
- Ovis
- Peel Community Kitchen
- Peel Community Legal Service
- Peel Youth Mental Health Taskforce
- PeelConnect
- People Who Care
- Peel Volunteer Resource Centre
- Rainbow Health
- Refresh Showers
- Ruah
- Services Australia (Centrelink)
- South Metropolitan TAFE
- South West Aboriginal Medical Services
- St Pats
- WA Mums Cottage
- Women's Law Service WA
- West Australian Alliance for Ending Homelessness
- Westaus Crisis

A notable example of our collaboration is when Lotus provided volunteers and students to support Halo during a period of low volunteer numbers. This partnership not only strengthened Halo's capacity but also enriched the experience of our volunteers and students.

Together, through these collaborations, we work towards creating a stronger, more supported community.



Making stress / juggling balls at Matchworks 'All About You' event

Events

Throughout the year, Lotus has actively participated in a variety of events, both those we hosted and those coordinated by other services. Here are some highlights:

- **Homelessness Awareness Day** (August 2023): We participated in events in Rockingham and Mandurah (foreshore and Baptist Church) to raise awareness about homelessness in our community.
- **Wellness Wednesday**: This event was a tremendous success, with our volunteers and students supporting participants in creating around 130 stress balls. The Lotus team was busy all day, even requiring additional supplies to meet the high demand!
- **Spring Into Life** at Lakelands Shopping Centre: This event promoted physical and emotional well-being, encouraging community participation and connection.

- **Mental Health Week (October):** We hosted "Colour Your Life" at George Robinson Gardens, where participants expressed their past, present, and future through drawing, painting, and collage.



Fun in the park at the Colour Your Life event, hosted by Lotus for Mental Health Week

- **All About You:** Held by Matchworks at their offices on Pinjarra Road, this event aimed to assist participants in overcoming barriers to employment. Lotus contributed by facilitating a stress ball-making activity and sharing information about our services.
- **Bethanie Housing Art/Craft Day:** We attended this event to engage with residents, providing our stress ball-making activity and discussing our services.

These events not only allow us to connect with the community but also to promote awareness of our services and the importance of mental health and well-being.



Colour Your Life

Meetings and Community Engagement

Lotus actively participates in regular community meetings to advocate for our participants, educate our team and other stakeholders, and network for the best possible outcomes. Our involvement includes:

- **Rough Sleeper Coordination Group (RSCG)** - as part of the Advance to Zero project, coordinated by the West Australian Alliance for Ending Homelessness (WAAEH), we work collaboratively to address homelessness and improve support for rough sleepers.
- **Homelessness and Street Present Networking** - coordinated by the City of Mandurah, we engage in discussions with various organisations and stakeholders to share insights and develop effective strategies for addressing homelessness.

- **Mandurah Shared Approach to Ending Homelessness Action Plan** – Lotus contributed to the gathering of lived experience stories for the City of Mandurah’s next Homelessness Strategy, helping to ensure that the voices of those affected are heard. Additionally, we participated in discussions and meetings to further contribute experiences to the development of this strategy.
- **A to Z Learning Cycle** - this initiative focuses on continuous improvement and sharing of best practices among service providers in our community.

Through these meetings, we strive to enhance collaboration and drive meaningful change for those we serve.

Registrations and Alliances

At Lotus, we have established several important registrations and alliances to enhance our service delivery and community support:

- **Volunteer National Police Clearance Program** - we are registered to ensure the safety and integrity of our volunteer



Grace (Assertive Outreach Worker), Julia (Counsellor) and Chandra (Student) enjoying a moment together

workforce. This provides volunteers with a police clearance at a reduced cost, and Lotus currently holds funds to cover this cost.

- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Foodbank** - this partnership facilitates referrals, allowing us to provide essential resources to those in need.
- **24-Hour SmartRider Cards** - we offer these cards to assist our participants with transportation needs.
- **Justice of the Peace (JP) on Site** – our CEO is a JP and is available to certify documents for participants.
- **Registered with Share the Dignity** – we receive donations of sanitary items which helps us support individuals in need of essential items.
- **Work Development Permit Sponsorship** - Lotus is now a sponsor for the Work and Development Permit program, helping

participants to pay off court fines through engaging in unpaid work at Lotus.



Showcasing the back of our uniform

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Statement of Financial Position

- Profit & Loss

July 2023 - June 2024

	Total
INCOME	
Bendigo Community Raffle	1,500.00
Bunnings BBQ Sales	4,580.23
City of Mandurah Grant	5,000.00
Containers for Change	100.70
Donations	1,796.85
DSS Grant	4,090.91
Mandurah Murray Charity Ride	500.00
Mayday Donation	5,000.00
Membership Fee's	86.83
Student Placement Fee	3,204.54
Uniform Sales	59.09
Volunteering WA Grant	102.72
Total Income	26,021.87
GROSS PROFIT	26,021.87
OTHER INCOME	
Interest income	1.60
Total Other Income	1.60
EXPENSES	
Accounting and bookkeeping	158.55
Advertising and marketing	25.00
Bank charges and fees	59.18
Bunnings Supplies	1,557.88
Insurance	1,493.79
Office expenses	1,550.37
Other Miscellaneous Service Cost	15.45
Participant Supplies	705.04
Postage & shipping	169.09
Printing, stationery & supplies	90.72
Registration and insurance	97.26
Rent or Lease of Buildings	2,322.53
Staff amenities	254.05
Telephone & internet expenses	736.11
Training	1,987.34
Uniforms	115.46
Website Expenses	597.32
Total Expenses	11,935.14
OTHER EXPENSES	
BAS Roundoff Gain or Loss	-1.18
Total Other Expenses	-1.18
NET EARNINGS	A\$14,089.51

Statement of Cash Flows

Statement of Cash Flows

July 2023 - June 2024

	TOTAL
▼ Cash flows from operating activities	
Profit for the year	18,455.23
▼ Adjustments for non-cash income and expenses:	0.00
Accounts Receivable (A/R)	0.00
Credit Card	-216.53
ATO Clearing Account	792.00
GST Liabilities Payable	-0.90
Bunnings Supplies	-1,557.88
Participant Supplies	-705.04
Training	-1,987.34
Uniforms	-115.46
Total Adjustments for non-cash income and expenses:	-3,791.15
Net cash from operating activities	A\$14,664.08
▼ Cash flows from financing activities	
Opening balance equity	0.00
Net cash used in financing activities	A\$0.00
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	A\$14,664.08
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	-1,850.00
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT END OF YEAR	A\$12,814.08

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Lotus has had a successful first year of operations, with funding primarily sourced from a combination of small grants, ongoing student placement fees, and fundraising initiatives, such as sausage sizzles and the Bendigo raffle.

While we have applied for several grants, not all have been successful. We are optimistic about securing more grant approvals in the upcoming financial year to further support our services. Additionally, our CEO has successfully negotiated agreements with new Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to receive placement fees,

including from RTOs that previously placed students without compensation.

We are fortunate to receive monthly contributions from an individual donor, which, along with cash donations, has significantly supported our operating costs. Furthermore, we successfully relocated our office to the Anglican Community Centre, with highly subsidised rent, and have secured lease terms through 31 July 2026.

Looking ahead, it is clear that we must enhance our efforts to secure additional grants and funding. Developing a comprehensive fundraising strategy,

including exploring potential corporate sponsorships, will be crucial to achieving our financial goals.

Our expenses are well-managed, placing Lotus in a strong financial position. We remain committed to maintaining this financial stability by closely aligning projected expenditures with anticipated revenue.

Grants Received

We extend sincere thanks to the following organisations who have granted funds to assist in our work:

The Federal Volunteer Grant of \$4500 - provided funds to reimburse counsellors for Australian

Counselling Association (ACA) membership, facilities for volunteers, background checks, and first aid training.

Mayday \$5000 – this money funded our start-up costs.

City of Mandurah \$5000 – funding Lotus for three years through the Community Partnership Grant, most of which is budgeted for volunteer training. The first year of funding has been used for the purchase of the printer and volunteer training.

Volunteering WA \$720 - for Volunteer week and funding the costs associated with a volunteer

acknowledgement event, in addition to a personalised gift for each volunteer.



OPERATING REPORT

Lotus is dedicated to providing fee-free counselling for individuals who face barriers such as long wait times, financial constraints, and transportation issues. Our outreach team ensures that everyone has access to the support they need, particularly those experiencing homelessness and disadvantage.

Our services are delivered by a committed team of volunteers, all of whom has completed the comprehensive Lotus Volunteer Training program. This training equips our volunteers with the necessary skills and knowledge to offer compassionate and effective support to those in need.

Through our outreach efforts and counselling services, we strive to make a meaningful difference

in the lives of individuals and families in our community.

Supporting Mental Health Through Professional Counselling Services

Our counselling services are designed to improve mental health outcomes for individuals facing a range of challenges, including grief, loss, anxiety, depression, stress, trauma and, addiction. Services are delivered by qualified counsellors who are members of the Australian Counselling Association. These professionals are committed to ongoing professional development and participate in regular clinical supervision to maintain the quality and effectiveness of the services provided.

Alongside our experienced counsellors, Lotus offers a supportive environment for counselling students,

who conduct sessions under the mentorship and guidance of qualified professionals during their placement. This approach not only enhances the students' learning experience but also broadens the availability of support for our community. All sessions conducted by students are offered with full transparency, ensuring participants are informed.

To further support our counsellors, in-house clinical supervision is provided, complemented by external clinical supervision to foster continuous professional growth and high-quality care.

External Clinical Supervisors

We extend our sincere gratitude to our external clinical supervisors, who generously contribute their expertise on a pro bono basis, playing a crucial role in developing and enhancing the skills of our counsellors. We would like to offer special thanks to Mieke Hodgskin-Roelandt, Terri Kaye, Indira Chanda, Shirley Farr, and Kasorn Campbell for their invaluable support. Their dedication greatly enriches our program and strengthens the quality of care we deliver to our community.

	Total number sessions	Outreach	Phone	Onsite	Online
July	18	3	1	14	0
Aug	44	5	3	36	0
Sep	26	0	16	10	0
Oct	33	1	15	17	0
Nov	39	3	13	23	0
Dec	24	1	6	17	0
CLOSED FOR MOST OF JANUARY					
Feb	37	2	10	25	0
Mar	33	4	2	26	1
Apr	27	0	3	24	0
May	30	2	4	23	1
June	26	3	0	21	2
TOTAL	337	24	73	236	4

Table 1: Summary of Counselling sessions provided at Lotus for the financial year ending June 2024

Assertive Outreach Services

Our dedicated team of assertive outreach workers actively engages with the community to provide essential support and resources. We focus on

making life a little more comfortable for those in need by offering:

- Provision of supplies
- Assistance with completing forms and adding individuals to the social housing list
- Conducting interviews for the By Name List as part of the Advance to Zero initiative
- Transportation to medical appointments
- And much more!

What Else Do We Do?

In addition to our regular outreach services, Lotus takes pride in offering flexible, ad hoc support tailored to the specific needs of each participant. Our commitment is to respond to individual circumstances without being restricted by the typical limitations of practice. When safe and feasible, we go above and beyond to improve outcomes for those we serve ensuring a personalised and responsive approach to care.

Our intensive support has included:

- Helping housed participants struggling with addiction by conducting welfare and medication checks
- Facilitating the printing of essential documents and securing emergency accommodation
- Providing food hampers and financial assistance for emergency relief
- Coordinating dog sitting services for participants in need
- Purchasing mobile phones to ensure participants have access to vital communication

	Number of engagements	Transport	Housing	VISPDAT	Rehab	DSP	ID
July	78	6	3	1	2	2	0
Aug	54	0	1	0	0	0	0
Sep	75	5	5	2	0	2	0
Oct	53	9	4	2	0	0	2
Nov	33	5	3	1	0	0	1
Dec	20	6	3	2	0	0	0
CLOSED FOR MOST OF JANUARY							
Feb	29	5	5	2	0	2	0
Mar	51	8	3	2	0	2	0
Apr	48	2	10	1	0	1	1
May	37	11	3	3	0	3	0
June	25	5	3	2	0	1	0
TOTAL	503	62	43	18	2	13	4

Table 2: Summary of community engagements & typical support provided in financial year ending June 2024

- Transporting and accompanying individuals to local court proceedings
- Assisting with phone calls, completing forms, and liaising with other services to ensure comprehensive support
- Relocating vehicles for participants who are unlicensed
- Supporting individuals at risk of losing tenancy due to missed rental inspections
- Advocating for the early release of superannuation funds in cases of financial hardship
- Arranging dental services for participants affected by domestic violence
- Understanding personal bias, judgment, acceptance, and self-criticism
- Establishing appropriate boundaries and defining the scope of our service
- Approaching sensitive topics, including discussions around suicide
- Building rapport, fostering effective relationships, and developing active listening skills (including practical sessions)
- Employing person-centred, strengths-based, trauma-informed approaches, with an emphasis on neurodiversity and homelessness
- Understanding supervision, policies and procedures, safety protocols, burnout prevention, and self-care strategies
- Exploring available housing options
- Utilising the VISPDAT (Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritisation Decision Assistance Tool)

Our team is dedicated to making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we support, ensuring that no one is left behind.

Lotus Volunteer Training

At Lotus, all volunteers who engage with participants are required to complete the comprehensive Lotus Volunteer Training program. This ensures that our volunteers are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to provide

effective, person-centred and strengths-based support. The training covers a wide range of essential topics, including:

- Statistics and myth busting regarding homelessness
- Aboriginal perspective and cultural awareness
- Roles, responsibilities, and expectations for both volunteers and participants

Throughout the year, we hosted three volunteer training sessions:

- July - 6 participants completed the training
- February - 12 participants completed the training
- April - 6 participants completed the training



Presentation of certificates on completion of the Lotus Volunteer Training

- **Beneath the Surface** - A professional development workshop for services within the homelessness sector (provided by City of Mandurah)
- **Mental Health Recognition and Response** (provided by City of Mandurah)
- **Social Media Secrets** - Simple strategies and low-cost options to help groups take advantage of on-line opportunities and utilise social media wisely to promote your group and activities (provided by City of Mandurah and delivered by Evolve Professional Development).
- **Successful Fundraising Training** - Advice on attracting income and securing financial support (provided by City of Mandurah and delivered by Evolve Professional Development).
- **Volunteer Magnet Workshop** – Advice for Mandurah based community groups to learn new skills on to how to attract, manage and retain volunteers (provided by City of Mandurah and delivered by Evolve Professional Development)

External Training Opportunities

At Lotus, we encourage and support our volunteers to engage in additional training to enhance their skills and knowledge. This year, our volunteers participated in several vital training programs, including:

- **One Child at a Time** – Trauma informed care (provided by the City of Mandurah)
- **Mental Health First Aid** (provided by the City of Rockingham)

These training opportunities enhance our volunteers' expertise and improve the quality of support we provide to our community as we believe continuous learning is vital for effective service delivery and personal growth.

Celebrating Our Impact

As we reflect on our journey, it's clear that Lotus has made a significant impact on the Mandurah community. This achievement is only possible thanks to the unwavering dedication and hard work of our incredible volunteers and students, including those working behind the scenes in social

media management, grant writing, and serving on the Management Committee.

This commitment and compassion drive our success as every effort from our volunteers helps to change lives and create a supportive environment for those in need.

I want to take this moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of our volunteers. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our

mission. You are truly making a difference, and your efforts matter more than you know!

YOU MATTER!

Let's continue this journey together with passion and purpose.

Doreen Jones
Chief Executive Officer



Celebrating completion of the Lotus Volunteer Training



Hard at work in the Lotus Volunteer Training