

L. E. Davis

Open Foundation Course, 1987

Australian History -
Research Assignment

"The Friends of Warred Hospital"

(Tuesday - 7pm - 9pm)

"The Friends of Wallace Hospital" is a voluntary welfare organisation which commenced in 1967. The then Board of Directors had been approached by a local clergyman who presented a case for non-medical and non-nursing services which could be performed for patients. A Public meeting was called, with good response, and "The Friends" formed.

Various services were able to be carried out by the newly formed group and included message and errands, and the washing of clothing for patients with none to do this for them. Members were also available to assist if a mother was hospitalised and the father unable to cope with a child at home. The child would be cared for by a "Friend" in their own home until such time as the child could return to their family home. Hairdressing and interpreter services were organised if required. Other members would assist by the transporting of the queried or shocked relative not able to get home by their own means, and too distressed to travel by public transport. It was also possible to assist the discharged patient who required help in the home, until such time as they could cope themselves or until official agency help could be organised. Some of the services are now carried out by the Social Work Department, and were transferred to this Department, when a part-time Welfare Officer, and later, a Social Worker, were appointed.

One group was formed to provide services to children who were hospitalised. This group was able to

expand its activities with the appointment of a teacher, initially part time then subsequently full time enabling the children to continue with their education. This facility was utilised by the College of Advanced Education, with students attending for practical experience. As the hospital no longer accommodates major paediatric cases, this group has been phased out.

A Day care Centre was established, catering for long-term inpatients and outpatients who needed some form of activity. This group would attend on a specific day and conduct craft and games activities. With the advent of the Geriatric Assessment and Rehabilitation Unit, this group now caters for a 23 bed unit, plus day patients, with similar activities to those when the group commenced.

Two groups have been formed to assist Staff rather than patients. The Flower group was formed to relieve the Nursing Staff of the task of arranging and caring for patients' flowers. The Chart group undertakes the tasks of assembling the necessary Medical Records Sheets used when a patient is admitted to hospital, so that the chart is already assembled and available for use when the patients present to the ward.

Unfortunately, it seems that not all patients fully appreciate the services provided by the Voluntary Workers, despite the fact that some services are of a personal nature. However, it is considered that there will always be a need for voluntary workers within the hospital situation and especially in view of

an ageing population. This is an area where there will be a greater need for voluntary help, to support trained personnel working in this specialty.

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Signed J. Budge

Date 20.9.1987

Interviewer L. Davies