

OAM Recipient Lynne McCrindle - A Lifetime of Service

Order of Australia Medal Presented To Hills Resident For A Lifetime Of Service.

Pennant Hills resident Lynn McCrindle has been recognised for her life of service and is a recipient of the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) on Australia Day 2021.

Lynn developed a heart for helping others from her childhood in regional Queensland when her family would go and visit an indigenous settlement outside town where the children were isolated and impoverished. The example of her mother who was committed to helping others in need inspired her to take on volunteering roles.

"When I was a teenager I was able to help out at children's camps and youth programs. I was very much in the background but when I was asked I would say yes. I really enjoyed serving, I had a lot of fun."

Lynn followed her dream to become a teacher and this took her to London where she worked with new immigrants.

"There was a great influx of West Indian families and the kids had very poor English. Helping these children in their new country, with a new language and culture was both challenging and rewarding for me as a new teacher."

Upon her return to Australia, and because of her teaching experience with migrants in London, Lynn was asked to take a class of non-English speaking children who had just arrived in Ipswich, Queensland. She did this for two years leading up to her marriage and then a move to Sydney where she started her family.

While raising her three young children, Lynn was asked to pioneer a new type of integrated school in which students with learning difficulties would be taught alongside mainstream students.

"At first I was reluctant after a nine year break but as I reflected on this, it became clear to me that at all other points in my life when I thought I couldn't, God gave me the courage to step out."

Lynn became the foundation teacher of that school, Pennant Hills Christian School, located in the Lutanda Children's Home on Boundary Road. She had eight students in two rented rooms and taught every subject.

"I always regarded teaching as serving."

Enrolment growth saw a new location and a name change to Pacific Hills Christian School at Dural. Lynn continued to teach and spent a total of 17 years in the classroom and then another 14 years serving on the school board. Today, the campus has more than 1400 students and it has gone on to establish six other campuses across the state. Her next service opportunity was assisting with the start of an organisation called CMI Aid which was created by one of her students, Matthew Hillier.

"Matthew had just started this charity which delivered shipping containers of supplies from Australia to the poorest villages in Eastern Europe and he was doing it all on his own. I phoned him up to see if I could help and he asked me 'Do you know computers?' and I said no, and he said 'If you are willing to come I'll teach you'. I did a computer course and soon I was doing a lot of the data entry. From there it went to going over to Romania then Moldova. I would visit families and children and assess their health and educational needs. Moldova is a really poor country and the need was huge."

Helping those who couldn't help themselves became the focus of Lynn's most recent service which involved tutoring students who have English as their second language.

"I enjoyed tutoring students who had fallen behind in their schooling. Doing this one on one allowed them to catch up and was really rewarding for me to see them understand something that had been a mystery to them and suddenly they were off and running. It was so exciting to see."

Lynn has simple advice for those who are considering becoming involved in areas of service.

"First of all it is important to understand our responsibility to others, that we are here to serve. Making a difference in the life of another is also one of the most rewarding things that we can do, so I would say, just go for it"

Lynn looks back over her life of service with a contented smile.

"It is amazing and humbling. The things I did I never would have imagined I could do."

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