

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Pen Pals Connecting The Community**



If you had a Pen Pal as a child, you'd remember the joy of receiving a letter.

Exchanging news, telling stories and sharing insights was not only a great way to connect – but there was the added excitement of mailing your letter and then eagerly awaiting the reply.

Local pharmacist Amanda Bryce from Gerald Burns Pharmacy at Hawaiian's Melville has started a new pen pal initiative between her elderly patients and students at Bicton Primary School, connecting generations in the local area through the art of letter writing.

The initiative has taken on a special meaning amid isolation and social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Already 48 letters have been exchanged between the pharmacy patients and students.

"Some of our older people have had the most incredible lives," Ms Bryce says. "They've fought in wars, experienced adversity that we can't comprehend and have seen many incredible things.

"I hope this project fosters some curiosity in the minds of the students and they get to see the world through the eyes of an older person."

Bicton residents and pharmacy patients Dennis and Linley Batterham have sent their first letters to the Bicton Primary School students through the pharmacy - and are keenly awaiting their replies.

"I think it is a good idea to connect the generations and we had some fun writing our letters and thinking about what would be interesting to the children," says Mr Batterham, aged 88.

The couple hope the students enjoy the pen pal project as much as them – and they hope the young recipients can read their cursive (running) writing – a skill no longer taught at school.

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Images: [https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gsfbu7gkdpbwnrx/AABuvxKO\\_yFExOkVorCahcKfa?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gsfbu7gkdpbwnrx/AABuvxKO_yFExOkVorCahcKfa?dl=0)

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