

Group honours care volunteer

Community | Blair Corless

THE walls at Banksia Palliative Care's headquarters have received their latest addition — a plaque honoring one of its long-time volunteers.

Alby Collis began volunteering for BPC after seeing first-hand how the organisation helped families with a terminally ill relative.

Mr Collis' wife, Alison, to whom he was married for more than 40 years, had cancer when BPC became involved, daughter Leanne Collis said. "At the time, Julie Paul, who is now the chief executive, was one of the nurses who came to the house, and helped with things such as making sure the medication was right," Ms Collis said.

"They (mum and dad) had moved from Northcote to Montmorency and she was much happier to be there."

After the death of his wife in 1994, Mrs Paul said Mr Collis became part of the organisation in a different way. "As a result Alby decided to become a volunteer for Banksia, which is symbolic of how many people become volunteers — special community people who want to give something back to the community via Banksia," Mrs Paul said.

Mr Collis worked as a client support volunteer and later moved into the fundraising field before he died last December.

"He instigated the first of many valued community partnerships with Freemasons Victoria," Mrs Paul said. "He was instrumental in Freemason groups choosing Banksia as a charity to support."



Also keen to acknowledge Mr Collis, who was a Freemason for 47 years, was Preston Northcote Masonic Lodge, which donated \$1,000 to BPC.

Mrs Paul said the organisation got much of its support from people who originally used the services it provided. "Banksia is willing to speak to any community group or business who wishes to know about the essential free specialist services which may assist one of their members or staff family members at any time," she said.

Details: 9455 0622.



Leanne Collis, daughter of Alby Collis, with Kevin Owen, of the Preston Northcote Masonic Lodge, and the plaque dedicated to her late father (left).