

The Nudgee Trust: Caring For Refugees



There is still no end in sight to the war in Ukraine, but refugees from the conflict are finding hope and health care in Queensland thanks to the support of the Nudgee Trust.

The Mater Refugee Complex Care Clinic (MRCCC) has been a major beneficiary of trust funding over its 21 years of operation at Mater's South Brisbane health campus.

The clinic provides specialised nursing, general practice, paediatric and psychiatry services to people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds.

Dr Rebecca Farley, Senior Medical Officer at Mater Refugee Health, said the clinic saw 370 patients and delivered more than 1700 health appointments last year, with recently arrived Ukrainians among those cared for.

“Refugees and asylum seekers are a highly vulnerable and often marginalised group within our community,” Dr Farley said. “Many will have limited or no access to Medicare, limited work rights and a high risk of homelessness.

“With no ability to earn money, many go without access to medications, clinical interventions, pathology or radiology – which risks exacerbating health issues.”

Dr Farley said the support of the Nudgee Trust was critical in allowing the MRCCC to maintain its services.

“Nudgee Trust grants have a direct impact on the MRCCC's work and the patients it serves,” she said.

“The grants have allowed MRCCC clinicians to provide timely access to screening and diagnostic pathology and imaging.

“They also allow our most vulnerable patients access to life-saving medications – something that we simply would not be able to afford without the support of Nudgee Trust.”

Viktor Olepir, a 57-year-old who has Down syndrome, is among those grateful for the compassion and expert medical care they have received at the clinic.

He was almost blind and living in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv when it was bombed by the invading Russian forces last year and had to seek refuge in the city’s underground railway.

Thankfully his sister Zoya, who has lived in Ipswich since 2012, was able to evacuate Viktor to Queensland and bring him to the MRCCC for assessment.

He was referred to Mater Consultant Ophthalmologist Associate Professor Anthony Kwan, who performed cataract surgery and finally restored Viktor’s sight.

Mrs Olepir described the moment when nurses at Mater removed her brother’s eye patch for the first time as “*priceless*”.

“He danced and jumped for joy knowing he could see again,” she laughed.

“I can’t tell you how happy I am to see my little brother smile like this again.”

The Nudgee Trust was established on 8 October 1869 and provides grants to ministries sponsored by Mercy Partners. For more information on the Nudgee Trust, ministries can visit the Mercy Partners Ministry Portal.

This article was first published on mercypartners.org.au website. For more information on The Mater Refugee Complex Care Clinic please visit: mater.org.au/health/services/refugee-health. For more information on Mercy Partners please see mercypartners.org.au/

