Paula – Carnagat – 24th November 2015

When we were first approached to do training to become community health champions our initial thoughts were, what is a health champion, surely you would have to be physically athletic looking and living a healthy lifestyle. Madaleine explained to us that we as community volunteers are already doing the work of a health champion.

We had heard of some of the previous people who had did the training last year and they all found their own area of being a health champion. Frank with his felons group and Martine with her bumps and babies. I searched my mind for what area I could fit into and didn't find an answer.

Anyway, we came along to the training, we were open minded but also had our fears of the training, like not wanting to be mixed with people we didn't know, speaking out in front of people and even worrying about the amount of writing that would be involved.

We were immediately put at ease as we were told the pace of the training would match our ability and at no time would we be asked to do something we didn't feel comfortable with.

We quickly learned that being a health champion was not just about exercise and healthy eating. It was about looking at the health of a community. The environment the community lives in has a huge impact on health and we as community health champions would be able to help with transforming the health and well being of our community by knowing how to reach out to people and give them the information they need.

I also got the answer to what area I would look at, by realising I volunteer in a community and deal with lots of different groups (eg) children, older people, and just residents as a whole. So for me it is about looking at our area as one group and helping and supporting anyone living in Carnagat who may need our help. One other thing which I have learned that it's not always someone you see that needs help but those who are not so visible in Carnagat and those less engaged that may be the most in need of our support.

Paula.