

General Information

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Registration No A0023269X

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CONTRIBUTIONS

We welcome contributions to the newsletter in the form of letters, stories, articles and news items relevant to mental health issues.

It must be stressed that what is printed may not necessarily reflect the views of Aspire, A Pathway to Mental Health Inc. (Aspire), its staff or The Committee of Management. Please declare clearly whether you want your piece, if published, to be anonymous, attributed to your full name or to appear with first name or initials.

Items for the next edition of the newsletter should be forwarded by

29th January 2010.

Items can be emailed to Karen Roberts in Warrnambool at kroberts@aspire.org.au or submitted in writing.



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ASPIRATIONS

The official newsletter of Aspire, A Pathway to Mental Health Inc.

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From the CEO's desk...

Welcome to the Spring edition of Aspirations and last newsletter for 2009. were outstanding contributions from artists associated with Aspire.

It has certainly been a busy year for everyone at Aspire. Colleen very kindly wrote an article for the September issue as I was on leave. As well as art shows, many have taken part in camps, conferences and various skill building groups. In mid 2009 we had all our State funding confirmed for a further three years; this allows us to plan our future. Staff have all been committed to service provision and have celebrated the many achievements of participants and carers.

Both were very successful and it was very pleasing to see so many familiar faces at each event. In their spare time, we have been working towards accreditation. We are hoping to successfully complete accreditation in early 2010.

2009 has had many highlights with numerous activities on both sides of the Tasman. In Victoria the 3rd Annual Ruth Ball Memorial Art Exhibition was held mid year with art contributions from participants, carers, kids and community friends. You will all have received local newsletters to let you know what activities are planned in your area over December and January.

Held at the Warrnambool Art Gallery, the exhibition attracted a great many visitors. This time of the year is traditionally quiet with many people on holiday. The offices will be open on all days except public holidays and staff will be available right through the holiday season.

In Tasmania, art was also a focus of much activity, particularly an exhibition of work by Stuart, a Hobart participant and artist for our Annual Report cover. With Summer just around the corner it is worth mentioning that on total fire ban days and extremely hot days, some activities will be cancelled or moved to an alternative

In September, there were two exhibitions of work as part of the Mental Health Week launch and art exhibition in Launceston. Again there

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Feedback

Aspire welcomes any feedback on our newsletter and/or services. All comments, both positive or negative, will be welcomed. A Comments Sheet (enclosed) is also available from any Aspire office and all comments submitted are treated confidentially.

Contact Information

Is your address up-to-date? Would you prefer to receive your newsletter via email? If so, please contact Warrnambool Aspire Reception on (03) 5560 3000 or email your details to Karen at kroberts@aspire.org.au

Calendar

ALL ASPIRE OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED OVER THE CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR BREAK ON THE FOLLOWING DAYS:

Friday 25th and Monday 28th December (Offices reopening Tuesday 29th December)
Friday 1st January - New Year's Day (Offices reopening Monday 4th January)

PLEASE CONSULT YOUR LOCAL OFFICE FOR OPENING HOURS OVER THE HOLIDAY PERIOD.

(Continued from page 1)

location.

Every effort will be made to notify you of any changes but just in case it's always a good idea to phone and check arrangements.

In the next edition of Aspirations, I will give details of our many plans for 2010 and beyond. For now I will wish you all a safe and happy festive season and look forward to working with you all in 2010.

Claire Vissenga,
CEO

Tasmanian Annual Review

This year, we held the Aspire Annual Review in Hobart at the Hotel Grand Chancellor. The night was very entertaining with two guest speakers; Martin Harris who spoke about issues for newly arrived refugees to Tasmania, and Gill McGuire who spoke about her own personal experience of recovery. Both speakers offered a wealth of knowledge to all who attended.

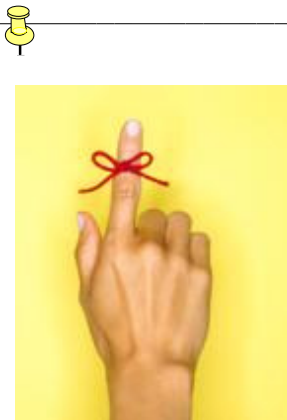
We also had two participants gave a musical performance with singing and guitar.



Above: Dinner after Annual Review.

All Aspire staff send their thoughts and best wishes to you for the festive season.
 May 2010 bring everything you hope for including the best of health and happiness.

All Aspire offices will be closed on the following Public Holidays:
 Friday 25th December 2009
 Monday 28th December 2009
 Friday 1st January 2010



We are now able to email this newsletter to you.

If you would like it emailed could you please email Karen at kroberts@aspire.org.au and let her know so that she can add you to our email distribution list.

Mental Health Week Artwork Exhibition at Camperdown library

As a part of Mental Health Week, I organised a Project for Kindergarten and School aged children. The children were invited to join with other members of the Corangamite School Community in expressing their choice of topic through artwork or essay. The project was called Freedom of Expression - Beyond the Square. The questions asked were to encourage children to think differently.

What does happy look like? What shape is a wish? What does a cloud sound like? What colour is your favorite song? What does inspiration taste like?

The response from three local kindergartens was wonderful. We received 104 beautiful artworks with the children's interpretations of What does Happy look like? Local artist Helen Mc Mahon judged the artworks, thirteen gifts in all were allocated for imagination, expression and creativity. Each child was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation. The Artworks were displayed at the local library, with many lovely comments from members of the public. The project outcome was positive with health promotion in four groups of Kindergarten children and Year 5/6 about Mental health and well being. I very much enjoyed the opportunity of interacting with the children.

Megan Harris,

Rehabilitation & Support Worker, Warrnambool/Camperdown.

STAR beat Choir

Those who attended Aspire's AGM this year, live or via video conference, would surely agree that the performance of the STAR beat Choir was an absolute highlight. The Choir was formed earlier in the year in collaboration with South West Healthcare Psychiatric Services in Warrnambool and is a partnership of staff, consumers, family and friends from the local mental health services.

We have had three public performances so far (including a very well attended Mental Health Week function held in Warrnambool in October, where tears of joy were flowing from various agency staff who loved seeing the participants shine) and have bookings into mid next year.

It has been an enormous joy for me to watch the choir participants form friendships and find their voices. Where as five months ago they would have slid in the back door and sat quietly with their heads down, they now stroll in confidently greeting everyone as they take their seats.

After choir practice one afternoon we were joined by another gentleman, who has quite advanced dementia and speaks very little. As I pulled onto the highway humming 'Waltzing Matilda', he joined me by belting out all five verses of the song word for word. Fortunately I had done my advanced driver training, otherwise the wonderful shock of hearing his voice may have caused me to collect a couple of the parked cars along the side of the road.

I have done many things in my life, but participating in this group and getting to know all of the amazing people who make up the choir is an absolute highlight. Watch this space, bright lights and big city here we come.

Tanya Taylor,

Volunteer Coordinator South West.

Flinders Island Visit 15th & 16th October 2009

The intention of my visit to Flinders Island was to promote the Sage Hill Family and Friends Service at the Flinders Island Show and to meet with local health care providers.

I flew into Flinders Island on a 16 seat plane which afforded me a great aerial view of Northern Tasmania, Bass Straight and the Furneaux Islands. The airport is located in Whitemark and upon landing I was welcomed by the organiser of the Flinders Island Show and the Lions club Secretary, Lois. Lois was cuddling an orphaned baby wombat, which was just the cutest thing I have ever seen. Needless to say Lois and I hit it off straight away and this was not the last furry animal to be seen over my two day visit.

The Flinders Island Show, held in Whitemark on Friday 16th October was organised by the Lions Club of Flinders Island and is an annual event providing the opportunity for services to promote, network and meet the local people. The Sage Hill Family and Friends Service stall was located in the exhibition pavilion along with the Independent Living Centre Tasmania, Relationships Australia and various trade stands.

As well as promoting the Sage Hill Family and Friends Service at the show, my visit to the island also included a visit to the Flinders Island Multi Health Centre where I met with Health Care Staff.

I did get an opportunity to do some sight-seeing, visiting the famed All-Points Beach and Lady Barron Cape, both very beautiful scenic spots and great places to breathe in the fresh island air and relax. I really enjoyed my visit to the Island and future visits will be dependent on need.

Kath Jury

Carer Support Worker

Sage Hill Family & Friends Service, Tasmania



Above: The beautiful scenery and Flinders Island.



Above: The 16 seat plane that I flew to Flinders Island on.



Above: the Flinders Island Show exhibition pavilion.

Aspire Annual General Meeting 2009

Aspire's 18th Annual General Meeting was held on the evening of Thursday 15th October 2009. A new venue was sourced for the meeting this year, using the new and modern conference facilities at South West TAFE, Warrnambool campus.

The evening went smoothly and was well attended, with 75 people attending in Warrnambool and via video-conferencing in the Aspire Launceston and Hobart offices.

Claire Vissenga, Aspire CEO, opened the meeting by welcoming all and introducing the excellent Star Beat Choir (*Ed - see separate article on Page 11*) who gave a rousing performance to a very appreciative audience.

Once the applause died down, the official part of the evening began with presentation of reports and the Committee of Management elections. New member, Jason Parker from Launceston was welcomed on board.

Next item on the agenda was the Victorian Aspire Mental Health Awards. This year Mr John O'Neill, CEO Portland & District Health Services won the Professional Excellence in Family Service Award; and joint winners of the Susan Tonks Community Service Award were Cindy Jenkinson-Clarke and Helen Durant, both from the BRICKS Program (Building Resilience in Corangamite Kids).

Claire Vissenga then presented two highly anticipated staff awards to Rhonda Gee-Mackrill, Acting Senior Rehab & Support Worker, Launceston office for Excellence in Service Provision; and Karen Roberts, Administration Officer in Warrnambool for Excellence in Contribution to the Organisation. Both winners were present at the meeting and were overwhelmed by the accolades. Finally, Cath Murphy, writer and director of the award winning short film *Marti's Party*, performed her duties as guest speaker before everyone adjourned to the foyer for supper.



Above: Aspire staff with Cath Murphy, guest speaker at the AGM.



Above: AGM audience.



Left: Paula Cook Committee of Management President at the AGM.



Above: STAR beat Choir performing at the AGM.

Victorian Roundup

Regional Victoria Camp

YMCA CAMP Bacchus Marsh 11-13 November 2009

We all left for camp on the 11th November 2009. Not fully knowing what to expect, excitement was in the air. We all crammed into the Tarago like sardines. It was a stifling hot day.

Upon our arrival at camp, we were greeted by Gus and the gang of leaders. We were debriefed on rules and expectations of the camp. After that we chose our rooms.

We were then taken on a guided tour of the camp grounds. I was so pleased when I heard there was a swimming pool.

First activity of the day was archery - a number of us had never tried archery before, including myself. Archery was really fun. During archery a fruit platter was brought to us - delicious!

Some of us went mountain bike riding, whilst the others stayed and did archery. I was a bit disappointed when I fell off the bike because it wasn't even moving. By the end of the bike ride we were wanting to go for a swim, it was so hot. The swim was well worth the wait. It was awesome.

For dinner we had spaghetti bolognese or carbonara, with garlic bread. Wacko. It was scrumptious!

Later that night we heard the story about fuzzies and then went and made fuzzy bags and did some journaling. After 9pm we were free to do what we wanted, so once again I headed to the pool for a swim.

After swimming I went for a hit of tennis. I finally got into bed totally exhausted and bombed out for the night.

Next day we were awoken early for breakfast. We had pancakes with maple syrup, toast, cereal and fruit juice.

After breakfast we went to the low ropes. It was great to see everyone giving it a go. We then went on a giant see-saw - we had to keep it balanced evenly for 30 seconds. Not for lack of trying, we weren't very successful. We then went for a salad roll for lunch.

After lunch, we all went for a summer challenge which consisted of two groups, making a raft from six logs, eight ropes and four drums.

It was good to see everyone in the team working together to strive towards the same goal. Once the two rafts were completed they were launched and the two teams raced to the buoy and back again. The team that I was in won. Later some of us relaxed in the dam and then did some canoeing. I loved canoeing, it was so relaxing gliding on the water and watching the ducks.



Above: Archery - aim at the target, just let the string go and hope for the best.



Above: Balancing on the see-saw is not an easy task but it was lots of fun.



Above: Working as a team to complete a task and supporting each other and helping them through the task.

Tasmanian Roundup

Tasmanian Team Building in Hobart

Early in the morning on 20th November the Tasmanian Aspire staff gathered for a Team Building activity. We broke up into smaller teams and took part in an "Amazing Race" inspired event - although unlike the show teams, we were judged on how well they worked as a team rather than how fast they got through the activities. The various challenges teams undertook on their journey to a secret end point required a variety of skills and uncovered some hidden talents that staff possessed such as Lynnette Kerrison being a "secret code busting" extraordinaire!!!

At the end teams made their way to ZooDoo animal park where we had a BBQ and tried to enjoy ourselves although hot dry winds and red dust put a bit of a dampener to the day.



Left and right: Staff members participating in the team building day..



Mental Health Week Expo — Hobart

On Friday 9th October 2009, the Hobart Tasmanian Botanical Gardens was once again the location of the Mental Health Week Expo. At the expo we saw a wide variety of services take part and this year's focus was on getting information out there for young people.

There were lots of great activities and events happening throughout the day including a Battle of the Bands. Bus loads of children and young people from the various schools around Hobart made their way around the stalls.

The Aspire stall hosted a "mystery items guessing game" which got people using their various senses (sight, hearing, touch and smell) to try and guess the contents of various boxes. The activity was very popular across all age groups. Once people finished the activity we handed them a little sheet with information about how they might like to use their senses to boost their mental health.

Aspire also took part in a "Cushioning Your Mental Health" design a cushion competition. Participants and workers worked together to stitch Patricia Deegan's Recovery Flower onto a cushion and decorated it beautifully.

The cushion received a notable mention from the judges and has taken pride of place on the waiting area lounge of the Hobart office.

Tasmanian Roundup

Photo Voice

In July, a group of budding photographers formed at the Hobart office with participants, staff and some photography students from the University of Tasmania. We met each fortnight and spent the afternoon learning some simple but effective photography skills including composition and digital editing. The theme was based around recovery and what that means for each person which created some interesting discussion around how to actually express this in an image - what were we trying to express? How could we convey this message?

Over seven sessions, we took photos around Richmond, local parks, the inner city, listened to students explain their experience of photography and also looked at how digital editing can be used to enhance images, with some participants looking to continue with photography next year and one exploring course options to study photography in 2010.

The group will be meeting in December to talk about what they may want to do with the images - some of the ideas are to create an exhibition or to make a series of framed prints to present on loan to local cafes as a way of getting the recovery message out to the general public. We'll keep you posted!



Above: Cemetery image is themed on renewal.



Above: (Left to right), Aspire worker (Megan) UTas student (Amelia) and participant (Bek).



Above: Black and white is about hope.

WELCOME Michele . . .

Hi all, my name is Michele Hawkins and I am one of the new staff employed at the Burnie Aspire office. I was born in Tas and I lived on 3 continents and spoke 4 languages before I was 7. I love all kinds of music including stage and theatre and have very bravely had a go at performing on stage (and loved it even though I nearly sprained my knees with all the shaking that I was doing). People are one of my passions and I love to create opportunities for others to shine, I love being a part of a community and have a soft spot in my heart for the West Coast. I have three teenagers, two dogs, one cat, two goldfish, one bunny rabbit and a busy life.

Victorian Roundup

Later that day we all suited up into the safety harnesses for the flying fox. What a thrill, it was very exhilarating. What a rush!

For dinner that night we had yummy chicken schnitzels.

That night some of us did journaling and arts and crafts. I showed some how to make origami cranes and iris flowers. Then we had a camp fire and sang some songs.

Once again totally stuffed from the busy day, I fell into the nice comfy bed.

Our last breakfast was bacon and eggs, cereal, toast and fruit juice.

After breakfast we headed to the high ropes. We put on the harnesses and I was the first to volunteer to go up. I was scared, but once I got up there I was fine. Whilst I was up there I was awestruck by the view. There were three high rope activities to complete. I tried all three challenges. Coming down off the third challenge I had the attitude that if I could do high ropes I could do anything in life.

Later that day we went to the giant swing. Whilst a person was hooked up to a rope via their harness the other participants pulled them to the top, then you had to pull a red cord to release yourself.

It was awesome, I enjoyed the cool breeze up there and the view.

For lunch we had chicken wraps. Later on we had an award ceremony. I got the All Star Award for doing all the challenges and doing well in the challenges and activities.

Other things we did at camp was kicking the footy, water volleyball and tennis. We also participated in activities that boosted self confidence and putting trust in others.

Overall the camp was awesome and I had an enormous growth in confidence, self worth, to trust others and to believe in myself.

The camp leaders should be commended because they were really good, kind, supportive and encouraging. It was a really good group of people who went to camp. Everyone was supportive to each other and encouraged one another on all the activities. Good friendships were made.

I recommend people to go on the YMCA Camp because it is awesome fun and good for self growth, which will assist in their recovery journey.

Ellie Roseburgh



Above: working together to complete a task.



Above: Completing a high rope task it's a long way up.



Above: Our accommodation while at the camp.



Above: Some of the high rope activities from a distance

Aspire Noticeboard



WELCOME Kerrie . . .

I started work at Aspire last month as a Rehabilitation and Support staff member in the Warrnambool / Camperdown team. I have just completed the Diploma of Community Welfare Work at South West Institute of Tafe.

I decided to return to study as a mature age person in order to change my career and take on a new direction in life as I felt it was now my time. I have completed the personal goals I set for myself in study and feel I am now ready for the next step.

Whilst I was studying I worked casual for MIND Australia in the PHaMs program in Warrnambool.

I'm thrilled to be a part of the team at Aspire and look forward to learning the ropes and meeting everybody!



WELCOME Katrina . . .

Hi everybody my name is Katrina Wickham. I am employed as the Project Officer, based in the Hobart office. My role is to manage the preparation across Aspire for accreditation in April 2010. I also have some responsibility to develop a vocational education project for the remainder of next year, after accreditation has occurred.

My background is in the Disability and Aged Care sector and more recently in vocational education working with community services students across Tasmania. I have an Arts degree in Public Policy and Sociology and have just recently (October) completed a degree in vocational education for adults.

I live in Moonah and have a cat called Maggie. Cheers Katrina



WELCOME Paula . . .

I am Paula O'Grady and have just completed the Diploma of Community Welfare at TAFE over the last 3 years. As well as studying I have worked at an employment agency and MIND – Purro Gunya program. I am looking forward to developing my skills and experience in working with everyone involved with Aspire in the Warrnambool/Camperdown offices. Prior to this I was a Painter and Decorator for 15 years and I enjoy doing art and craft activities.



Aspire Noticeboard



WELCOME Annie . . .

I am Annie Hughes. I have a background in Education and Social Work and I have been practicing as a Social Worker in the Launceston area for over 20 years.

My experience in the community sector is varied and includes working with homeless youth, at risk children and youth, students, sexual assault victims, families and professionals.

My roles have been various - counselor, community educator, mediator, advocate, facilitator, supervisor, consultant, project officer, policy and research evaluator.

In my continuing education I have acquired extra knowledge and experience in interpersonal skills, conflict resolution, mediation, youth issues, alcohol and drug issues, homelessness, poverty, health, mental health, sexual assault, domestic violence and other power issues and parenting skills. I have also had specific training in models such as strengths perspective, narrative therapy, motivational interviewing, suicide prevention and crisis intervention. Most recently I have undertaken training in the Boston Model.

I am passionate about social justice issues and early intervention and access to resources that make a positive difference in the lives of individuals and communities.



WELCOME WAYNE FROST . . .

My name is Wayne Frost and I've just started as the Area Coordinator North/Northwest Tasmania. Previously I worked with Mental Health Services in Launceston, both with the Adult Community Team, and Forensic Mental Health Services. I am a Social Worker and have trained, worked and lived in the Launceston area most of my life.

I'm very excited about the opportunity to work with Aspire as I've seen the achievements made by staff and participants with this service. As time passes I hope I will have the opportunity to meet many of you who are involved with us.

Regards, Wayne Frost.

