



Co-operative Newsletter

January 2008

Welcome to the Co-operative Newsletter for 2008. For those who have read it before you will notice that it has a new look, simpler format. This is to enable the Newsletter to be placed on our website and downloaded easily by people wishing to read it.

Whilst the Newsletter currently goes out to all Co-operative members, our community supporters and local services, it is important that as wide an audience becomes aware of our activities and has access to the information and resources that the newsletter and the Co-operative can provide. Many families now search for information through the web and new families have contacted the Co-operative seeking advice and information via this medium.

The Newsletter will continue to be sent out to people in paper format to ensure those that do not have access to the internet are not disadvantaged. Hopefully the new format will continue to provide people with the information they need, and be copied and sent onto other families that may benefit from reading it.

The newsletter can be found on our website www.fip.org.au under the News page.

Happy Reading

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Group Homes in Camden

Over the past months the Co-operative has been involved in raising the community's awareness for the need of group homes for people who have a disability, by providing both articles to the local press of positive outcomes for people who have a disability and their families, and in responding to comments made by the papers and community members.

The Co-operative is supportive of the provision of supported accommodation for people who have a disability in the Macarthur region. The Co-operative is represented on an Advisory Group established by DADHC to ensure the process for the establishment, opening and ongoing management of the new homes in Macarthur proceeds and address the needs of all sections of the community.

Members of the community are encouraged to contact the Co-operative to discuss any concerns they have with the proposed group homes and to continue having conversations on the issue. Through ongoing collaboration and understanding the whole community can embrace the concept of group homes and the ability of people who have a disability to live within the community.

The following is a media release put out by DADH on the 11th January 2008.

Homes for intellectually disabled people in the Camden area

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) says group homes are a common part of residential communities across New South Wales.

The Deputy Director General, Accommodation and Direct Services, Ethel McAlpine, said the department had almost 100 group homes and respite services for people with a disability in the South Western Sydney area.

“Most, if not all, have operated for more than 10 years and live in harmony with their neighbours and the local community.”

Ms McAlpine said that DADHC worked very hard at being a good neighbour in the community by ensuring that it abided by the usual neighbourly courtesies, such as keeping noise to a minimum and making sure that the house was well presented and that visiting vehicles did not cause inconvenience or obstruction.

She said that six new group homes, such as those being established at Ellis Lane, Grasmere, Theresa Park, Catherine Fields, Cobbitty and Kentlyn, would provide accommodation in a group setting for between four and six people with an intellectual disability.

“Thirteen such homes are already operating in the Campbelltown and Camden areas. The facilities will be very similar to any other home in the street. Each resident will have their own room and will be supported in their daily life around the clock by qualified residential staff.

“Claims by a small number of people who continue to oppose group homes that neighbours experience constant problems of noise, visits by the police and being in fear in their own yards do not reflect the actual situation.

“The fact is there have been very few incidents such as those described.

“The five people who will be living in the new group home at Cobbitty have an intellectual disability and have been living together at another location for many years. They are in an older age group and now, like many people of similar ages, they are seeking a lifestyle change.

“People with intellectual disabilities have a lot to offer local communities. Their desires are no different to other Australians and should be respected, because they have the same rights and privileges as all other citizens, including the right to live in a community.”

Ms Mc Alpine said that for the government to deny these people the right to live at a certain location would be to abrogate its responsibility to them and also would be discriminatory.

Source www.dadhc.nsw.gov.au

Carers Action Plan for SWS Area Health Service

The Co-operative is involved in the preparation of this important document for the local Area Health Service that aims to develop the capacity of all clinical services and Health facilities to better meet the needs of Carers – A Carer Friendly Model of Care for Health

Over the past three months a Co-operative family member and its Co-ordinator have been meeting with other carers and Health staff to formulate a draft plan that will then go out for community consultation, with final signing off by the Department of Health in April 2008.

The Carers Plan focus on the five priorities established in the NSW Carers Action Plan. These priorities are considered to be fundamental to improving the quality of life for carers and the people they care for:

1. Carers are recognised, respected and valued
2. Hidden carers are identified and supported
3. Services for Carers and the people they care for are improved
4. Carers are partners in Care
5. Carers are supported in combining caring and work

It will be important that the Carers Plan becomes a “living document” that is central to how local health services are delivered and how carers and the people they care for are treated. The Co-operative will continue its involvement and advocacy for the needs of carers and people who have a disability.

The NSW Carers Action plan can be found at www.health.nsw.gov

Advocacy Workshops

Parents and other family members of a child, young person or adult who has a disability need to be an advocate as part of their caring role. This has been highlighted through discussions with families who have been “through the system” and want a better deal for people who have a disability.

Presented by Families in Partnership Co-operative in conjunction with MDS Training Centre and Equalis, the Advocacy Workshops are designed to give people

- a basic understanding of the role of being an advocate,
- strategies and resources to become a successful advocate, and
- skills in communication and dealing with difficult situations.

The Workshops are ideal for people who have not seen themselves as an advocate before and have not done any training, through to those who would like to revisit the role of being an advocate or refresh their existing skills.

Workshop Details

Workshop 1. Introduction to Advocacy Skills	26 th and 27 th March 2008 10 am to 2.30 pm each day
Workshop 2. Advocacy Revisited	2 nd and 3 rd April 2008 10 am to 2.30 pm each day

Venue

Workshops will be held at the MDS TRAINING CENTRE in Queen St Campbelltown. Refreshments including lunch will be provided along with a workbook and handouts.

Cost

All Workshops are provided **FREE** to local families/carers of people who have a disability, through sponsorship by the Families in Partnership Co-operative.

Accredited Training

People attending the workshops can gain accreditation at two levels

Statement of Attainment includes a short assessment process, which when completed will give you a Nationally Accredited Certificate, able to be used in any other training you may wish to undertake.

Certificate of Attendance provided to people who attend either of the two workshops.

Come to an Information Session

Find out more about the opportunity to be involved in these Workshops by attending an Information Session.

Date Thursday 14th February 2008

Time 10 am to 11.30 am Refreshments available

Venue MDS Ltd Level 8 /138 Queen St Campbelltown, located near Mawson Park
Parking at Campbelltown RSL Club

Autism Support

Families in Macarthur are able to join a family led **Support Group** that meets every second Saturday afternoon from 4 to 6 pm in Narellan Vale. Aimed at providing an opportunity for families to meet other families and for children to play in a safe and friendly environment, the support group is slowly growing in numbers. It is held in one of the group's home which is set up to provide Family Day Care during the week.

People can find out more information and dates when the group meets by ringing Bianca on 0432 320 189.

Bianca was the focus of a story run in The Macarthur Advertiser lobbying for the provision of a specialised Preschool in the Macarthur region for children on the Autism Spectrum. As part of the Federal Government's election pledges a number of these preschools are to be rolled out across Australia along with a \$190 million package of other support over a five year period.

The Co-operative has written to our two Federal members of Parliament supporting the location of a preschool in Macarthur and the opportunity to meet with our family members to discussion the Federal's Government's planned course of action.

Details of the proposals can be found at www.facsia.gov.au

Building Foundations Autism: Your Child Your Family is a publication and DVD recently released by Autism Spectrum Australia to provide information about autism to families and to the people who work with their children. It is a great resource for families who may have recently been given a diagnosis that their child has an Autism Spectrum Disorder, and for services that are and should be working with these children.

Funded through DADHC you can obtain a copy for \$9.95 by contacting the Aspect's Autism information Line on 8977 8377 www.aspect.org.au

Expanded UWS program improves educational opportunities for people with disabilities

People with disabilities in the Greater Western Sydney region who want to go to university, undertake a course at TAFE or pursue an apprenticeship and then move into the workforce will now have extra help with the expansion of a federally-funded program hosted by the University of Western Sydney.

UWS has been granted \$1.3 million by the new Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to establish and run the National Disability

Coordination Officer (NDCO) Program in Western Sydney, for three and half years. The university was one of two organisations to be granted funding for three service regions.

Tatiana Lozano, the Acting Director of Equity and Diversity at UWS, says she was delighted that UWS has been chosen to expand this program.

"People with disabilities have to negotiate many obstacles to access post- school education, training and employment and this program presents a great opportunity for UWS to engage with the community of Western Sydney and provide greater opportunities for people with disabilities," she says.

The national program will have a total of 31 officers around Australia whose mission will be to enhance education, training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. UWS will employ a National Disability Coordination Officer in three service regions across Western Sydney to provide transition support for people with disabilities entering tertiary education and employment.

UWS has been actively involved in improving educational access for people with disabilities through its Regional Disability Liaison Officer initiative which has been in place for the past twelve years.

Recent projects by the Regional Disability Liaison Officer have included the production of an Education to Employment Package and the development of an accessible "Get Ready for Uni" website www.uws.edu.au/rdlo/getready. This site provides a wealth of useful information and advice to students with disabilities who are planning to go to university.

More information about the NDCO Program can be obtained from the UWS Equity and Diversity Unit on 4570 1460

Source: UWS Email news alert

Ageing parent and Carers

Under the Bilateral Agreement between the Commonwealth and the States, DADHC has developed four initiatives specifically targeting the needs of older parent carers and their families. The Respite for Aging parent carers program has four components aimed at providing additional respite and access to services for ageing parent carers of people who have a disability.

Flexible Respite Packages – to provide flexible and responsive service delivery in line with the needs of individuals and older parent carers. A range of respite service types are provided to ensure flexible, meaningful and positive activities and experience for individuals with a disability in respite care and breaks for ageing parent carers. A funding package of \$7,500 is provided; a package is equivalent to one week's support.

A total of 791 packages provided across the state with an additional 903 in the next two years. Sunnyfields, Interchange Wingecarribee and House with No Steps received packages for the South West Sydney region

Flexible Day Options – to provide meaningful activities, community inclusion and skill development opportunities for mature adults with a disability who are cared for by older parent carers. Provides for regular respite for these carers at times that suit them.

125 new places provided across NSW – places provided through Interchange Wingecarribee for Wollondilly and Wingecarribee areas.

Centre based Respite – planned short term breaks in line with the needs of individuals and older parent carers. This service is where a person generally stays for more than one day in a respite centre. Nine services were given a direct (funding) allocation to enhance centre based respite capacity – Interchange Wingecarribee received funding in South West Sydney.

Support Co-ordination Program – aims to provide case management, carer’s assistance packages, assistance with building and maintaining formal and informal supports and future planning for the needs of their adult child.

Nineteen new services provided with funding – Anglicare who operates the Commonwealth Carers Respite Centre received funding for South West Sydney.

Source www.dadhc.nsw.gov.au

Co-operative News

The **Website** of the Co-operative has been running for some months now and appears to be receiving a number of ‘hits’ from people seeking information on the Co-operative and access to the links, fact sheets and other information provided.

The Aspergers page is very popular with the support group membership now over 100 families with new members joining each month. Whilst they all do not come along to meetings, they are able to remain in contact with other families through email alerts and a monthly news letter. The Co-operative has sponsored four families to attend the workshops being facilitated by ASPIE and featuring Tony Attwood, a world expert on Aspergers and Autism www.aspie.org.au www.tonyattwood.com.au

Formal **membership** of the Co-operative has grown to over 50 families and professionals with nearly 100 members being part of the Co-operative at one stage or another since its formal formation in 2000. Many more families and individuals have benefited from the services of the Co-operative showing the high regard it holds within the Macarthur region.

The **Board of the Co-operative** meets six times a year to undertake the governance role for the Co-operative. Monica Doran, a family member of the Co-operative has joined the Board as its tenth Director – thanks Monica for undertaking this role.

Its next meeting is on the 17th February where one of its main tasks will be to develop a plan that will enable the Co-operative to gain **funding to maintain its Community Development Program**. Funding for this program and the employment of the Co-operative’s Coordinator will finish by the end of June this year, if no additional financial support can be gained from the State Government.

The Co-operative will be seeking the support of the four Macarthur Members of Parliament and calls upon all Co-operative members and community supporters to lobby them on behalf of the Co-operative.

Look out for more information on this important issue for the Co-operative in the coming month.

A few sayings to finish with

“We all draw our Rainbow with the Colors we are given” – USA website

Slogans for your own t-shirt (a bit of fun intended on an Aspergers website)

Attractive Nuisance; It's Ok to be different; I'm just like everyone else – only different; You laugh because I'm different I laugh because you are all the same; Different is the new norm.

A child's life is like a piece of paper on which every person leaves a mark – Chinese Proverb