

**Aspergers Syndrome Support Group
for Families in Macarthur**

February 2008 News Sheet

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February's Coffee meeting at Macarthur Square was a noisy, very interactive and informative time. We welcomed two new parents along to the meeting – they have been getting our news sheet etc but they now are people in flesh and blood.

I know both of them found it a good opportunity to make links with other parents and increase their knowledge of aspergers. We all to all keep on learning as something new happens each day.

Good to hear kids have made it back to school with some really positive stories being told about their success. It is important that we remember to acknowledge their achievements, what children and young people can do and the ways that they cope in life.

Two parents made it along on **Thursday night** and both had attended the Advocacy Information session held that day – well done ladies!! We had a good yak, shared information and borrowed some books. Had a look at a well known article called “The Geek Syndrome” – we call it Aspergers Syndrome but many would understand why the article used this name. Copy of article in our library or by goggling it on the web.

March Meetings

- **Second Wednesday's of the month** 12th March 10 am at The Coffee Club Café at Macarthur Square, next to Border Books, downs stairs and outside where all the new coffee shops etc are. The iced coffee seems the go and I will try the scones and cream again.
- **Second Thursday of the month** 13th March 7pm at the Harrington Park Community Centre Fairwater Dr next to the shopping centre. Come along and see what you can gain from listening and talking with other parents or family members.

April Meetings Wednesday 9th Thursday 10th start before the school holidays

Advocacy Workshops for families

A number of parents from our group have taken the opportunity to improve their Advocacy skills by enrolling in the Co-operative's FREE Workshops being run 26th 27th march and the 2nd and 3rd April at the MDS Training Centre in Campbelltown.

Why not join them and learn how you too can become a better advocate for your family and people who you care for. Contact Kylie Georgeson at MDS on 4621 8400 or kylieg@mdsservices.com.au for all the details on how to register.

Books on Aspergers

Sue Larkey's latest email advertises a book and Sue says:

"Teacher Assistants are such an important part of the team to make learning successful for a child with ASD. Over the years many people have asked Anna Tullemans and I for practical strategies, guidance and ideas for teacher assistants. Well finally we have put all our lessons down on paper. I am so excited to announce our new book: 'Teacher Assistants BIG RED BOOK of Ideas' for supporting students.

The book is 75 A4 pages full of lots of practical ideas as well as a section on frequently asked questions. It is just \$45. For more information on the book have a look at my website
Best Wishes Sue Larkey www.suelarkey.com"

Cardinal Rules for Assistants excerpt from "Teacher Assistants Big Red Book of Ideas"

An Assistant Should:

- Work toward the student becoming independent
- Teach the student coping strategies
- Encourage the student to respond to others in the classroom. (Prompt with correct peer group words and suggestions of how to respond)
- Help the student understand the hidden curriculum rules by discussing situations with the student, explaining what other people maybe thinking
- Understand the difference between the day a student is able to do work and keep him on task and the days he can't.
- Encourage the student to be flexible, social and cooperative by explaining the 'whys' and the 'how's' of each situation
- Catch opportunities where the special interest of the student can keep him motivated
- Fade direct support on occasions to allow the student to grow
- Teach the student how to learn

Things to Avoid

With everything that we put into place for our ASD student what we must remember is to not make him dependant on you for all things. Just because we want him to keep up with the class we tend do lots of little things such as

- Get the books out for him
- Find the correct page
- Tidy up his desk

What we are promoting here is dependant behaviour and not teaching him anything of value. When the student is very stressed that's when we can do these things for him.

An assistant should avoid:

- Being the one who rescues the student every time.
- Fostering helplessness (by doing everything for him)

This will help to instill self assurance and self esteem in the student as he learns new concepts and is able to put them into practice by himself.

Sue's Larkey Workshop in Campbelltown 9 am 11th March 2008 - check her website or call on 0433 660 379 for details and register.

The Future of the Families in Partnership Co-operative

People would have received information on the future of the Co-operative who employs me and provides the funds and resources to make this Support Group happen. It would be unfortunate if the Co-operative had to effectively cease operating due to the State Government no longer providing it with funds.

All supporters of the Co-operative and people who feel that it has assisted them in some way are being urged to contact their local Member of Parliament and advocate that the Co-operative received ongoing funding for the services it provides.

It is not about my job but about families having access to a service that can help them in the many different life stages that their family member who has a disability will go through. Such an organisation needs to be supported so it can get on with supporting families and the communities across Macarthur.

Like to show your support? Contact your local MP today and tell them your story and how Families in Partnership has assisted you.

The contact details for the four local State Members of Parliament are listed below. If you are unsure who your member is, contact the Co-operative's office for information.

Mr Geoff Corrigan MP

State Member for Camden

Office Location and Postal Address

66 John Street

Phone 4655 3333 Fax 4655 3325

Camden NSW 2570

Email: camden@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dr Andrew McDonald MP

State Member for Macquarie Fields

Office Location and mailing Address

Shop 18 Carnes Hill Marketplace

Cnr Cowpasture Rd and Kurrajong Rd

Horningsea Park NSW 2171

Phone 9608 8991 Fax 608 0606

Email: macquariefields@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Phil Costa MP

State Member for Wollondilly

Office Location

Shop 1 117 Remembrance Dr

Tahmoor

Postal Address

PO Box 1007

Tahmoor NSW 2573

Phone 4683 2622

Email: wollondilly@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Graham West MP

State Member for Campbelltown

Office Location and Postal address

Suite 2a 263 Queen Street

Campbelltown NSW 2560

Phone 4625 3344

Fax 4626 3640 E-mail: campbelltown@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Social Skills Training

Branches to Learning have advised me that they would run this training if they get enough interest, so I said "let me spread the word".

If you are interested in this type of training for your school aged child or other small group tuition why not contact Michelle McKinnon on 0416 297 755 or email her on michelletmckinnon@bigpond.com

I know many parents have asked about social training a small number of children were able to do the course provided through Aspect Australia last year. Let Branches to Learning know about your interest so we can get things happening in our area.

Challenging Serious Behaviours Collaboratively

Community Links Wollondilly and Brief Therapy Solutions are running a series of workshops aimed at parents who have a child diagnosed with ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, or Conduct Disorder. Learn how parents can be partners in managing behaviour and strategies to reduce outbursts.

Runs in May June 2008 at Narellan Community Health Centre and is FREE.

Contact for more details and to register 4683 3371 or 4647 4550

Found on the Web

A bit of humour to finish with. From a site of a young man Frank Klein who in on the Autism Spectrum. If you can, look up his site and read the disclaimer that goes with this – a real insight into the asprie world I believe

Top Ten things about being Autistic

10. No need to keep your lies straight
9. None of that pesky peer pressure
8. No irritating fluctuations in pitch when you speak
7. No need to wait for bad news to get stressed out about. Why procrastinate?
6. Greatly reduced odds of bad dates when you can't get members of the opposite sex to acknowledge your presence.
5. Ability to hear bad news and not realize you are suppose to be sad. Happy happy joy joy
4. Fewer friends means less Christmas shopping
3. Harder for others to read your face when you are playing poker.
2. If you are ever in a swam of flies, the swatting-at-the-air motion will be second nature,
- 1 You never notice the dirty looks other people are giving you; that would mean looking them in the eye.

Source www.home.att.net/~ascaris1/topten.html

Until next time Bob Lester

4648 1593 or 0400 481 520 or email coordinator@fip.org.au Check out www.fip.org.au