

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

March 2008 News Sheet

This news sheet is provided for information and awareness purposes only. People should make their own enquiries and judgement concerning any service or product contained within. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the FIP Co-operative Board, its members or staff.

March's Coffee meeting at Macarthur Square was well attended with one parent bringing along people from her local neighbourhood who support her, to enable them to find out more on aspergers. I turned up a bit late due to a meeting with the local MP's re the Co-operative's funding and found everyone really connecting with each other and enjoying the sunshine – as well as a few scones and cream.

Two new people came along on **Thursday night**. A parent and grandfather of a girl who has aspergers. Good discussion with other parents and grandparents in attendance, around issues facing this family and how they are coping. It again shows how meeting other families can provide information, ideas and support.

April Meetings

- **Second Wednesday's of the month** 9th April 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.
- **Second Thursday of the month** 10th April 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.

This is the week before school holiday's start

Tony Attwood Workshop

Tony is scheduled to hold another workshop in Sydney on the 18th and 19th June 2008 at the St Marys Band Club, organised by the Blue Mountains Disability Services. Many parents have found Tony's past workshops very beneficial and inspiring – some of the issues he will cover include:

- Strategies to reduce being bullied and teased
- The origins of special interests and constructive strategies
- Challenging behaviours in children and adults with autism
- Issues for teenagers with Aspergers
- Social inclusion for adults on the autism spectrum

Tickets are available now for \$85 per day or \$170 for both days (includes lunch and refreshments) and will go fast I am sure. Phone 4751 5266 to register and pay for your tickets. The Club is a 10 minute walk from St Marys railway station and they have free shuttle bus available if you register with them for this service.

Contact 4751 5266 for more information or on their web site at www.eloura.com.au

Opportunity to hear from Donna Williams 12th May

Donna is an international bestselling autistic author and artist, who will speak to parents and professionals about her life and experiences as an adult with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder). Organised by the

Autism and Aspergers Support Group 2 hour sessions will be held at the Richmond Club in Richmond, at a cost of \$20 per session.

Session 1 - 2pm to 4 pm aimed at an audience of professionals

Session 2 – 7 pm to 9 pm aimed at an audience of parents

For more details and to register contact 0425 380 575 or info@autismsupport.org.au

Donna Williams' web site is www.donnawilliams.net

Autism Spectrum Expo 10th May @ Sydney University

Autism Awareness is a group of parents and professionals who have come together to promote and advocate for autism services. They held a very information Expo at the Macquarie University in 2006 and are holding another one this year. They say:

“The Autism Awareness Expo will feature presentations by some of Australia’s leading professionals and service providers who will take you through the process of diagnosis and discuss effective treatment options.

Explore the exhibition area with stalls on everything from education, therapies, counseling, schools, ABA, books, resources and much more. Many reputable providers will be in attendance with tables of information and will be available to chat to those attending. Book and resource suppliers will also be there on the day.

This year more children will be diagnosed with Autism than AIDS, diabetes and cancer combined. The Expo will be supported by a public media awareness campaign starring some of Australia’s most well known personalities.

Autism Awareness Expo on Saturday 10th May seeks to address these issues and disseminate information to all. **There is no cost to attend - a gold coin donation would be appreciated on the day.”**

More information on the Expo will be sent out in the next news sheet or check their web site on www.autismawareness.com.au

The Future of the Families in Partnership Co-operative

The Co-operative Board who manages the service that employs me has meet with three of the local State Members of Parliament, to seek their support and assistance in obtaining ongoing government funding for the Co-operative.

Whilst they are receptive to our need and the needs of local families, they gave no commitment to funding. They did request further information that the Co-operative will provide – about number of families what we provide services to – and the Co-operative will continue to advocate to them concerning our situation.

A number of families involved with the Support Group have written to their local member giving their support and we thank them for this. If you would like to show your support of the Co-operative please consider writing/emailing your local MP and tell him what you feel about the support you have received through the Co-operative.

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

Again thanks for everyone's support and I will keep you informed of how we progress with obtaining funding.

“A” Teen Camp – 16 to 18 May 2008

Teenagers who help care for a sibling on the autism spectrum can attend a camp being held by Aspect Australia at Stanwell Tops. To find out more information contact Anita freeman from Aspect on 8977 8324 or email afreeman@aspect.org.au

On the Web

www.asperger.net/bookstore is a site where you can read about a number of new books and resources available for purchase. Two I looked at were *Visual Strategies for improving communication* by Linda Hodgdon (she has a good website herself) and *Jay Grows an Alien* by Caroline Levine, a novel about a boy who has aspergers – the book is aimed at 9 to 14 year olds. **May be two books for your local school library to get for teachers and students to read?**

Helping a local Parent

Thanks to all those people who sent in their ideas on schooling for one of the parents in the support group who asked for help with her child. She expressed her thanks and now has information and ideas to go with.

The request for help was circulated through our email lists for a quick response for this parent. Similar action has been taken with other requests and is a way for parents to ask questions of others without the need for a more formal discussion group on the internet.

If you are unable to make it to any of our support group meetings but would like to hear what other parents have to say about an issue you have, please let me know and I will send it around on an email for people to respond to. This includes people without access to the internet. Give me a call with your issue and I will send responses received back through the post.

Message from NSW Ambulance Service – via a family member

We all carry our mobile phones with names & numbers stored in its memory but nobody, other than if we were to be involved in an accident or were taken ill, the people attending us would have our mobile phone but wouldn't know who to call. Yes, there are hundreds of numbers stored but which one is the contact person in case of an emergency?

Hence this "ICE" - **In Case of Emergency** - Campaign.

The concept of "ICE" is catching on quickly. It is a method of contact during emergency situations. As cell phones are carried by the majority of the population, all you need to do is store the number of a contact person or persons who should be contacted during emergency under the name "ICE" - In Case Of Emergency.

The idea was thought up by a paramedic who found that when he went to the scenes of accidents, there were always mobile phones with patients, but they didn't know which number to call. He therefore thought that it would be a good idea if there was a nationally recognized name for this purpose. In an emergency situation, Emergency Service personnel and hospital Staff would be able to quickly contact the right person by simply dialling the number you have stored as "ICE".

It really could save your life, or put a loved one's mind at rest. For more than one contact name simply enter ICE1, ICE2 and ICE3 etc.

Everyone Can Dance

A local girl is organising an event to raise awareness of children in the area with additional needs. She has a brother who was born with cerebral palsy who has inspired her to organise this day of fun activities and entertainment. Families in Partnership is giving her their support and encourages everyone to attend the day.

Watch out for more details about this event planned for **Saturday 17th May** at the Narellan Community Centre Queen St Narellan.

Until next time Bob Lester

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