

Aspergers Syndrome Support Group  
for Families in Macarthur

# September 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.*

## Support Meetings

Pleasing rollup of families at both our meetings in September with a few new faces and a few regulars. This made for a some lively discussion and antidotes on life in an aspergers household.

The ABC show on the *Extreme Male Brain Theory* and aspergers raised a few more theories about aspergers and shows that we still need to learn more about how the brain works and what can cause it not to function correctly. One parent raised the situation of her son walking like a frog with others saying this happened with their child, maybe not a frog but walking on their toes or mimicking another type of walk. Another aspie characteristic or a typical kid characteristic?

Another issue discussed was around children stealing/taking things from others in the house. Do they see items belong to everyone so it is Ok that they keep it in their room, that they do not understand the concept of ownership, a skill/knowledge they need to learn? Even if they do it could be an issue of generalising the knowledge in other situations or with different items.

As usual a number of information sheets were handed out on topics that families have raised or found through other support groups or on the internet. A few library books were returned that enabled them to be circulated to other families. I have purchased a few more and will be showing a DVD at the October Thursday night meeting to see what people think of it – so bring the popcorn along.

## October Meetings

It will be the school holidays (again!!!!) and I know a few of families are going away on holidays – hope the weather in Queensland is “perfect”. However, the support meetings will be held as usual with **children are very welcome to come along**

- **Second Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> October** 10 am at The Coffee Club Café at Macarthur Square, next to Border Books, down stairs and outside where all the new coffee shops etc are. An opportunity to have chat over a cuppa of your choice.
- **Second Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> October** 7pm at the Harrington Park Community Centre Fairwater Dr next to the shopping centre. For those who work or are busy during the day to meet other families and share their experiences and ideas.

## Fishpond

No not a new swimming hole but an online bookshop recommended by one of our families with loads of books on aspergers and related topics – [www.fishpond.com.au](http://www.fishpond.com.au) They seem reasonable priced and they are located in Western Australia, so you are supporting our own economy.

Book titles that caught my eye and interest included:

**Playing it Right** by Rachael Bareket

**The New Story Book** by Carol Gray

**Pretending to be Normal** by Lione Willey

**I am utterly Unique** by Elaine Larson

**Freaks geeks and Aspergers Syndrome a users guides to adolescence** by Luke Jackson – a teenager with aspergers

Your local council library should be able to get any book that you want to read on inter-library loan and are always interested in buying books for their collection that people will read

## Living with Adult Aspies

A single mother of a young man (30 years) who has Aspergers Syndrome, working and living at home would like to talk with other parents in a similar situation or who have an adult son or daughter with aspergers. She has been involved with the aspie world for many years now but would like some support/ideas in coping with her grown up son.

If you would like to make contact with the mother please contact me and I can organise it – it will be by phone only as she does not have email.

In talking with the mother and giving her the information I have on adult aspergers I checked out a few organisations and come up with a few websites that people may be interested in looking at – for those not on the Internet I can provide you with copies of information if you let me know.

[www.aspia.org.au](http://www.aspia.org.au) – for partners of adults with aspergers

[www.faaas.org](http://www.faaas.org) – a US site for Families of Adults Affected by Aspergers Syndrome

[www.co-brass.com](http://www.co-brass.com) – another US site with plenty of links and information across all age groups

[www.jdpsy.org](http://www.jdpsy.org) – Sydney based psychologist what has page on aspergers

## Community Events

With the weather warming up – or supposed to as I am sitting here in my winter jumper – there are a number of community events that families may be interested in attending. Some have a bit of an aspie flavour about them

**Minto Festival** Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> October at the Sarah Redfern Oval. Plenty of free activities and entertainment for all the family from 10 am until 2 pm

**Sydney Model Boat Show** 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> October at the Hubertus Country Club 205 Adams Rd Luddenham \$5 entry kids free 4773 4444

**Sydney Aviation Model and Memorabilia Show** – 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> November at the Bankstown Airport Passenger Terminal – Airport Ave Bankstown. \$5 entry fee with children under 10 \$2.50 and under 5 years free - just the thing for all those plane spotters out there.

E-mail [sydneyaviationmodelshow@live.com](mailto:sydneyaviationmodelshow@live.com)

**Tiny Ted's Picnic** – Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 9.30 am to 12.30 pm at Curry Reserve Camden Valley Way Camden. For the younger ones to help celebrate Children's Week with fun activities and games

## Helping children with Autism

This initiative funded by the Commonwealth Government is slowly – perhaps very very slowly – is being rolled out across Australia. The best benefit to-date is the increased Medicare benefits available to families with children under 12 years for assessment/reassessment and therapy treatments.

A fact sheet is provided on the Co-operative's web site [www.fip.org.au/news](http://www.fip.org.au/news) or by contacting me for a copy. Ensure your local GP knows about this and how you can be properly referred to take advantage of the Medicare Benefits.

## Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) News

Their Autism **Information Line** can be accessed for queries by parents with a child who has a recent diagnosis, adults who suspect they may be on the spectrum, grandparents wanting information and support, and service providers wanting information

Call 8977 8377 or email [infoline@aspect.org.au](mailto:infoline@aspect.org.au)

**Social Clubs** for boys and girls 8-18 years are being established across NSW under funding from the State Government. Information on this new program has been sent out to all families in the Support Group, however to get one happening in the Macarthur region people need to make an application to Aspect as soon as possible. Clubs will only be set up in areas of most need – **that is where parents tell Aspect that they need it**. You can get an application form off the Aspect web site [www.autismspectrum.org.au](http://www.autismspectrum.org.au) or by contacting the Co-operative.

The "**Someone to turn to**" program that offers support for families has extended their service to provide support to people whose main language is other than English. Knowing they can talk to someone in their own language often will make them take that initial step in seeking support. Contact for this service is 8977 8348 or email [astewart@autismspectrum.org.au](mailto:astewart@autismspectrum.org.au)

If you are interested in attending the **Behavioural Intervention Workshops** being run at Penrith on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> October do not delay in applying for a placement. Many families missed out last time as they are very popular. Information is available through Aspect or the Co-operative.

## **Aspergers support group starting up again**

Park House for Children and Families, based in Liverpool previously ran an Aspergers Support Group for families, upon which our group was initially based over 2 years ago. It stopped operating over the past 12-15 months but has been revitalised with the return from maternity leave of Christy Potter the Counselling Psychologist with Park House.

It will meet on Wednesday mornings each school term at Carramar (near Fairfield) with full details available through Christy on 9827 8011 You or someone you know may find this support group easier to get to and will enable more families in SW Sydney to gain support.

I will be inviting Christy to come along to our meetings to tell us about the services of Park House and give us the benefit of her many years of experience.

## **The Perils of Pretending**

The lead item in this month's Link Magazine – a publication that deals with disabilities in Australia – says that people with Autism Spectrum Disorder have common characteristics with communicating being one, but with aspergers it is style rather than the content that often leads to confusion.

The author Leigh Michel said people without ASD – 99% of the population – are able to employ a wide range of non-verbal cues instinctively in social interactions. She said that people with aspergers frequently possess extensive vocabularies and express themselves fluently, but frequently fail in social situations because they over compensate and stare too hard and too long, and make gestures that don't match what they are saying.

Leigh knows from experience that they feel under massive pressure to keep up “pretending” and that can lead to anxiety. Leigh is an adult diagnosed with aspergers and is concerned with the seemingly lack of involvement of adults with ASD on boards and committees of services providing programs and intervention for children with ASD.

## **The Association of Genetic Support of Australasia Inc**

This charitable organisation provides support and information for individuals and families affected by a genetic condition. The Association has a database of over 500 predominately rare genetic conditions and is a good place to start if you or someone you know needs to find out about a genetic disorder.

They can provide peer support and resources to assist families understanding different medical conditions caused through genetics

Telephone 9211 1462

Email [agsa@ozemail.com.au](mailto:agsa@ozemail.com.au)

Website [www.agsa-genticsuport.org.au](http://www.agsa-genticsuport.org.au)

## **Off the web**

A couple of sites that I found interesting and worth a visit when you are surfing the web

[www.neurldiversity.com](http://www.neurldiversity.com) - has a large number of links to research papers and articles on issues like social skills.

[www.awares.org](http://www.awares.org) – a site from Wales in the UK that includes a bulletin board that you can be involved in.

[www.uws.edu.au/ndco/getready](http://www.uws.edu.au/ndco/getready) - for students or people with a disability thinking of going to university.

**Let me know of any sites you found useful and I can include them in future news sheets.**

## **10 Positive Traits of Asperger's Syndrome**

There are aspects of aspergers that you can use to your advantage

1. Focus
2. Unique Global Insights
3. Independent Thinking
4. Internal Motivation
5. Attention to detail
6. Three dimensional thinking

7. Cutting through the smoke screen
8. Logical decision making

9. Different outlook on life
10. Aptitude

Find out more detail at an adult asperger's website [www.ktalk.com.au](http://www.ktalk.com.au)

## **Welfare Rights Centre**

They are a community Legal Centre which specialises in social security law, providing advice and representation on all social security matters, including appeals. It also provides education and training and is active in community development, law reform and lobbying.

You can contact them if you have any concerns with dealing you have with Centrelink either for yourself or a family member.

Phone 1800 226 028 or 9211 5300 Web [www.welfarerights.org.au](http://www.welfarerights.org.au)

### **Four key Welfare Rights tips for avoiding a debt with Centrelink**

1. Inform Centrelink about any changes in your circumstances as soon as possible
2. Keep a record of all contacts with Centrelink including all telephone conversations
3. Talk to Centrelink if you have difficulties understanding you payslips
4. Discuss with Centrelink about the possibility of changing your reporting day to a day after you have received your pay slip

## **A couple of quotes to finish with**

"We each have our own way of living in the world, together we are like a symphony. Some are the melody, some are the rhythm, some are the harmony. It all blends together, we are like a symphony, and each part is crucial. We all contribute to the song of life.".....Sondra Williams

"I know of nobody who is purely Autistic or purely neurotypical. Even God had some Autistic moments, which is why the planets all spin." .....Jerry Newport

## **Until next time Bob Lester**

4648 1593 or 0400 481 520 or email [coordinator@fip.org.au](mailto:coordinator@fip.org.au)

Check out [www.fip.org.au](http://www.fip.org.au) for more information on aspergers and other disability related issues.