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MDAA Newsletter

April 2007

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PO Box 9381
Harris Park
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by coming to the office:
Monday -Friday
9.00am - 5.00pm

40 Albion Street,
Harris Park,
NSW 2150

MDAA CONSUMERS' CONFERENCE 'PLANNING FOR YOUR FUTURE' Friday 27 July 2007, 9 am - 4 pm

This forum is a must for our consumers and members, who often miss out on information about important things they need to know. If you are concerned about your future or your family member's future or if you are a carer who wants to plan ahead, we urge you to come and participate in the workshops and meet our guest speakers:

Looking After your Money Matters (trusts, wills...)

A workshop for people with disability and carers

How to look after yourself (mental health and physical health).

A workshop for Carers, family members and friends

Health Needs; Aids/Equipment and Modifications; Accommodation and Support to Live Independently

(general support and public transport...)

A workshop for everyone.

Admission is free for our consumers, their families and carers.

Guest speakers will be invited. Lunch will be provided.

Call MDAA on 9891 6400 by 7 July 2007 to book a place.

AN EXCITING GLASS PAINTING ART WORKSHOP

Sukejna Elezovic (an experienced art worker) will run a workshop at MDAA on **18 May 2007**. Lunch included.

To book a place see the insert in this newsletter.



MDAA FACES

My name is Gordana Kalanj, a new MDAA individual advocate at Harris Park. My parents are Serbian but I was born in Croatia. I am doing individual advocacy: this means I will work together with people with disability, families, and the community and "stand beside" and support you, so you can make your own decisions and get what you need. I can help you to stand up for your rights, for example, when you have problems with housing, immigration, work, school, and disability services. Here at MDAA we have advocates from different cultures and we use interpreters so we can talk to everyone confidentially and most importantly our service is free. Please feel free to contact me for more information on 9891 6400 or email gordana.kalanj@mdaa.org.au. I look forward to hearing from you soon.



Gordana



MARCH CONSUMER FORUM

We held a very successful Consumer Forum on "What do you know about my culture?" on Friday, 2 March. Over 20 MDAA consumers, members and Committee members, as well as some MDAA workers, attended the forum.

We covered two areas:

1. Celebrating our important holidays

The speakers were MDAA members and volunteers: Nidhi, Hannen and Tony.

Nidhi - Indian culture

Diwali is an important festival celebrated over 4 days in October. The dates vary as they follow the lunar calendar. Diwali is also called the festival of lights and is the most popular festival in India. It celebrates the victory of good over evil. The celebration is commonly done by lighting lamps, visiting relatives, fireworks displays and feasting.

Holi is another popular, playful Hindu spring festival. It is also called the festival of colours, from a legend where an aunt, Holika, died arguing against her brother, the king. On the first day, bonfires are lit or an effigy (a statue) of the goddess of love is also burnt at night in some parts of India. This signifies the burning of Holika as she is supposed to have disturbed the meditation of the God Shiva. On the second day, known as Dhulandi, people spend the day throwing coloured powder and water at each other. During spring when the weather changes, it is believed to cause viral fevers and colds, so the playful throwing of the coloured powders has a medicinal value. The colours are traditionally made of Neem, Kumkum, Haldi, Bilva and other medicinal herbs prescribed by herbal/naturalist doctors. A special drink called thandai is prepared, sometimes containing bhang (Cannabis Sativa). People invite each other to their houses for feasts and celebrations later in the evening.

Hannen - Lebanese Muslim culture

Sunni Muslims are one of the largest religious groups in Lebanon. The special day of **Eid** (feast day) happens at the end of **Ramadan** after fasting from sunrise to sunset for 40 days. Muslims pray 5 times a day.

The mosques play a major role in people's lives, as it is a place of worship. In my community, when people go to the mosques they meet with people they have not seen for a long time. Women wear long clothes and the head scarf as a sign of great respect to Allah and to each other.

Tony - Lebanese Christian culture

Tony focused on some important issues for the Lebanese Maronite community. Like Roman Catholics, Maronites have a strong devotion and celebrate all the festive seasons. Our most important events are Easter and Christmas as well as the Baptism of a child. The family is very important in Lebanese Christian lives as they take care of family members, including people with disability. Extended family plays a major role. 'We like lamb and olives and cheese are very popular', he said.

2. Cross-cultural communication

We also invited Maria Katrivesis, MDAA's Regional Industry Development Worker, to give us tips on how to communicate with people from other cultures, such as:

- . Communicate in plain English.
- . Consider the different ways people communicate in different cultures.
- . Active listening and not interrupting.
- . Clarify that people involved in the communication understood each other, and use interpreter services if needed.

After the forum, we had an enjoyable lunch with food from different cultures.

Vanco Djoneski



Calling young female carers

Do you support a family member with an illness, disability, mental illness or substance abuse problem?

Are you female and aged between 16 and 25?

Would you like to have a day off, to do something that is just about you?

If you answered 'YES' then the Bankstown Women's Health Young Women's Pamper Day could be for you!

What is it? The Young Women's Pamper Day is a day where young women who share similar experiences can have a day off and be cared for and pampered themselves. We are currently asking for feedback from young women to find out what would be most re-vitalising.

What do I do? Grab a survey and send it back along with your details if you are interested in joining us on the day. (if a survey is not available please contact the centre on (02) 9790 1378 and a survey can be emailed or posted to you)

What happens then? All women who enter their details on the survey will be notified of the date when the program is set.

Bankstown Women's Health Young Female Carers Pamper day is fully funded by NSW Health.

Bankstown Women's Health

74 Restwell Street Bankstown
Ph (02) 9790 1378 Fax (02) 9790 1456
www.youngcarersnsw.asn.au

NSW Council for Intellectual Disability



The NSW Council for Intellectual Disability (CID) holds regular forums for people with an intellectual disability.

The forums are a rare opportunity for people with an intellectual disability to discuss important issues affecting their everyday lives.

The forums are both fun and informative.

The information received from these forums feeds into the advocacy work CID undertakes.

Our next forum will be held in Panania. We would like to meet people with an intellectual disability and hear about what they want adult learning programs to be like.

If anyone has any support requirements, or needs directions or any additional information please contact Jane Sorensen, Participation Worker (NSW CID)

NSW CID presents a forum for people with an intellectual disability on: What makes a good adult learning program?

Date: Wednesday 16th May

Time: Arrive 1.15pm

Start 1.30 pm - Finish 4.00 pm

Place Panania Senior Citizens' Centre
77 Anderson Ave Panania

Please note: Participants will be paid \$10.00

RSVP Date: Wednesday 9th May

Phone: 9211 1611

Fax: 9211 2606

Email: jane@nswcid.org.au

WORK & TRAINING OPTIONS FOR CARERS PROJECT

Do you care for an elderly person who is over 65 years of age?

Do you live in South West Sydney or the Nepean Region?

Are you interested in studying/training/learning a course or qualification that may lead to work? or

Are you finding it difficult juggling current work demands with your caring responsibilities?

Australian Home Care may be able to help you. Carers can access respite of up to 15 hours a week to study/train to complete a course or qualification via Australia's Home Carer's two year project. More information: Call Maxine Anderson on 9388 9544. To be eligible you must be caring for a person who is over 65 years old or 50 years if Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

(This project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing)

Sojourn Centre at 32 Albion St, Harris Park 2150, is offering Counselling, Assessments, Psycho-education, Supervision, Court Assessments, Family Therapy/Therapy, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Group Work and other services. Most of services are partly or wholly covered by Medicare. Phone: 9613 0465 Fax: 9613 0508

NSW OMBUDSMAN IN 15 LANGUAGES

If you, or a member of your family, have a disability, you are likely to use at least one community service at some time or other. This could be anything from community transport, respite care, residential services to home care services like home help or meals on wheels.

In a perfect world everything would run smoothly but in real life there may be times when you have a complaint about a community service that you or a family member or friend uses. Generally the first thing to do is to discuss your concerns directly with the service. Sometimes this isn't appropriate, or doesn't solve the problem. If this is the case and you need further help, you can contact the Community Services Division of the NSW Ombudsman's Office on **(02) 9286 1000** or toll free from outside Sydney on **1800 451 524**.

In NSW any community service run by a government department (like DoCS or DADHC), or funded by the government, must abide by certain standards. To make sure this happens the Community Services Division of the NSW Ombudsman can take complaints from members of the public and then decide to investigate **independently**. If their friendly complaints staff can't help you they will try to refer you to someone who can.

Information about the NSW Ombudsman, and the Community Services Division, is available in a range of community language brochures to assist people using community services to know about

their right to complain. Languages included are Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Hindi, Bahasa Indonesia, Italian, Korean, Persian, Russian, Samoan, Serbian, Spanish, Tamil, Turkish and Vietnamese.

To get copies call the Office on (02) 9286 1000. The brochure also explains how to make a complaint, including what information you need to include.

If you have access to the internet you can find out more about the NSW Ombudsman's Office, and what else it can do for you, at www.ombo.nsw.gov.au.

To download a copy of the brochure in your preferred language, click on the bottom right-hand side of the home page.

Anyone can contact the NSW Ombudsman to make a complaint or seek advice about making a complaint. People are welcome to use the interpreter service, an MDAA advocate or other advocate in dealing with the Office. If you are not satisfied with how they handle your complaint - let the Ombudsman know, by asking to speak with someone else in the Office or getting an organisation like MDAA to help.

For more information please contact:

Tracylee Arestides
Community Education Officer, CSD, NSW
Ombudsman, on 0425 208 521

Major Religious Days

MAY

2	Last day of Ridvan Buddha Day (Visakha Puja/ Wesak) **	Baha'i Buddhist
6	Lag B'Omer *	Jewish
17	Ascension of Christ	Christian
23	Declaration of the Bab *	Baha'i
23-24	Shavuot *	Jewish
27	Pentecost	Most Christians
29	Ascension of Baha'u'llah *	Baha'i

JUNE

3	All Saints' Day Trinity Sunday	Orthodox Christian Christian
7	Corpus Christi	Catholic Christian
15	Sacred Heart of Jesus	Catholic Christian
16	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib	Sikh
19	New Church Day	Swedenborgian Christian
29	Feast of Saints Peter & Paul	Christian
30	Guru Purnima ** Asalha Puja Day**	Hindu Buddhist

Note: * Usually begins sunset the day before; ** local customs may vary this date.
Dates and information largely obtained from the Interfaith Calendar (www.interfaithcalendar.org/2007.htm).
Detailed explanations about each holy day can be found on MDAA's website on the Frequently Asked Questions page (www.mdaa.org.au)

Insert 1

Exploring Arts



An Exciting Art Workshop
run by an
Experienced Art Worker

***Everyone can Come along and join
the workshop !!!***

Activity: Glass Painting

(please bring your own clear glass or pot to turn it into a piece of artwork)

Where: MDAA Office
40 Albion Street
Harris Park

When: 18 May 2007
10:00am – 12:00noon
(Lunch included)

Facilitator: Sukejna Elezovic

Sukejna Elezovic was born in Bosnia/Herzegovina. Sukejna is a Textile Engineer and for most of her life she's been working on different kinds of textiles. In the past 15 years she has expanded her talents by including art work in her everyday life, where now she keeps busy by drawing on Silk, Glass, Lamps, Jewellery decoration and other Textiles.

In Germany Sukejna ran many seminars and exhibitions working with groups of women and children. In Sydney she is active in the Bosnian organisation Australian Bosnian Women Culture (ABWC) where she works with women from countries of the former Yugoslavia.

The number of participants is limited.
Please RSVP by Monday, 14 May to Gordana on 9891 6400

Family Assistance Fund: Information for families

What is the Family Assistance Fund?

The Family Assistance Fund provides small amounts of one-off funding (up to \$2,000¹ in 2006) for families to purchase services and equipment to help them care for their child with a disability at home and increase family well-being. Funding can be used to make practical changes at home, provide support for individual family members that is otherwise unavailable, and purchase non-recurrent assistive equipment. The funding helps families to address specific needs and stresses before they become a crisis and to make a difference in the care of the child or young person with a disability.

What can be funded?

Examples of how Family Assistance funding can be used include:

- purchase of assistive equipment to help families care;
- resources to promote play activities and interaction between children/young people in the family and/or their parents;
- recreation activities for both the child with a disability and other children in the family (e.g. a total family outing, assistance to attend holiday activities);
- new resources to support the child or young person through transition stages and to help families manage care changes;
- services to increase parenting skills, communication and improve family routines in the longer term;
- training to improve caring skills;
- counselling or other forms of personal support for family members, including siblings;
- equipment/support to assist the child or family's community involvement and the development of personal support/peer networks;
- modifications to the house and garden to provide a safe, secure environment, or a car modification for transportation; and
- household equipment such as a washing machine or clothes dryer to assist with laundry for children with incontinence or a heater to prevent medical problems for a child with complex health care needs.

To find out more about the Family Assistance Fund ask your case manager or contact your Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care DADHC Regional/Area Office:

Metro North Region

- Western Sydney (02) 9895 8659
- Northern Sydney (02) 9450 7999

Metro South Region

(02) 9334 3700

Western Region

1300 134 450

Northern Region

1300 364 563

Hunter Region

- Newcastle (02) 4908 5200
- Central Coast (02) 4320 4100
- Maitland (02) 4933 6488

Southern Region

- Wollongong (02) 4254 0326
- Nowra (02) 4429 4900
- Batemans Bay (02) 4472 4678
- Bega (02) 6492 3888
- Goulburn (02) 4824 0150
- Queanbeyan (02) 6200 7300
- Cooma (02) 6452 3188

Insert 2