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MDAA Newsletter

June 2007

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You can contact us

by phone:

(02) 9891 6400

or

1800 629 072

by fax:

(02) 9635 5355

by e-mail:

mdaa@mdaa.org.au

Website:

www.mdaa.org.au

by writing:

PO Box 9381
Harris Park
NSW 2150

by coming

to the office:

Monday -Friday
9.00am - 5.00pm

40 Albion Street,
Harris Park,
NSW 2150

TRAINING FOR CONSUMERS, MEMBERS AND CARERS

In 2005, MDAA became a registered training organisation (RTO) so MDAA is now delivering effective, quality training aimed at increasing participants' skills and knowledge in cultural diversity and disability. Among the courses on offer for consumers and carers are:

1. Certificate 1 in Work Preparation (CHC10102)

Through this course you will learn how the workplace operates, the best way to communicate at work and about working in a safe environment. This course is available only to people from NESB with disability. If you are interested in doing this course, please let us know so we can organise a time to suit people who express interest.

2. "Advocate for Consumers" which we plan to organise together with City and Inner West Disability Advocacy (CIWDA) in November 2007, for any consumers who want to learn how to speak up for themselves. You'll learn practical skills to help you become assertive, communicate better and stand up for yourself. Please call Gordana on 9891 6400 or Viji on 9212 2020 as places are limited.

MDAA Consumers' Conference 'Planning for your Future' is on Tuesday 24 July 2007, at Parramatta Town Hall. This forum is a must for our consumers and members. Three workshops are lined up: Looking After your Money Matters; Health Needs, Aids/Equipment and Modifications; Accommodation and Support to Live Independently. For more information call Judith at MDAA on 9891 6400 or visit our website at www.mdaa.org.au

MDAA FACES

My name is Ijatu Jalloh, from West Africa, Sierra Leone. I am the new Community Development Worker for the NSW Network of Women With Disability based at MDAA in Harris Park. I have been in Australia since 2002 with my family. I worked as a nurse before and am currently undertaking training at TAFE and community based centres to improve my language and skills in welfare. This year I am enrolled in Certificate IV in Community Services and doing my job at the same time. People ask me how do I juggle around my activities and work? My answer is just time management. I really like my new job and I know I will enjoy doing it.



Ijatu

CONSUMER FORUM GLASS PAINTING

More than 15 consumers and members got together at Harris Park for the Glass Painting Art workshop organised by MDAA on 18 May.

Sukejna Elezovic (Art Worker) led everyone through the process of turning an ordinary cup or glass into a colourful and expressive piece of craft. Patience and dedication were required but the results left everyone smiling.

Tony Shoushani said "I am going to the hospital to visit Mum – she was a bit sick at the time -and give her the glass I just painted ...she'll be happy".

A family, including dad, mum, son and daughter were all working hard to finish their masterpieces. Everybody smiled and went home with a little something they can be proud of.

As Sukejna Elezovic said: "It was a real pleasure to see the happiness and the sense of satisfaction which you have achieved. Some of you might have thought that you could not do something beautiful for somebody you love, but you have overcome that negative idea and managed to express your love through the drawing and colourfulness of your imagination. Your creativity and talent for art has successfully been demonstrated and for me personally that is the biggest achievement of all, especially when I work with kind and passionate people as yourselves".



KNOWING YOUR RIGHTS FORUM



On 29 June 2007 we held the Consumer Forum “Knowing your Rights”. It was well attended with 35 MDAA consumers, members and committee members. The response and interest of participants were excellent. We covered general questions about disability and discrimination such as: What is disability and discrimination? Indirect and direct discrimination. What are my rights? Who can help me?

The presentation was by Amy McGowan, a project worker from NSW Council for Intellectual Disability. A follow-up session will be organised in the future.

Major Religious Days

JULY

9	Martyrdom of the Bab *	Baha'i
11	St Benedict's Day	Catholic Christian
13	Ulambana / Obon **	Buddhist/Shinto
24	Tisha B'av *	Jewish
25	St. James the Great Day	Christian

AUGUST

1	Lammas	Christian
	Fast in honour of the Holy Mother of Lord Jesus	Orthodox Christian
6	Transfiguration of Christ	Orthodox Christian
11	Lailat al Miraj	Islam
15	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Catholic Christian
	Dormition of the Theotokos	Orthodox Christian
28	Raksha Bandhan **	Hindu
	Lailat al Bara'ah	Islam
29	Beheading of St John the Baptist	Christian

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)

NORTH SYDNEY YOUNG CARERS PROJECT

Who are Young Carers?

Young Carers are people under 26 years of age who provide care for a friend or a family member who is ageing, has a chronic illness, disability, or a mental health disorder.

The Project is aimed at young carers who are studying at school and may be having difficulty managing their studies with their caring responsibilities. The young carer may be missing classes, have no time to complete homework, or be thinking about leaving school.

What is Respite?

Respite is having a break from the responsibility of looking after someone. Respite can assist the person providing care to have some time to study, do homework, see friends.

What assistance is available?

The assistance available is flexible depending on what the young person needs. It can include: organising respite to help young carers have a break from caring, including emergency and planned respite. Information, advice and referrals to other respite options available to young carers. Support such as tutoring to enable young carers to complete their secondary education.

Contact Information:

North Sydney Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre. Tel: 1800 059 059.

This Project is funded by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FACCSIA)

What is the Continence Aids Assistance Scheme?

CAAS is a Commonwealth program offering assistance to people who have permanent and ongoing incontinence as a result of a neurological condition or severe intellectual impairment. The aim of CAAS is to help eligible clients to meet the cost of continence aids. Intouch (a division of PQ Lifestyles Limited) operates CAAS under contract to the Commonwealth Government. CAAS Clients receive a subsidy of up to \$470 per year on continence aids ordered through Intouch.

Changes to the Continence Aids Assistance Scheme Eligibility

The Minister for Ageing, Senator Santoro, recently announced changes to eligibility for the Continence Aids Assistance Scheme (CAAS), to help more people with the cost of purchasing continence aids.

These changes will take effect from 1 July 2007.

Under the new arrangements, eligibility for the CAAS will be open to people aged 5 years and older, removing the previous 16 to 64 age restrictions. The requirement for permanent incontinence as a result of a neurological condition such as paraplegia, multiple sclerosis or spina bifida or intellectual impairment is unchanged.

Eligible CAAS clients must qualify for the Disability Support Pension, Mobility Allowance or be receiving the equivalent Tax Exemption on a vehicle. From 1 July 2007, eligibility for people under the age of 16 years will be based on the parents' entitlement to a Carer Allowance. People who received CAAS but left the scheme after they turned 65 are now eligible to reapply for funding from 1 July 2007. The previous requirement for people over 65 to be in employment will no longer apply.

When returning the CAAS application form you need to include a copy of the applicant's DSP Card or an Acknowledgement letter of eligibility from Centrelink and a copy of the applicant's Birth Extract/Certificate.

If you need further information or assistance contact Intouch on 1300 366 455 or email healthcare@intouchdirect.com.



City and Inner West Disability Advocacy

CIWDA aims to promote, protect and secure the rights and interests of people with disability and their families and carers living in the City and Inner West area. CIWDA is for people who live in the local government areas of Ashfield, Canada Bay, Leichhardt, Marrickville and Sydney City.

CIWDA started in September 2004 with funding from the Commonwealth Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, and is auspiced by the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW (MDAA).

TRAINING FOR CONSUMERS, MEMBERS AND CARERS

A training course "Advocate for Consumers" will be run in November 2007 by MDAA and CIWDA for consumers. See front page of the MDAA newsletter for more details.

CIWDA'S Community Voices Members:



Roger was born in Scotland and came (sailed) to Australia in 1988. Roger was diagnosed with epilepsy from an early age and speaks of this experience from early diagnosis until now. This includes a recent cognitive impairment resulting from anticonvulsant medication side effects. Roger speaks of the restrictions of his condition such as the need to re-adjust career goals and life's pace. Roger also speaks of the lessons learnt from having a disability in a positive sense such as determination in overcoming obstacles, patience, self-advocacy, nurturing of support groups and relationships.

Gale is a mother and primary carer of a young man with autism and learning disabilities. Gale has advocated for her son for the past eighteen years in both the Government and non-Government sectors. In her first community voice presentation, Gale spoke of her experience over time, up until the present day which includes issues about her son's initial diagnosis and the impact of her son having a disability.



Consumer Forums in 2006 and 2007

At CIWDA we have activities and projects for consumers to participate in, such as the Consumer Forums. We invite guest speakers from government and non-government organisations to talk about consumer issues/concerns.

In 2006 CIWDA held two forums. These were:

- In May 2006, Ben Fogarty (Principal Solicitor) from Disability Discrimination Legal Centre spoke to consumers about their rights and what to do if their rights were not being met.
- In September 2006, Ben Fogarty (Principal Solicitor) and Josh Brock (Policy Officer) from Disability Discrimination Legal Centre spoke to consumers and service providers about welfare to work legislation, consumers' rights at work and what to do if your rights are being infringed upon.

In December 2006 CIWDA surveyed consumers about what issues they were interested to learn about in the 2007 consumer forums. Consumers told us they wanted to learn about:

- What disability related services were in their local area
- Self Advocacy skills/strategies

In response to this, CIWDA has organised two consumer forums in 2007. These are:

- * August 2007 'Services within the City and Inner West Area'. For exact date and location, keep posted to the CIWDA website.
- * November 2007 'Advocating for Consumers'. Please see front page of the newsletter for details.

Please check the website for updates on both of these events, or phone CIWDA on 9212 2048 or 9212 2020

CIWDA Consumer shares his passion:

Supported by TAFE Neurological Disabilities Unit & CRS Australia, Roger is currently undertaking a 2 year Advanced Diploma course in Live Production, Theatre and Event Design @ The Design Centre, Enmore. This is part of a re-skilling & rehabilitation schedule. These photos are of the annual fashion design & show production held in May, and they picture Roger & some of his fellow students with their costumes and prop designs. The course involves training in many areas of production - from make-up, prop/set design & construction, lighting, A/V, film/editing, costume design & sewing, choreography, finance/promotion, event management, & "creative" software computer instruction! Roger believes he is making good progress in this sought after course – and is having much fun as seen in the pictures!

