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MDAA AGM 2007

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BEGA new Advocacy Service

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CITY AND INNER WEST DISABILITY (CIWDA) RIGHTS BOOKLET LAUNCH

On 13 September, CIWDA launched a 'Rights and Services Booklet', which outlines the rights of people with disability and some of the services available in Sydney City and the Inner West areas. It was a great event, with a very full schedule. In an hour and a half, 45 consumers and service providers heard from several people about their experiences or the services they provide. Ken Thompson, the manager of IDEAS, talked about disability and related services which his organisation provides by phone and website.

Many thanks to Gayle Murphy for sharing her experiences as a carer of a person with disability. Gayle is part of CIWDA's Community Voices (CV) Program, which trains people with a disability or their families and carers in public speaking so they can inform the wider community about disability and diversity. If you want a CV to come to your organisation, call Luis Moreno, CV Coordinator on 9891 6400.

The enthusiastic audience then heard from Vanessa and Val, from the DADHC Information and Referral Unit, who outlined the many services and strategies employed by governments to assist people with disability. Then Barbel Winter, Executive Director of MDAA, which auspices CIWDA, launched the Rights and Services Booklet.

To top it all, a truly excellent feed was prepared by Viji Dhayanathan, Individual Advocate at MDAA, and the Coles roast chook department.

Many thanks to Susan, Luis, Shu, Hannen, Rachel and Sheron for helping out on the day. Feedback has been good, though we still need you to tell your friends and keep the momentum going. Help us in spreading the word and putting CIWDA out there.

If you would like a copy of the Booklet please contact CIWDA on 9212 2020.

OMBUDSMAN CONSUMER FORUM “HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT”

On 12 October MDAA held a Consumer Forum at Harris Park called “*The right stuff - Tips for making complains*”. Betsy Coombes, a Team leader at the Ombudsman Office, talked about how to complain. The forum was officially opened by MDAA Community Voices Nidhi Shekaran. She welcomed Betsy and 24 consumers and members of MDAA.

For two hours Betsy discussed rights, building a positive relationship with services, complaint processes and resolving problems with other services. The meeting was very informative and all participants were actively involved in

asking questions. During discussion time the participants had a chance to tell their personal experiences, share stories and find out what to do in future.

Consumer Opinion: “The role of the ombudsman's office was explained very well and also the way the presenter involved the whole group in the discussion. It was beneficial for clients to see and feel that they were not the only ones who are in this situation. The speaker was very open and made me feel very welcome. It was a good reminder of disability rights. It would be good to have language brochures.



HUNTER REPORT



Bronwyne Chapman (MDAA Locum Advocate in Newcastle) reports: I have been ongoing locum advocate for the Hunter Region since April of this year. During that time my work has been varied and extremely interesting. I have

done a range of things from networking with other services to attending hearings in the Guardianship Tribunal and advocating in the Children's Court for parents with disabilities whose children have been taken away to live somewhere else. I have attended meetings and done presentations to different groups.

A man with an intellectual disability & a mental illness was refused to contact with his children by his former wife. After several months of trying he was getting frustrated as he could not get legal aid. He felt he was facing a brick wall and was missing his children. We worked with him and explored what is available.

We tried a new service called the Family Relationship Centre (BFRC). We made an appointment to see a counsellor and the man went to a mediation with his ex wife. The outcome was very positive & is he getting support through BFRC.

RACHEL LAZAROV CD

Rachel Lazarov, a member of our Committee was interviewed by the Guide Dogs Association about her experience using hospital services. If you want to learn about how a person with a visual impairment has learnt to deal with doctors, nurses and visitors in a hospital setting call MDAA on 9891 6400 for a free copy of the CD they prepared.

ELECTION FORUM

It's Election time so MDAA is organising an Election Forum in the next 2 weeks. Come and listen to the different parties' plans for people with disability. Get your election questions answered at the forum. Ring Judith on 9891 6400 to confirm your attendance.

BEGA REPORT

We have lift off!

South East Advocacy (SEA) is now based at the Community Living Support Centre at 101-103 Bega Street, Bega (the Meals on Wheels for the Bega Valley Shire). Call Danielle Neves, SEA Individual



Advocate, on (02) 6492 0200 or email sea@mdaa.org.au. Some of the upcoming events SEA will be involved in are:

- The 'Create, Don't Wait' seminar in Merimbula on 24 November, 2007. This is a forum for people with disability and their families to explore opportunities for independent living.
- The 'Who are You?' Road Train will also be hitting Eden, Bega, Merimbula and Bermagui in the first week of December. This will be an opportunity for people with disability, their families and carers to find out more about individual advocacy and advocacy development in the Bega Valley Shire. Venues will be advised in the next newsletter.

AGM 21 NOVEMBER PUT IT ON YOUR DIARY NOW!!!

It's that time of the year again. Annual General meetings are being held everywhere. So what's different about the MDAA AGM? Well if you have been before you know and if you have never been...you'd better find out. When: 21 November 2007 10am to later on with some food and song and dance Where: MDAA office, 40 Albion St, Harris Park. RSVP Now: Call Judith on 9891 6400.



Supporting Young Carers at Risk

The Commonwealth Carers Respite Centres and Department of Family and Community Services (FaCSIA) can help support you in your caring role, while you study and complete your secondary education.

Identifying Young Carers at Risk

Carers may be caring for older people or people with a disability who may be parents or siblings, other family members, friends and neighbours. Respite gives the carer a break from their caring responsibilities especially in the following situations.

- When helping a family member who is sick or older and needs help with daily living activities.
- When a family member has a mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction, and family responsibilities interfere with your schooling and or ability to study effectively.

Accessing respite services

The program is able to support young carers at risk by providing an appropriate and flexible support service. This could include: tutoring, support at home such as domestic assistance, respite care for the young carer's family member, referral to other relevant programs

and identifying future needs for care planning where appropriate.

Note: To be eligible, the young carer, must be a primary or significant carer. The outcomes and type of support provided will depend on the individual needs of the young carer's caring situation. Care may be provided in the home, as an outing or in a residential facility.

How to Contact your local centre?

Commonwealth Carelink and Carer Respite Centres are available Australia wide. To contact your local centre, call the free call number: 1800 059 059.

FREE HOLIDAYS

People with mild disability, their families and carers living in Baulkham Hills and Blacktown LGAs are invited to apply for a Free Weekend Holiday at the Cumberland Retreat at Middle Dural. If you are interested, register for the Information Session on 14 November 2007 by contacting Margaret Ryan, Director of Corporate Relations for Cumberland Industries on 9643 4400, or by emailing margaretr@cumbind.com.au

Major Religious Days

NOVEMBER

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| 1 | All Saints' Day - <i>Christian</i> |
| 2 | All Souls' Day - <i>Catholic Christian</i> |
| 9 | Diwali (Deepevali) /
Bandi Chhor Divas (Diwali) -
<i>Hindu, Sikh</i> |
| 12 | Birth of Baha'u'llah * - <i>Baha'i</i> |
| 15 | Nativity Feast (Winter Lent) -
<i>Orthodox Christian</i> |
| 22 | Thanksgiving - <i>Interfaith</i> |
| 24 | Martyrdom of Guru Tegh
Bahadur Sahib - <i>Sikh</i> |
| 24 | Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Sahib - <i>Sikh</i> |
| 25 | Christ the King - <i>Christian</i> |
| 26 | Day of the Covenant - <i>Baha'i</i> |
| 28 | Ascension of Abdul'I-Baha * - <i>Baha'i</i> |
| 30 | St. Andrew's Day - <i>Christian</i> |

DECEMBER

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| 2 | Sundays of Advent - <i>Christian</i> |
| 5-12 | Hanukkah * - <i>Jewish</i> |
| 8 | Bodhi Day (Rohatsu) ** - <i>Buddhism</i> |
| 8 | Immaculate Conception
of the Virgin Mary - <i>Catholic Christian</i> |
| 9 | Sundays of Advent - <i>Christian</i> |
| 12 | Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe -
<i>Catholic Christian</i> |
| 16 | Sundays of Advent - <i>Christian</i> |
| 20 | Eid al Adha - <i>Islam</i> |
| 21 | Yule - <i>Christian</i> |
| 21 | Feast of St Thomas the Apostle -
<i>Christian</i> |
| 23 | Sundays of Advent - <i>Christian</i> |
| 25 | Christmas * - <i>Christian</i> |
| 25 | Feast of the Nativity -
<i>Orthodox Christian</i> |
| 26 | Zarathosht Diso - <i>Zoroastrian</i> |
| 26 | St Stephen's Day - <i>Christian</i> |
| 28 | Holy Innocents - <i>Anglican Christian</i> |
| 30 | Feast of the Holy Family -
<i>Catholic Christian</i> |
| 31 | Watch Night - <i>Christian</i> |

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)