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MDAA Newsletter

April 2008

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CONSUMERS' FORUM ON HOUSING

On 16 April 2008, MDAA held a Consumer Forum about the new policies of the Department of Housing (DOH). The topics covered were: priority housing eligibility criteria; recent changes to DOH; modifications, and other support products that DOH offer to people with disability.

There were 32 consumers and members who attended the presentation and they had an opportunity to discuss their concerns. Some issues were also raised by MDAA advocates and feedback is expected later from DOH.

The speaker was Mr Rick Farrow, a Housing Client Officer in the Parramatta office. We appreciate his contribution and knowledge in answering the questions. The Forum was followed by an assortment of food some of which were contributed by our Afghani and Filipino consumers. We would like to thank everyone who helped during the forum.



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Multicultural Mental Health Australia (MMHA) has released a number of new mental health resources with a couple of leading agencies. MMHA launched its "What Is..." series of mental health fact sheets in over 20 languages at the recent Diversity In Health Conference in Sydney. The 10 topics cover issues surrounding mental illness, anxiety, bipolar mood disorder, eating disorders, depression, personality disorders, schizophrenia, challenging behaviours and suicide. The fact sheets are available in Amharic, Arabic, Assyrian, Chinese, Croatian, Dari, Dinka, English, Farsi, Greek, Italian, Khmer, Korean, Krio, Macedonian, Polish, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Swahili, Turkish and Vietnamese. The series has also been adapted for people who have a vision impairment. MMHA and Vision Australia, have produced the series into Braille, large print, electronic text for the internet and audio formats such as CD, cassette and DAISY.

MMHA also released a new series of bilingual resources with beyondblue: the national depression initiative are now in Arabic, Assyrian, Bosnian, Khmer, Croatian, Dari, Farsi, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Lao, Macedonian, Polish, Punjabi, Russian, Serbian, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Somalian, Spanish, Tamil, Thai, Turkish and Vietnamese.

The resources include: The Depression Checklist, Understanding Depression, Living and Caring for a Person with Depression, How Can You Help Someone with Depression? Depression and antidepressant medication and Emotional Health During Pregnancy and Early Parenthood. All resources are free and can be ordered directly from the MMHA office on (02) 9840 3333 or downloaded from www.mmha.org.au/mmha-products/fact-sheets

NEWS FROM MDAA-WOLLONGONG

Jim Clabour MDAA Individual Advocate in Illawarra reports: I have worked in collaboration with other ethnic and government services such as the Fernhill Place (SESAHS), the Illawarra Multicultural Mental Health and Disability Network, Northern Community Mental Health Team, Illawarra Ethnic Communities Council during the Mental Health Week in October where we organised a Multicultural Celebration with the theme: "Relationships in the Community". I have also done presentations with two organisations namely the House With No Steps and the Italian Welfare Disability team meeting.

MDAA is located at Illawarra Multicultural Services office at 27 Atchison Street, Wollongong.

NEWS FROM CITY AND INNER WEST DISABILITY ADVOCACY (CIWDA)

Congratulations to **Sophia Kirizcenko**, our Advocate at CIWDA who has completed her Degree in Social work. We are proud of what she has achieved, juggling the heavy, self driven study load whilst excelling thoroughly in her advocacy work at CIWDA



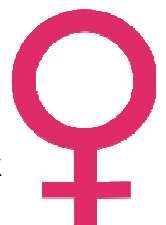
We are currently working with our Community Voices (CV) members. They are planning to do promotion and networking with services so we develop more links. The CV will share their stories and overall contribute to raising awareness on diversity in the community. The current focus for CV members is how to best reach our target audience and promote awareness around how disability affects an individual, their families and loved ones. Please refer to our Community Voices section for Roger and Gayle's profiles.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY "At the back of the line"

Still today women with disability stand at the back of the line. On Saturday the 8th of March, The NSW Network of Women with Disability marched on the streets of Sydney together as a part of the International Women's Day.

As the women rallied Ena Hinde took to the stage to voice the discrimination that women with disability still battle today. Hope and enthusiasm united women to fight for independence and inclusion.

The Women's Network challenges all women to create a world where women with disability are treated as equal to their able bodied sisters.
(Katielee Simpson, NSW Network of Women with Disability)



CONSULTATION WITH THE NEPALESE COMMUNITY

On 29 March 2008 MDAA held a consultation with the Nepalese community workers and other organisations who work with this community. It was MDAA's first attempt to build networks within this community and the aim is to increase our links with the Nepalese community; to raise awareness about disability and the services available in NSW to people with disability.



As a result of our consultation, we agreed that we will need to undertake community education on disability in partnership with Nepalese community workers.

We will organise media promotion and develop a flyer in Nepalese language to be distributed to the community. It is envisaged that this partnership with the

Nepalese workers will continue in the future. We want to thank Gurkha, the Nepalese Community Organisation (GNC) in Marrickville, the St George Migrant Resource Centre, Ethnic Child Care, Family and Community Services (ECCFCS) in Marrickville and TAFE NSW who participated in this consultation.

NEWS FROM SOUTH EAST ADVOCACY (SEA) IN BEGA

“That is What Advocacy is All About”

Catherine Checkley has a vision impairment. In October 2007, Catherine and her mother, Hazel, approached SEA for assistance with an application to the Consumer Trader and Tenancy Tribunal (CTTT) after disputes and bullying from a neighbour had taken a nasty turn. Danielle, Catherine and Hazel worked on an application together. Catherine and Hazel also sought legal advice.

In February 2008, they received the decision of the adjudicator who decided to appoint an independent strata manager and re-consider the demolition of the complex pool, which was an important aspect of Catherine's recreation. We were ecstatic. Their story had finally been heard and *that's what advocacy is all about!*



Case Study

A man with an intellectual disability, who had been targeted by Telstra telemarketers to sign up on a mobile plan which he did not understand. He approached SEA for support.

SEA advocated successfully to have the existing debts waived and worked with this client and two other service providers on a plan to prevent such debts from re-occurring.

Light at the End of the Tunnel

My name is Nidhi Shekaran. My employment experience began 2 years ago when I approached a Disability Employment network provider. My first contact was made with the provider early in 2006. I had an induction process and I got involved in one to one meetings with my employment adviser who helped me prepare my resume and gave me basic interview skills. They gave me advise on cold calling for job applications and marketing myself to prospective employers. As part of my induction process I also had to undertake a job capacity assessment, which determined how my multiple disabilities impacted my work tasks. I was also supported and encouraged through each job application by my employment adviser, which made me confident to write applications on my own. Jobmatch has a support program for finding and applying for the right positions held every Wednesday for two hours, although I prefer to do one on one sessions with my ad-visor as they provide specialised help in accordance with the requirements of the role that you are applying for.



I have finished a graduate diploma in Education (Habilitation) which in simple words means disability work and although I have this qualification on paper I still need work experience. I gained practical experience through my volunteer work with the Australian Red Cross, Vision Australia and MDAA for 2 years in administration which gave me the opportunity to further develop my skills and helped me in finding a job. I am also a member of the Community Voices program at MDAA. Through this program I was trained in public speaking and had shared my story to different communities to help educate and raise awareness about the diversity of the community.

I am now working for a disability service organisation and one of the wonderful things of being with a Disability Employment Network (DEN) provider is that they provide you with ongoing support and on the job training for a certain period of time to help you feel confident and comfortable in your new job. Most DEN service providers will also provide you with the right aids and equipment to make your job easier for you.

My personal feelings of this experience is that it takes you a long time to feel confident when interviewed and being able to judge whether you got the job or not. I also had the fear of disclosing my disability to my employer but it all works out in the end. Never let anybody stop you achieving your dream of job. Always have a positive support network around you and know your strengths and weaknesses and the impact of your disability in your work life. Be honest, positive and be you. Remember there is always a light at the end of the tunnel.

Further information: Jobmatch, 1 Fennell Street, North Parramatta, NSW 2151
PH/TTY: (02) 9890 0970 Fax: (02) 9890 9863 Email: jobmatch@northcott.com.au

Religious and Significant Days

MAY

2	Last Day of Ridvan Yom HaSho'ah *	Baha'i Jewish
11	Pentecost	Christian and Orthodox Christian
20	Buddha Day (Visakha Puja/ Wesak) **	Buddhist
23	Declaration of the Bab *	Baha'i
26	National Sorry Day Australia	
29	Ascension of Baha'u'llah *	Baha'i
31	Lag B'Omer *	Jewish

JUNE

5	Ascension of Christ	Christian
9-10	Shavuot *	Jewish
15-21	Refugee Week	United Nations
16	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev SahibSikh	
16	Day of the African Child	Celebrated across Africa
20	World Refugee Day	United Nations
22	All Saints' Day Orthodox	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/2008.htm).

Detailed explanations about each holy day can be found on MDAA's website on the Frequently Asked Questions page (www.mdaa.org.au)

Forum “Becoming an Australian Citizen”

MDAA is inviting all consumers and members to the Forum “Becoming an Australian Citizen” on 21 May 2008, 10am-12noon at 40 Albion St Harris Park.

Would you like to know more about your RIGHTS?

- Becoming an Australian citizen - What does it mean?
- Dual Citizenship
- Citizenship test – Assistance for people with disability
- Revocation of Citizenship
- Recent changes to Australian citizenship legislation
- Questions and Concerns



For more information and/or to let us know you are coming please call Gordana or Judith on 9891 6400. Lunch will be provided.

Free of Charge



Getting Help With Your Legal Problems When You Are Mentally Unwell

The Mental Health Legal Services [MHLS] Project at the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) started in January 2008.

We are going to pilot a number of new legal services in September 2008.

In preparing for those pilots, we want to hear from people who are or who have been mentally unwell about how to improve your access to justice.

This might include things like finding support when you go to court, what you can do if you are discriminated against and your rights when in a psychiatric hospital. If you want to share your stories with us, come to a consultation on **7 May** at MDAA from 10am to 12noon. Light lunch will be provided.

Here are some questions that will guide our discussions:

- What legal problems have you had?
- Were you able to get help for those problems?
- If not, why not?
- If so, what was good about the help you got?
- If so, what was not so good about the help you got?
- What would make it easier for you to get help for your legal problems in the future?



Please call Judith on 9891 6400 to let us know that you are coming.



FREE MENTAL HEALTH DVDs NOW AVAILABLE FROM NSW VIDEO/DVD STORES

The Mental Health Association (MHA) NSW and beyondblue: the national depression initiative today announced their partnership to place DVDs on depression and other mental illnesses in video/DVD stores. A set of 6 DVDs is available to borrow free of charge from most video/DVD stores throughout NSW, including many Blockbuster, Civic Video and Video Ezy outlets.

The DVDs produced by MonkeySee Productions, cover the following mental health issues:

- 'Me Depressed? Don't Make Me Laugh: Overcoming Depression' – presented by Spike Milligan
- 'Fight or Flight: Overcoming Panic & Agoraphobia'
- 'I Think They Think: Overcoming Shyness & Social Phobia'
- 'Manic Depressive Illness (Bipolar Disorder): A Guide to Living with it'
- 'Living with Schizophrenia'
- 'No More Bets Please! Overcoming Problem Gambling' – presented by HG Nelson

For more information on the DVDs or to find mental health support services in your area call the Mental Health Association NSW on 1300 794 991 or visit www.mentalhealth.asn.au
For information about depression, anxiety and related drug and alcohol problems call the beyondblue info line on 1300 22 4636 or visit www.beyondblue.org.au

Saver Plus

Receive \$1000 For Education Expenses through the A.N.Z Bank, Brotherhood Of St Laurence, The Smith Family and Benevolent Society.

Contacts:

Liz Tinney (Campbelltown) Ph: (02) 46333721
Gary Ingels (Parramatta) Ph: (02) 98951225

E-mail: lizt@bensoc.org.au

E-mail: garyi@thesmithfamily.com.au

What is Saver Plus ?

The matched savings program that can help you reach a savings goal, become a regular saver and build your money management skills.

It offers an opportunity to have every dollar saved (up to \$1,000) matched with an additional dollar for you or your family's education - related expenses.

Are You Eligible ?

You or your partner - have or eligible for a Health Care Card or Pension Concession Card, have some regular income from work, are at least 18 years old, are a parent or guardian of a child at school or are doing a vocational training course yourself.

Meeting With Saver Plus Worker.

Talk about the rules. Check you are eligible. Discuss and sign agreement.

Open A.N.Z Account.

Attend Financial Skills Workshops

Participate in financial skills workshops (10hours in total).

Save.

Make regular deposits into your A.N.Z account over a 10 - 18 month period. Keep in touch with the Saver Plus Worker

Savings Matched

A.N.Z. matches your savings according to program rules.