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CARERS CHILL OUT: LAUGHTER WOKSHOP!!!!



On 23 October 2009 a 'Chill Out for Carers' forum was held at MDAA to celebrate Carers Week. Twenty carers from a number of cultural backgrounds took part in a 'laughter workshop'. Shyda Marek, a trained Laughter Therapist showed the Carers laughter exercises which relaxed the muscles and gave carers a much needed break. Participants were quoted as saying 'The meeting today is excellent. I enjoyed the laughing exercise'. 'Laughing exercise really helps a lot'. A presentation was also made by NDS - Companion Card. MDAA gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance provided by Carers NSW and NSW DADHC for this event.

Planning for the Future Conference

MDAA Consumers got together at Granville Youth Centre to hear from Enable NSW, Public Trustee & Guardian, PADP and Northcott Society on 28 October 2009. Some participants opinions as follows: "The presenters were well prepared and organised", "...it is good to get out and socialise...", "every program is good because they talk about something I never heard before", "presentation time –should be shorten-and give time for questions"



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Joan Gennery: Hi everyone! This month I joined MDAA in the position of Individual Advocacy (IA) Team Leader. I'll be working with the Individual Advocacy Team to continue to develop the professional services provided by the IA team across NSW. Previously I've have worked in non-government and government roles at service provision, management, policy development and research levels. I hope to use my skills and knowledge to make a positive contribution to MDAA and the communities we represent. I look forward to getting to know my colleagues and community over time.



Lee Wilson: My name is Lee Wilson and I recently joined the staff here at MDAA, Harris Park. I'll be working on intake, handling enquiries, conducting the annual assessment for the funding bodies, writing up 'success' stories for the website and newsletter and doing exit interviews with clients when closing files. My usual working days will be Mon-Thurs. I have been working at NSW Council for Intellectual Disability for the past 9 months on policy issues and the information and referral service, and am very happy to be working with people from a Non English Speaking Background with the MDAA team.



Georgina Clark: My name is Georgina Clark and I have worked at MDAA before on specific projects as well as filling in for Individual Advocates from Harris Park and the city office while they have been on holidays. I started in a new position at MDAA in October as the Regional Access Project Officer. I am assisting Maria Katrivesis to work with disability organisations in the Prospect Cumberland Region to improve their cultural competence so consumers have better access to quality services.



Spike Deane: My work title is Executive Assistant (would you believe!)...My task at MDAA is to organise old and new records and files. Sounds dull? Well, a successful filing system not only assists the everyday work of staff, it is also evidence at document level of the fantastic job that MDAA does. At University I am studying Visual Arts, majoring in Glass.



Amy Butcher: I am the new individual advocate in Griffith. I have worked in disability advocacy in Sydney for many years but have now moved to Griffith with my new husband. I am spending time getting to know the Griffith community and promoting the services and the rights of people from NESB with disability. I have been to the Harris Park office for orientation and training and am now settling into my new role.

Suzy McKinnon: Suzy is the new advocate in Bega. She started in October and has spent time getting to know the local community, organising the office and contacting consumers.



Left Suzy Mc Kinnon and Ace Boncato from MDAA & Tony Allen, Bega Shire Mayor, attended the IDEAS Expo at Merimbula between Three & Four December. Holding a stall at the event, gave great opportunity to meet the locals and other organisations who were involved and who attended. A lovely time was had by all.

International Day of People with Disability

The International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD) was celebrated across NSW.....



CV Nidhi singing



CV Hannen dances in Parramatta



Right: Shobna shares her personal story,
Left: Nicole having a break after her dance



CV Carmelita at Centrelink Parramatta



CV Tony at Campbelltown Council

MDAA NEW ADVOCACY SERVICE

MDAA is one of the organisations which will share in over \$500,000 of funding from the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, to provide individual advocacy for people with disability living in south-eastern Sydney including Botany, Randwick, Waverly, Woollahra, Rockdale, Hurstville, Kogarah and Canterbury. MDAA will auspice the new service, South East Sydney Advocacy (SESA), which will be located in the Rockdale-Kogarah-Hurstville area. We expect SESA to start in February 2010.

MDDA NEW POSITION STATEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE LOOKING FOR YOU

MDAA is looking for two (2) consumers and two (2) members to join its Position Statement Subcommittee. The Subcommittee will talk about issues that affect the lives of people from non-English Speaking Backgrounds with disability (NESB). Subcommittee members will also give their opinion and views on what work needs to be done to improve the lives of people from NESB with disability. This will inform MDAA work on current issues. The first meeting will be held in February 2010. **Join our subcommittee & have a say about disability issues!**

If you are an MDAA member or a consumer and are interested in joining this group, please contact: Adama on 9891 6400 or email adama.kamara@mdaa.org.au

AWARD WINNER "RAISING KIDS TOGETHER" DVD AND INFO KIT

This project, funded by DADHC, was a collaborative effort between MDAA, Information and Cultural Change (ICE) and Multicultural Health Communication Services (MHCS), to develop an information and resource kit for families from Afghanistan, Iraq and Sudan who have a child or young person with disability.

It was launched on 8th December 2008 and won the Government Award at the National Multicultural Marketing Awards in Sydney on 2 November 2009.

The Community Relations Commission of NSW has conducted the Awards for the past 20 years. They were presented this year at a dinner hosted by the NSW Minister for Citizenship and Fair Trading, Virginia Judge. Congratulating the winners of the Government Award, the Chair of the Commission, Stepan Kerkyasharian said: "The Department has taken a serious issue and employed state-of-the-art multicultural marketing techniques to deliver information and guidance, vital to the well-being of families from Sudan, Iraq and Afghanistan, who are already facing significant settlement challenges."

The first challenge was that many in the targeted group have only limited access to media and often limited literacy, even in their first language. Bi-lingual community workers were part of the project, taking part in face-to-face discussion to give reassurance and to overcome the challenges of limited literacy. They also spoke at community meetings.

The DVD tells real life stories using a combination of drama and documentary styles to convey information relating to disability. It also employed storytelling techniques to deal with stigma, cultural taboos, discrimination, shame and isolation. It also explores the sensitive issue of the impact that having a child with disability in a family can have on applications for permanent residence, as well as attitudes about disability.

The Kit has a DVD and an information booklet in 6 languages: Arabic, Assyrian, Dari, Dinka, Juba Arabic and English.

To order a kit call MDAA on 1800 629 072 or 9891 6400

CIWDA HAS MOVED

City Inner West Advocacy service has moved to Ultimo and is now co-located with IDEAS. The new contact details for Individual Advocates Stephen and Mirela are:

Phone: 9281 8699; 9281 4533

Fax: 9211 1366

Address: Suite 8, Level 1, 330 Wattle Street, Ultimo NSW 2007

Religious and Significant Days

JANUARY

1	Mary, Mother of God	Catholic Christian
	Feast of St Basil	Orthodox Christian
	Gantan- sai (New Year)	Shinto
5	Twelfth Night	Christian
	Birthday of	
	Guru Gobindh Singh Sahib	Sikh
6	Epiphany	Orthodox Christian
	Feast of the Theophany	Orthodox Christian
7	Christmas /Nativity of Christ	Orthodox Christian
10	Baptism of Jesus	Christian
14	Maghi	Sikh
17	World Religion Day	Baha'i
20	Vasant Panchami **	Hindu
30	Mahayana Buddhist	
	New Year**	Buddhist
	Tu B'shvat*	Jewish

FEBRUARY

2	Presentation of Jesus	
	in the Temple (Candlemas)	Christian
12	Maha Shivaratri **	Hindu
14	Chinese New Year	Confucian
		Daoist
		Buddhist
15	Nirvana Day**	(Mahayana)
		Buddhist
	Lent begins (Clean Monday)	Orthodox Christian
16	Shrove Tuesday	Christian
17	Ash Wednesday	
	(Lent begins)	Christian
21	Orthodox Sunday	Orthodox Christian
26	Mawlid an Nabi *	Islam
28	Purim *	Jewish

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/2009.htm).

More details about each day can be found at www.mdAA.org.au on the Frequently Asked Questions page.

MDAA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) & COMMITTEE

On 25 November MDAA had its thirteenth AGM. It was well attended by MDAA members, consumers and colleagues. During the AGM Milanka presented her Chairperson's report for 2008 – 2009. On behalf of the Committee she thanked the staff their hard work throughout the year. She also thanked the



consumers and members for their support of MDAA's work. David presented the Treasurer's report and talked about how MDAA managed its funds in the last financial year.

At every AGM some Committee members would stand down and their positions would be vacant for nominations. At this AGM some Committee members finished their two year term and retired and they were Alberto Castillo, Anne Napoli, Athana Fan and George Buxbaum. MDAA would like to thank them for hard work and valuable contribution. Some Committee members were re-elected to the Committee for another two year term. They were Dulia Mandinic, David Abello who was elected as the Treasurer, Milanka Zivanovic who was elected as the Vice-Chairperson and Rachel Lazarov who was elected as the new Chairperson. A big congratulation goes to all of them. This year we also see some new people joining MDAA Committee. Four new members were elected to the Committee and they are Hannen Abdallah, Marlene Carrasco, Jim Grainda and Steve Todorovski. A very warm welcome to these new Committee members and we look forward to working with them.

MDAA's AGM would not be complete without the presentation of certificates of appreciation to our valuable volunteers. We wanted to acknowledge their dedication to MDAA and how much we appreciated their support.

The AGM ended with a special tribute to Milanka for her fifteen years of ongoing service to MDAA. She started in 1994 as a founding member of MDAA and then served continuously on MDAA's Committee, being the Chairperson for the last six years. Milanka worked tirelessly for the vision and goals of MDAA. She can often be seen representing MDAA at meetings, helping at the office with mailout, chairing Committee and sub-Committee meetings and providing solid support to the Executive Directors of MDAA and its staff. A certificate of appreciation was presented to Milanka with a pot of Gardenia to satisfy her passion for gardening.



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After the AGM there was food, singing, dancing, bagpipes, drama and lots laughing and talking all happening in a nicely decorated hall. It was a time for everyone to enjoy themselves and the photos showed that we certainly achieved that. Behind the scene a lot of hard work has gone into arranging the AGM and it was an event where everyone worked together to make it happen. A very special thank you goes to the staff and volunteers for another job well done!

