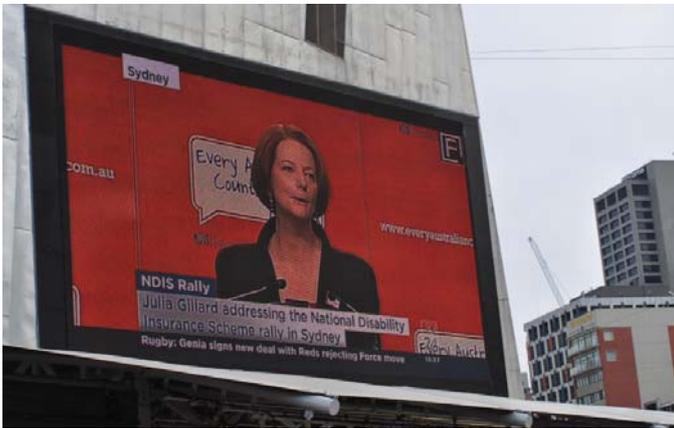


June The Bugle

UnitingCare Community Options

If you would like to contribute to The Bugle, please email info@ucco.org.au or ring (03) 9239 2500. We welcome any ideas or suggestions you may have.



The Prime Minister's funding speech broadcast live to the rally crowd.

Good news month

April proved to be a successful month for two of our most important campaigns, with the Federal Government announcing funding for both aged care reform and the introduction of a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

On 20 April, the Government announced it would allocate \$3.7 billion for a much needed overhaul of the aged care system, starting with the adoption of many of the recommendations put forward by the Productivity Commission in August last year. Importantly, a large part of the funding will go towards services that support people to continue living in their own home.

While the funding is well short of what is required to completely update the system, it is a significant step forward and a win for everyone who lobbied independently and via the AgeWell campaign.

As expected, there was plenty of detail in the announcement but we've summarised the main points of what it all means on page 8.

Just 10 days later, the Federal Government also announced a \$1 billion package to kick start the National Disability Insurance Scheme - a full year ahead of schedule. The announcement coincided with the Make It Real rally which saw nearly 5000 people converge on Federation Square as part of a national day of action to show the level of community support for the scheme.

The package, confirmed in the May budget, will cover the first phase of the Scheme and will assist around 20,000 people over the next four years via four launch sites. Although these sites are yet to be determined, Victoria has already put its hand up to be one of them and a decision will be made soon.

After years of campaigning, it was a momentous announcement that was well received by the rally crowd, but there's still a long way to go.

The funding falls well short of the annual commitment of \$6-8 billion recommended by the Productivity Commission and the Federal and State Governments are yet to agree on how to fund and manage the scheme going forward.

Once again, the announcement came with plenty of detail, so please turn to page 6 of this edition of the The Bugle for a full summary and a review of all the colour and fun from the Make It Real rally.

www.ucco.org.au

'A Good Life For All'



A message from the Chief Executive's desk

As they say in the classics.... "when it rains it pours!"

After months of lobbying, we were bowled over in April to see the Federal Government not only commit to a much needed overhaul of the aged care system, but also commence the introduction of a National Disability Insurance Scheme.....a full year ahead of schedule!

It's great news and, while there is still a long way to go before we see both initiatives realised (and plenty of detail to be ironed out), it is exciting to see that both issues are firmly on the Government's agenda and are finally starting to gain traction.

The fact that we have been able to get this far so quickly is a testament to the hard work our participants and staff have put into the wider campaigning and lobbying that have been going on right around the country. It seems we have all made so much noise about the need for change that the Government has finally listened.

As you can imagine, the \$3.7 billion aged care reform package contains plenty of detail, but we've provided you with a 'snapshot' of what it means for all of us on into the future on page 8.

CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| Welcome Siew Kim Lim | 3 |
| News and events | 4 |
| Good news for NDIS | 6 |
| Win for aged care reform | 8 |
| Participant Committee | 10 |
| From Texas to Knox | 12 |
| Building Communities | 13 |
| Spotlight On..... | 14 |
| Young Carers | 15 |
| About us | 16 |

We've also introduced a summary of what the first stage of the NDIS might look like on page 6.

It's a great article that helps put the Government's funding announcement into plain English and includes some great photos from the 'Make It Real' rally that was held in Federation Square on 30 April.

While these initiatives open the door to more resources and better services for participants, we are ever mindful of our mission and our role in assisting participants in the best way possible.

There are always better ways of doing things so please let us know if there is more we can do for you.

Also in this edition we meet our new Pastoral Support and Cultural Advisor, as well as an aged care worker who travelled from Texas recently to pick up some best practice tips from our Direct2Care team. We also meet the 'class of 2012' for the Opening Doors program and take a look at the difference Art therapy is making to the Koori community in Dandenong.

Until next time.....

Scott Sheppard

Chief Executive

Pastoral Care

welcome Siew Kim Lim



LAST month, we welcomed new Pastoral Support and Cultural Advisor, Siew Kim Lim, to the UCCO team. We caught up with her to discover what makes her tick....

Tell us a little about your background.....

I always had an interest in people and, even as a child, I would often ask people to tell me their story. It seemed a natural course to follow when the Bachelor of Social Science (Pastoral Counselling) course was offered to me by the Australian Catholic University. Over the next five years I completed my studies as a mature-aged student and, despite juggling it with part-time work and family, I also embarked on a Masters of Management, focusing on change management. Since then, I have worked at Monash University as a student advocate, manager and international career consultant and then with a private organisation as a senior counsellor and transition coordinator where I provided pastoral counselling and case management.

What attracted you to this role?

I was drawn to the description of the role and the organisation itself. It's not often that you encounter a set of selection criteria that embodies who you are in terms of experience, professionalism and

qualifications. UCCO's philosophy of 'A Good Life For All' definitely sits well with my personal value system and, as someone who is committed to providing pastoral care and support, I knew I had to apply for the role and am glad I did!

What are you most looking forward to?

Everything! I am looking forward to meeting everyone and I hope they are looking forward to getting to know me as well. I feel like I am about to write a new book and, while I have some idea about the content, I am excited about how each chapter will unfold and evolve as I discover and learn from staff, volunteers, participants and support agencies.

What are you hoping to bring to the role?

What you see is what you get. I bring to the role a humble level of humanness, numerous life anecdotes which I have been privy to and some first hand support to people in crisis. I have borne witness time and time again that nothing is hopeless as there is always a different way out.

And how about a few personal thing....what is your favourite food?

I love good food and enjoy a variety of tastes, fragrance and textures. I believe food is more delicious when sharing with others. With colder weather, I'm thinking of comfort food – slow cooked lamb shanks in red wine or minestrone. I also like a good steak, salmon sashimi, char kway teow, chicken rice, pumpkin/spinach/pinenuts risotto and for dessert – tangy lemon tart, berry/pear or apple/rhubarb crumble. Yum!

Do you have a favourite saying?

"Life must be understood BACKWARDS but it must also be lived FORWARD" (Soren Kierkegaard).

UNITINGCARE COMMUNITY

Facelift for Brandon Park

UNTIL the end of July, we'll be renovating our Brandon Park office.

If you call us during this time, you may experience some delays in being put through by our reception team as many of our staff will not be sitting in their regular spot and may be harder to find than normal.

If you are visiting us in person, you may even see some building work going on. But don't let that put you off – we are definitely open as normal so please come on in and say hello.

We appreciate your patience during this time and look forward to welcoming you to our new-look office soon.

COPMI website now live

The Young Carers team has been working with Children of Parents with Mental Illness (COPMI) to compile meaningful and relevant information for their new website. This useful website is now live and is packed full of information for young people, families, service providers, people with a mental illness and people caring for someone.

To find out more, please visit:
www.copmi.net.au

Who cares? We do.....

THE Commonwealth Respite Carelink Centre (CRCC) recently teamed up with Upper Yarra Community House to present a special information forum for carers living in Melbourne's east.

The CRCC team (operating under the auspice of UnitingCare Community Options) joined dozens of carers, service providers and referral agencies at the "Who Cares" forum at Comely Bank in Healesville to learn more about the supports and services available to carers of older people and those with a disability.

After hearing a series of presentations (including CRCC and Direct2Care), the carers were invited to participate in discussion groups, share their stories and take some time to consider/reflect on their caring role.

The service providers were eager to hear from the carers themselves about their needs and identify the service gaps that exist in this region. A series of follow up sessions will be coordinated to ensure all the feedback is acted on.

The CRCC team will also be helping coordinate forthcoming forums for Young Carers and carers of people with mental health issues so please keep an eye on our website (www.ucco.org.au) for details.



Know your rights with taxis

Using a Cabcharge e-ticket is a great way to get around Melbourne, but it is important you understand how to use it and what your rights and responsibilities are.

Here are a few simple tips to follow:

- Don't use cash – if you are using an e-ticket, there is no need to pay your driver in cash, even if they ask you to. Your fare will be charged to the ticket.
- Machine is broken – occasionally you may encounter a driver with a broken card reader (or your card may be damaged). If the machine is out of order, your driver should have a backup procedure to record your e-ticket details and your fare manually.

OPTIONS NEWS AND VIEWS

- Ask for a receipt – always keep the ticket stub and receipt. If the driver doesn't give it to you, be sure to ask for it before you leave the taxi.
- Half price fares – If you are using a half price taxi card, you are not required to pay the full fare. At the end of your journey, simply pay HALF the total fare and remember to collect your stub and receipts.
- Collect details – It is also a good idea to write down the drivers cab licence number in case you need to follow up or report an incorrect fare.

UCCO is currently trialling a 'stored value card' which will make transactions like this much easier to manage. If the trial is successful, we'll bring you more information on this new system in the next edition.

A story of resilience by Luke White

Paul is a very energetic man, despite the numerous obstacles he faces on a daily basis.....obstacles that could possibly stop most people in their tracks.

You see Paul has suffered several strokes and lost much of the use of his right arm. He no longer has the freedom and independence to drive which has been extremely challenging for a self-made man that has driven trucks, owned a farm, been a restaurateur, built his own home extension and led a physically active working life. The physical changes in Paul's life have been significant, but are by no means the most challenging forces he has had to deal with and the personal tragedies that he has experienced over the years are a daily reminder of how precious life is.

Paul's Partnership Worker, Jo Roger, has supported Paul through many phases of his ever-changing journey and been persistent in her desire to see Paul rediscover his zest for life.

This led Jo to make a referral to the Community Connections Program. Jo discussed the referral with me and we soon set about organising a meeting with Paul to assist Paul find whatever it may be that could help facilitate his interest in reengaging with the community. Paul's response was "I'm happy to give it a go!" and he and Luke were soon attending an introductory computer course, which Paul quickly discovered wasn't not for him. The next plan was to attend a social luncheon and, although Paul enjoyed the company and food, it fell short of making him feel personally inspired and valued. Finally an opportunity to volunteer at his local men's shed came up and Paul jumped at the opportunity. Sorting through his extensive tool collection reinvigorated Paul and he is now excited about commencing the next phase of his life by sharing his knowledge and skills with others. While Paul is happily mentoring and educating others in building skills, he is also setting an example in resilience and the importance of being defined by what you can do rather than what you can't. This role as a volunteer will provide Paul with the chance and environment to make new friends, share his skills and provide him with a profound purpose of helping and encouraging others.



Paul (right) with Luke.

Good news for NDIS....

Participants, carers and supporters had extra cause to celebrate during April's 'Make It Real' rally, with the Federal Government using the occasion to officially commit funding towards a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Federation Square was turned into a sea of red and white (the every Australian Counts campaign's official colours) on 30 April as thousands of people converged on the site to demonstrate the groundswell of community support for significant reform of the disability sector.

The Melbourne event was one of six rallies held simultaneously around the country, and saw the MC (Stella Young) introduce a series of guest speakers and entertainers who were all campaigning for the same thing – the introduction of a NDIS.

Federal and State MPs from both sides of politics addressed the 5000-strong crowd before an expectant hush fell as the Prime Minister's speech to the Sydney rally was beamed onto the big screen.

The speech delivered what everyone had been working towards for so long – confirmation the Federal Government would commit funding to get the first stage of the NDIS up and running a year ahead of the Productivity Commission's recommended start date.

So what does it all mean?

In May's Federal budget, Treasurer Wayne Swan announced a \$1 billion funding package to kick start the NDIS. The package paves the way for a more person-centred approach to disability services and includes:

- \$342.5 million from mid-2013 for individually funded packages for people with significant and permanent disability



The crowd shows its support for a NDIS.

- \$154.8 million from mid-2013 to employ Local Area Coordinators to provide an individualised approach to care and support
- \$58.6 million from mid-2013 to assess the needs of people with a disability in the launch locations
- \$122.6 million to start preparing the disability sector for the new way of delivering disability services
- \$240.3 million to build and operate an NDIS information technology system
- \$53 million to establish a new National Disability Launch Transition Agency to manage the delivery of care and support to people with a disability and their carers in launch locations from 2013–14

The Government is also asking the States to contribute to the NDIS in the future on a roughly 78% Commonwealth and 22% State basis, effectively flipping the current National Disability Agreement on its head (at present the States fund the majority of disability services around Australia).

It's a great start but there's still plenty of work to be done. The Federal and State Governments still need to agree on how the Scheme will be funded into the future

....but more to be done

and, while this initial phase will help around 20,000 people, there is no guarantee of funding beyond this package, potentially leaving thousands of people with a disability (and those who care for them) without adequate support.

If we are to reach our goal of 200,000 registered supporters by the end of the year we need your help. Asking your friends and family to show their support for the campaign is now more important than ever so please visit www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au today.

What is UCCO's take?

UnitingCare Community Options has welcomed this week's federal budget commitment to a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) but says much more is needed to ensure people with disabilities are ready for the transition. UnitingCare Community Options Chief Executive and Chair of the Victorian NDIS Campaign Committee, Scott Sheppard, said while funding allocation was a great start, it falls well short of the \$3 billion recommended by the Productivity Commission.

"An allocation of \$1 billion over four years is great news and will help establish a solid platform on which this much needed reform can be built," he said.

"However, this funding must continue to grow with each new budget cycle to ensure people with a disability and those who support them are fully prepared to deal with the complexity of a transition to a major reform initiative like the NDIS."

He said the NDIS represented a massive shift in the way tens of thousands of Australians access essential services, but it would not work if adequate funding was not made available to ensure individuals,

carers and service providers were fully informed and prepared for the transition. "Now the ball is finally rolling, the pressure will be on both the Federal Government and State Governments around the country to make good on the mutual support they expressed at the recent COAG meeting," he said.

"This is only the first step in a very long journey and it will be important that we all keep working and campaigning hard so we can show the Government and opposition at all levels that there is genuine community support to make the NDIS real."



UCCO Chief Executive, Scott Sheppard (right) and UCCO Principal Policy and Research Officer, Eddie Chapman get into the spirit of the day.



Federal Attorney General, Nicola Roxon addresses the crowd.

Federal Government green

AUSTRALIA's Aged Care sector will receive a long-overdue overhaul after the Federal Government approved a significant funding package in its May budget. The Government will spend \$3.7 billion over the next five years to bring the current system up-to-date and adopt many of the actions recommended by the Productivity Commission in August last year along the way.

The person-centred 'Living longer, living better' package includes:

- \$1.2 billion to tackle critical shortages in the aged care workforce, through a Workforce Compact
- \$955.4 million to increase the supply of Home Care packages and assist people receiving aged care to remain in their home
- \$660.3 million to encourage greater investment in residential care facilities, including in regional, rural and remote areas
- \$268.4 million to improve the care of people with dementia
- \$256.4 million to improve the accessibility and quality of aged care services; and
- \$192 million to support the diverse needs of older Australians

Addressing workforce pressures

The Government will also provide \$1.2 billion over five years to tackle critical workforce shortages through a new Aged Care Workforce Compact.

The Compact will improve recruitment, training and wages for aged care staff, enabling the sector to meet growing demand and provide quality care for older Australians.

Helping people stay at home for longer

The Government will increase the number of Home Care packages at a cost of \$880 million.



The number of Home Care packages will increase by nearly 40,000 over the next five years, providing a broader range of services to choose from.

Other measures

The Government will encourage greater investment in the sector to provide consumers with more choice and greater protections, at a cost of \$660 million over five years.

The Government will also make savings through new income test arrangements for people commencing Home Care packages or entering residential aged care after 30 June 2014.

A new income test will be introduced from 1 July 2014 for Home Care packages. Under these arrangements, full pensioners will not pay any income-tested care fee, while part-pensioners will contribute up to a maximum of \$5,000 a year, and self-funded retirees up to \$10,000 a year, for their care. Care recipients will continue to pay a basic fee of up to 17.5 per cent of the basic age pension.



lights aged care reform

These reforms are expected to result in savings of \$183 million over five years (including \$123 million in 2016-17). Income and assets tests will be combined from 1 July 2014 to strengthen the means testing arrangements that currently apply to residential care. An annual cap of \$25,000 will apply to care contributions in residential care. Care recipients will continue to pay a basic fee, currently up to 84 per cent of the basic age pension. Residents in permanent care in an aged care home as at 30 June 2014 and all respite residents will not be affected by these changes.

These reforms are expected to save \$378 million over five years (including \$181.1 million in 2016-17).

For full details of the package, please visit the 'Ageing' section at: www.health.gov.au

UnitingCare Australia's response

UnitingCare Australia has welcomed the funding, with National Director, Lin Hatfield Dodds saying the reforms would put older Australians at the centre of a new aged care system.

She said reform blueprint invested in the core components of a fundamentally reshaped aged care system that would deliver better care to older Australians now and as their needs change.

"More and better support to age at home, and a simpler and fairer financing system are the keystones of the new system," Ms Hatfield Dodds said.

"We know that older Australians want to stay in their own home and community as long as they can.

"\$1 billion of the \$3.7 billion budget will go to care in people's homes. That's a very good thing.



"UnitingCare Australia welcomes new fair and flexible financing arrangements. Equity has been missing in action in aged care financing for too long," she added. "We are very pleased to see measures that will ensure vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians are protected and supported, while those who can afford to pay a fair share toward the costs of their accommodation and care, do so." She said the Government's commitment to invest in structural reform was a welcome priority, while the establishment of a single Gateway for information and access to care, an independent financing authority, better supporting our workforce and an expert implementation council would ensure the Government can ensure the intent of the reforms are delivered. "Finally, the focus on alleviating workforce pressures is welcome," said Ms Hatfield Dodds. "\$1.2 billion will go a long way to delivering higher wages, better training and professional development, and improved career pathways."

NEWS & VIEWS FROM THE

HALFWAY into the year and the 2012 Participant Committee has hit full stride! New members Zarina, Antoinette and Iris (Ageing stream) and daughter/mother team Colleen and Bernadette (Disability stream) have been welcomed and are already valued and hardworking members of the team.

Zarina, Iris, Colleen and Bernadette recently attended their first UCCO function and bravely introduced themselves to the 120 assembled staff. Their personal stories of resilience and determination were the favourite part of the morning for many, with some saying they were almost moved to tears.

We thank these new members for their courage and honesty in sharing these parts of their lives with UCCO staff.

This year there has been a focus on reviewing documentation to help us improve the way we communicate with participants. This has entailed a lot of 'homework' for committee members and generated plenty of discussion.

The Committee has also been providing a participant perspective on complaints and grievance issues and have participated in advocacy activities such as the NDIS and AgeWell campaigns.

Some have even welcomed the opportunity to be part of other public relations activities such as meeting with local Members of Parliament and talking to media.

Committee members also regularly meet with UCCO staff members seeking views on various issues or to inform the committee about their role (or a particular project) within the organisation. Some committee members also participate on other UCCO committees while others have taken up further training and scholarship opportunities.

Being a committee member is a busy, but rewarding role that provides a unique opportunity to learn more about UCCO and the sector, while participating and providing valuable feedback to the organisation.

UnitingCare Community Options
Participant Committee

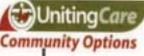


Self-directed care:
what it means for you

Wednesday, 4th July, 2012
10:30 am — 2:30 pm
Registration & refreshments from 10 am

PLEASE JOIN US!

RSVP 27th June



FORUM

Committee forum – I do it MY way!

Australia-wide reforms in both disability and ageing are on the way. That means self-directed care is coming and, whether you are a participant or a carer in either of these streams, this forum will help you understand the range of self-directed care options available to you as UCCO participants.

PARTICIPANT COMMITTEE

How does this work for you?

Tell us what you want from UCCO to help you do it your way – your input counts! As an UCCO participant or carer, you can be actively involved in receiving the services that you most want or need. Mark your calendar for this opportunity to find out more and have your say.....not to mention enjoying a great lunch with the UCCO community!

For more information, please talk to your Partnership Worker or contact Barbara Blakey (see contact details in blue box below).



Living independently by Matthew Simpson

My name is Matthew and I am one of the longest running UCCO Participant Committee members.

I am 38 years old and suffer from cerebral palsy which means I need support from a carer three times a day, seven days a week.

I've been living out of home for nearly seven years now and am currently on the DHS ISP Direct Payment package and just use one service provider as a broker where I interview, employ and manage my weekly roster which works very well.

After moving out of home, I changed agencies every year or so because most of them didn't have enough staff available. There were many occasions when staff simply didn't turn up for their shift which was quite drastic for me – if no one comes, I get left without the necessary daily tasks such as getting out of bed and having breakfast! Two years ago, I changed over to a very client-focused agency called Access Unlimited Care Service (AUCS), which provided a 24/7 'on call' service, a management service and an exclusive staff agreement which most agencies won't provide or simply fail to maintain their agreement.

AUCS has been very supportive and, importantly, have kept to the agreement so I have never gone without.

In fact they have been so impressed with the way I manage my own supports, they have employed me as a Project Officer for a few hours a week to develop a plan and pilot program that replicates the model of support that I have developed for myself.

Want to help?

- Are there any topics or issues you would like the committee to address?
- Can you occasionally help the committee in its work to benefit all UCCO participants?

If so, please talk to your Partnership Worker, or contact:

Barbara Blakey: Community Development Officer: Participant Committee Liaison

Email: parcom@ucco.org.au

Telephone: 1300 651 463

SHARING KNOWLEDGE FROM

THE Direct2Care team recently had the opportunity to share experiences and knowledge with Matthew Weaver – an ageing services worker from Texas. Matthew was visiting Australia as part of Rotary’s Group Study Exchange program and was keen to learn more about Direct2Care and how it had developed its strong reputation as a leading service referral agency. We caught up with Matthew during his visit to find out more....

Tell us a little about the organisation you work for....

The United Way of Tarrant County has more than 60 partners to carry out its “Learn Well,” “Earn Well,” and “Live Well” initiatives. These initiatives target literacy, financial stability, healthy ageing and independent living. The specific United Way program I work with is 2-1-1 Texas and Ageing Services. The 2-1-1 Texas service is a free, easy to use phone line that connects callers throughout the state with health and human service providers in their community. It is also the state disaster information line and can connect callers to disaster-relief resources.

How did you find out about Direct2Care and why were you keen to visit?

Initially, Group Study Exchange (GSE) participants were asked to research specific agencies they would be interested in seeing. Using Google, I researched community care services and information and referral and found Direct2Care which leapt out at me as a significant and necessary resource for aged care information and referral.

What are some of the things you learnt during your visit?

I have to say, my knowledge of Australia prior to my visit didn’t expand much beyond kangaroos, koalas and eucalyptus. Now; however, I can say I’ve eaten Vegemite and kangaroo and can speak of the hospitality and humanity of caring

Australians. I have gained some knowledge about Victoria’s ageing assessment process, retirement planning, enduring powers and general power of attorney, aged housing options, elder rights and advocacy and food bank operations. Of all these, I am most intrigued with the ideas of superannuation, ‘work for the dole’ or Newstart Allowance and sustainable living initiatives such as public transport systems, water conservation techniques and energy exchange programs.

What are some of the similarities between what we do in Australia and what you do at home?

Like Direct2Care, the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services and the Area Agencies on Ageing offer benefits counselling. Victoria and Texas are both experiencing shrinking affordable housing options for its residents and, with an increasing demand for affordable housing, both Victoria and Texas have been forced to think more creatively (e.g. group living, roommate matching and multi-family dwelling set ups like granny flats.....we call those in-law suites!).

What are some of the differences you noticed?

Government funding seems to be the largest contributor to the not-for-profit agencies I toured, while in Texas, not-for-profit agencies secure most of their budget from public donations, private philanthropic grants and through campaigning large businesses. Adult protective services in Australia have a different spin as well. Victoria’s model includes rights, responsibility and trust. It is an empowerment model aimed at prevention. Texas has a protective model which is disempowering for seniors. Texas seniors must be provided with protection (retroactive) rather than securing empowerment (proactive).

TEXAS TO KNOX

Having said that, the goal of both countries' models is the same - to intervene in a process that's harming the "vulnerable adult".

How important is it for organisations like ours to share knowledge?

Exchanging ideas of success and failure is imperative; however, vicarious learning doesn't come without frustration. Australia's tax structure and population is not comparable to the US. Funding mechanisms for similar programs would differ incredibly, thus compliance and regulatory instruction would too vary.



Matthew chats with Direct2Care Manager, Despina Kavnoudias.

Building Communities

By Kerryn Wheeler

Art Therapy assists people to build greater awareness of their feelings, spirituality, thoughts and issues, while providing greater confidence in their ability to creatively solve problems and make meaning in their lives.

Art is built into the very fabric of Aboriginal culture and they have used this throughout their history to connect with their story of culture and heritage.

After working as an Art Therapist with the Aboriginal Youth Group in Dandenong for the past two years, I have gotten to know the participants well and they have gotten to know, trust and share with me.

The group is made up of males and females aged between four and 18 and I have watched them all get involved in a variety of projects, including the latest initiative (part sponsored by UCCO) - the Totem Tree of Life.

Being a person-centred project, this piece was created and led by the group, meaning there were no rules and no right or wrong way of doing things. It was a magnificent creation that was designed, organised and completed by them, for them.

We have already received some great feedback from the group, with comments such as "it brought unity to the group" and "it was a good way to learn (about my culture) and a good way to pass it on" being typical examples.

The beautiful piece of art will stand with pride of place during this year's NAIDOC Week activities and will remind the entire group of what they can achieve through leadership, unity, teamwork and a deeper understanding of their culture's spirituality.



Spotlight On.....

The Opening Doors Program

SINCE 2008, Opening Doors has been helping communities in Melbourne's east and south-east overcome the negative effects of social isolation.

This year, those running the Inner-East and South-East Opening Doors Programs spoke to many aspiring community leaders and asked, 'are you passionate about making your community more socially inclusive?' The response was a rounding 'YES' and 32 new participants have now been accepted into the 2012 program.

The South-East Program, which covers the areas of Casey, Cardinia and Greater Dandenong, has 16 participants for 2012, ranging in age from early 20's through to late 70's. There are 12 women and four men from a variety of cultural backgrounds, with some experiencing limited mobility and sight issues.

The Inner East Program, covering Monash, Manningham, Boroondara and Whitehorse, welcomes 14 women and three men from 10 different cultural backgrounds and also ranging in age from 20's to 70's.

Look out for some regular updates on how the groups are progressing in future editions of The Bugle.

What is social isolation?

Social isolation is when someone has little or no interaction with their friends, family or the wider community. This can occur for a number of reasons (e.g. non-English speaking background, illness, disability) and recent research suggests that this type of disconnection can be as damaging to the health as smoking.

The Opening Doors Program has a strong vision of communities that are completely socially inclusive, regardless of age, race, religion, disability gender or sexual orientation and, since its inception, has enjoyed tremendous results, including:

- More than 50 grass-roots projects that directly address social isolation
- More than 4000 community members who are engaged with the community in new and positive ways
- A network of more than 80 different organisation, businesses and groups collaborating to reduce social isolation through their support of the program

Opening Doors is open to anyone who is passionate about making a difference in their local area, building their skills and developing a project that directly benefits others who may be socially isolated.

If you would like to find out more about the program, or how you can support it or get involved, please contact Jane Oldfield or Alex Mills at UnitingCare Community Options on 9239 2500.



Ready for action! The Opening Doors 'class of 2012' from the South-East (above) and Inner-East (below).



Scholarship win for Young Carers

ALMOST 20 young carers have received funding through the WCF Thomas Charitable Trust/Rotary Young Carer Scholarship thanks to the support of the Young Carers program.

The team of Young Carer workers helped 19 young people identify the kind of things that would support them with their schooling or provide them with some valuable time out from their caring role. They then wrote each young person a letter of support outlining the way in which this funding would help each applicant. The unique aspect of this application is that Young Carers could ask to be reimbursed for items already paid for this year such as school books, club memberships, dance lessons and more.

The exciting news is that 100% of the applications lodged have been successful and all 19 young carers will be awarded the funds requested.

School holiday fun

Our young carers had a fun-filled school holidays in April starting with an all ages 'movie-a-thon' which included The Lorax, Jon Carter and Mirror Mirror, plus some time to hang out and enjoy the fun at TimeZone. Secondary school-aged young carers also had the opportunity to join other carers from across Victoria to celebrate Youth Week with a visit to Luna Park.

The school holidays definitely ended with a bang as a team of secondary school-aged young carers made their way to the Gold Coast for a Young Carer Program trip of a life time. The group managed to visit all three of the major theme parks during their trip, while the younger carers who couldn't attend were treated to an afternoon of zooming around Port Philip Bay in the high powered 'St Kilda Spinner'.

The Young Carers Program has some exciting activities planned for June including attending the Australian Young Carers Festival called "FESTofAll". To check out the festival visit: www.festofall.com.au



The Bugle

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ABOUT US

UNITINGCARE Community Options is a community services organisation, dedicated to assisting people to live good lives in their own homes and communities. We have been supporting older people, people with disabilities and the unpaid carers that support them since 1987. Each year, we support around 4000 people throughout Melbourne's east and south.

Our vision is to achieve 'a good life for all' regardless of their abilities. We aim to support people in achieving the goals they have and living the life they hope for. If you know anyone who might benefit from our support, please ask them to contact us.

FEEDBACK

We're always looking for ways to improve our service so please let us know if you have any feedback you'd like to share with us. If you have an issue or complaint, please raise the matter with your Partnership Worker who will raise the complaint with their Manager if they are unable to help. Issues that remain unresolved will be dealt with by Senior Management. You can also ask for support from an external advocate. See your Participant Information Pack for more information.

CONTACTING US

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Interpreters Available On Request

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For assistance, please call the Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450.

