

I promise to love my Bear



Prior to Mother's Day we were approached by Westfield Bondi Junction and Eastgardens and were lucky enough to have 15 of our children, and others from Wairoa School, invited to spend a day at the Centres as their guests on Saturday 10 May.

Photos (above) were taken at Build-a-Bear where each child got to select, build, dress and take home their very own bear, having taken an oath to love their bear always. Every mother also received a gift package from Westfield and all the children received lots of goodies.

Thanks to Westfield management and staff and to all the many individual shopkeepers at both centres who created such a special day for our children.



Detail from the design drafts for the new mural

From the Director

During the last quarter Holdsworth has hosted special events for Seniors' Week, Families' Week and National Volunteers' Week in between continuing to expand the number of services and programs on offer. We have witnessed the increasing popularity of our programs with demand growing in all areas. Part of this is a direct result of stable staffing at the Centre over the year which has given us greater opportunities to innovate and develop all our programs to match the interests and aspirations of our community. There is more information inside on these events and some of our latest activities.

Our newest employee, Louise de Lorenzo, has been hired to provide parenting advice, information sessions and general support to parents and carers of young children who access Playgroup. Look for Louise on Tuesday-Thursday mornings. Her most frequently asked question is "How do you ever get enough sleep as the parent of a young child?"

We are very grateful to Woollahra Council for the significant increase in our annual grant from 1 July, which will assist us greatly in our service growth. Our full Strategic Plan for 2009 can be downloaded from our website.

If you visit the Centre during June you may notice work in progress on the wall mural in the Playground. The present mural was created by children in what was then our after school program in 1996. Unfortunately the paint is peeling rather badly and it is time to refresh the mural with a new work which has been created (see sample below left) and is being executed by a combination of staff, volunteers and clients. Feel free to grab a paint brush if you are here when work is being carried out.

For our members we are planning to bring our membership year into sync with the financial year from 1 July. For those whose membership expired this quarter we have extended your memberships till 30 June for free and will be sending you reminders to renew from 1 July. For everyone else we will be phasing in the new membership period over the year ahead so that no one is financially disadvantaged by this change which is being done to make administration more cost-effective. We are also about to launch a Friends of Holdsworth program to provide our philanthropic supporters with greater opportunities to network and to be invited to gala fundraising events. Let us know if you would like to hear more about becoming a member or friend of Holdsworth.

*Michael Ryan
June 2008*



Thanking our volunteers

Fifteen Holdsworth volunteers, along with Director Michael Ryan, Volunteer Co-ordinator Holly Brown, and driver Ross Young, had a day out together at Chapel Hill in the Blue Mountains recently to celebrate National Volunteers Week 2008. The bus trip and lunch provided a small way of saying a big thank you to those who make such a great contribution to the work of Holdsworth. Pictured above right are Pam, Siska and Barbara. Our thanks go also to those whose private or work commitments prevented them from being part of this special day.

We also sadly farewelled one of our dear volunteers Jonathan Rhodes (seen right with members of our Wednesday group) who has been sorely missed since he returned home to England. Good luck Jonathan, you are always welcome back in the Holdsworth Team!



Playgroup Plus

Term 2 of Playgroup Plus, our integrated program for very young children with special needs, started on Tuesday 6th May. Activities for the term include, playdough, dress ups, bubble-making, animal walks, drawing and painting, tummy time, crawling practice, banging pots, singing songs and generally have a fun time. There are still places available in the group. Please contact Sarah Sillar for more information or to make an appointment for an assessment.

Holdsworth Family Camp 2008

Following the success of our camp in December 2007 we will be visiting Berry Sport & Recreation Camp again from Friday 27th to Sunday 29th June. This camp, for children and young people with disabilities but involving the whole family, will be an opportunity to have fun, gain new experiences, share information, involve siblings, meet other carers and mix with Holdsworth staff. Nine families are registered for the camp so far. Holdsworth Staff will provide fun activities and look after

the children and their siblings to give parents some time on their own to discover the beautiful Berry and Kiama area, or join other carers in some structured activities like kayaking, bush walks, archery etc. Families will have their own time during the evening. There will be group activities involving all family members and staff on Sunday morning.



Family Time at Holdsworth

The theme of National Families Week (11 to 17 May) was 'Work and Family - getting the balance right'. Holdsworth celebrated with a Family Day at Playgroup on May 12th. As well as the usual fun activities of Playgroup we had a Jumping Castle, Sports Fundamentals, Coffee and Cake, Face Painting and Craft Stalls. Cr Isabelle Shapiro, Deputy Mayor of Woollahra, and member of our Management Committee (right), officiated and cut the cake. Playgroup parents and carers were encouraged to come along with partners, children, grandparents and other family members and it was a real Family Day!



Family Services

Moving from a solid base of long-standing popularity and very high numbers at Playgroup, we are establishing an enlarged program of parent support, information and education. This is aimed at enhancing the capacity of individuals and the community to look after children, build networks, promote positive parenting and provide resources for parents to access when they need them. As part of this strategy we have employed Louise de Lorenzo as Parent Support Worker. Louise, who has a nursing and midwifery background, will work alongside current Playgroup staff. While Lucian and Mary look after the operational aspects of Playgroup and have made it the success it is today, Louise will have a roving role to advise and assist parents and to arrange and run information and education sessions and groups. Feel free to contact Lucian or Louise for more information about our program of activities.

Fun with Funsworth

The Funsworth afternoon program for school aged children with a mild to moderate disability is run in partnership with Eastern Respite & Recreation. Children are picked up from schools by our community transport and brought to the Centre for the afternoon's activities. Now into its third term, the program is running very well. The program promotes independent choice making, social interaction and fun, all within a structured and closely supervised environment. The children look forward to coming to Funsworth with excitement and it has been a pleasure to see them grow and develop meaningful relationships with other children and staff. The emphasis is on regular evaluation, ensuring that the program continues to innovate and help the children achieve specific personal goals.

Discovering Sydney

Our Tuesday Bus Outing for Seniors recently visited Lakemba Mosque where we were given a warm welcome and an instructive talk and tour by the Imam (see below). This was followed by a Lebanese Mezze luncheon at a local restaurant and was enjoyed by everyone.

Our weekly bus outings offer a great opportunity to see different parts of Sydney both geographically and culturally.

Forthcoming destinations include a visit to the Jewish Museum, the Royal Australian Navy Heritage Centre and a tour of the ABC studios.



Seniors' Week

To mark Seniors' Week in April along with Woollahra Council we co-hosted a Seniors' Expo at the Centre. The hall was transformed into a Devonshire Tea room,



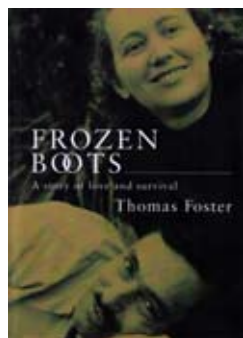
Glenmore Road School Band played, Woollahra Seniors' Choir sang, other community groups provided info stalls and some of our most senior clients were on their feet doing aerobics. Thanks to the Mayor, Cr Geoff Rundle, for his words of welcome, and to everyone who contributed to the success of the day.



JewishCare was among the many service providers and partner organisations providing information at stalls on the day.

Frozen Memories

The importance of recording the memories and experiences that are significant in our lives has been brought home to one family that visits our Centre. Thomas Foster published his story as a book called Frozen Boots. He details his life from his birth in Hungary, to the wartime in the Soviet Union and eventually to Sydney via the Panama Canal and Polynesia in a fascinating and sobering account that reminds us how lucky we are in this country. Thomas is now attending our Memory Loss group and recognises the value of having written down his story. Frozen Boots is published by the Sydney Jewish Museum.



Carers' News

Carers Relax

Carers are learning to relax! Join us for 3 Monday evenings to learn simple and practical relaxation techniques for your mind and body. These tips will help you sleep, relieve pain, allow you to feel calmer, happier, and be able to concentrate. Manage your stress levels while enjoying the company of other carers. Three evenings, 7.30 pm - 9 pm, July 28th, Aug 4th, Aug 11th. It will be held by Alex Gruner here at Holdsworth. Ring Lindy on 9302 3600 to confirm on any Monday or Tuesday. \$15 for the 3 sessions. BYO blanket and pillow!

Carers Plus

Are you caring for a child 0-5 with special needs? We meet every month or so to share stories, build up an online resource list of services, take time out, find out about free entertainment, laugh, relax and meet like minded people. We often meet at the local coffee shop and talk over a cuppa while the children receive respite care at Holdsworth. We meet on Tuesdays from 9.30 am - 10.30 am, prior to PlaygroupPlus. Ring Lindy on 9302 3600 if you are interested.

Write your story

Writers Lyndall Hough and Sarah Brill are running workshops for carers to get down their stories and poems in a book to be published for Carers Week in October. We now have over a dozen carers sharing their carer stories and discovering their talent as writers. It has been amazing to hear the stories emerging. If you would like to join in, give me a ring. It's not too late. The next workshops will be on Monday June 2nd from 1-2 pm, and on Tuesday June 10th from 4.14 - 6.15 pm.



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If you would like to join the Holdsworth team as a Volunteer please call 9302 3600

