

Listening to Carers

On 19 August local federal member and Shadow Treasurer, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, braved a Holdsworth meeting with about 40 of our clients who are parents and carers for children and adults living with disabilities in order to hear first hand some of the many issues faced by carers.

Among the issues raised were the frustration of carers in dealing with the bureaucracy surrounding funding of programs and the need to give carers the power to determine how and when best to use available public funding on behalf of their child. Access to supported accommodation, availability of respite care, the shortcomings of the education system and the need for a national carers' card were just some of the topics covered in the meeting.

Continued on back page



Annual General Meeting Invitation

Our AGM will be held at the Centre on **Wednesday, 24 September**, and we would like to invite our members, friends and many clients to join us as we celebrate another year. All members should find a formal Notice of AGM enclosed with this newsletter. Further details of the AGM can be downloaded from our website www.holdsworth.org.au

Prior to the meeting we will be serving drinks and refreshments from 5pm and we will be dedicating the new mural in the playground prior to the meeting. The AGM itself runs from 6pm to 7pm and will be followed by a short concert, featuring the Door in the Wall choir, and a light supper. Please RSVP by 19 September to Judy Renford on 9302 3600 if you would like to come and let her know if you require complimentary community transport on the evening.

From the Director

Spring finds Holdsworth full of life and activities with more people accessing our programs than ever before. Our Seniors' programs are in great demand and in September we are opening up another Thursday outing to complement our heavily booked Tuesday and Wednesday outings. Sometimes I think we are running a deluxe travel service given the exotic destinations and entertainment sampled by our intrepid explorers.

Funsworth, our after school program now operates five days a week in conjunction with Eastern Respite and Recreation and our dedicated Sydney Grammar volunteers. Other new barrier-smashing programs are in the pipeline in response to annual evaluation meetings held with both clients and their parents/carers. Our Carer Stories are about to go to print ahead of their launch by Minister Keneally during *Carers' Week* in October. We have been actively networking with other service providers in the region to strengthen the range of support services available for carers.

Fathers are being coaxed into Playgroup with our fathers' day event on 6 September. It's great to see children in the playground interacting with the colourful new mural as they try to pat the dogs and cats and drive the bus above the sandpit.

On the management front we are hoping to restructure our governance at our upcoming AGM in order to be able to attract philanthropic resources. Details are contained in the papers being distributed to members and on our website. We are also planning a major fundraising event for 19 February at which we will be launching a fund to further our work in supporting carers. Put the date in your diaries now and look for further details in our summer edition.

Management Committee Vacancies

I would like to encourage any of our members who might like to have a greater involvement in the future direction of Holdsworth to consider standing for a position on our Management Committee. The Committee meets about ten times a year on a Wednesday evening and plays a vital role in the governance of your community association. We are particularly keen to ensure that we have a good representation of our diverse service users as your input is crucial. If you would like to find out more please contact me at the Centre.

*Michael Ryan
June 2008*

All the fun of the farm

To celebrate the end of another busy term at Playgroup we held a mini-Fun Day in June with a kindly farm, some stalls and the ever popular Sports Fundamentals.



Following the positive feedback about the Community Day in February and the Families Week Fun Day in May we decided to try and have one 'special day' each term. The next one will be a Fathers Day event on the morning of Saturday 6 September.



Baby Days at Playgroup continue to be popular and there are now several parent information sessions offered each term.

Recent topics have included

Breastfeeding, Milestones, Speech Development, Tantrums and Colds & Flu. Keep up to date with the current program which is available to download from www.holdsworth.org.au/s_children_family.htm

Elections - a piece of cake

While fulfilling your civic duty by voting at the Holdsworth Centre for the Local Government Elections on 13 September you can give yourself a treat!

Holdsworth will be having a cake stall selling cupcakes and Kourambidis (Greek shortbread). We had a stall at the Federal Election in 2007 and as well as making some money to support our programs, it proved a great way to meet people from the local community as they queued up to vote. Call in and buy your cakes or just have a chat.

A wall of colour

As part of the (then) Vacation Care program a mural was painted on the wall of the Holdsworth playground in 1996. It was a bright and colourful design that became part of the centre's identity. Unfortunately much of it was peeling and restoration was not viable. The surface of the wall is in fact a retaining wall and has regular drainage grooves. It was time to move on and, thinking of this type of art as dynamic, we needed to accept that

the old mural would go and a new one emerge in its place. We have photographed all the panels individually and created a composite image for future reference and as a part of the centre's history.

With input from all our programs, artist, Cathy Hoare (pictured below), who works with our adult clients, came up with a design that reflects our services, our activities, the community, the landscape and the dynamism of Holdsworth. The design incorporates images from the names of many of our programs for young people such as cool katz, crunchy crocs, magic possums, fairy penguins and leaping lizards. Some of these young people have helped with the painting.

Subject to weather, the mural will be completed soon and be ready for its 'official opening' at the AGM in September.



Carers' Week activities

We have a number of proposed activities for our Carers' Support groups during Carers' Week 19-25 October. These activities and planned events are made possible with the support of Carers NSW and SESIAHS.

Some of these planned events will be held just before or just after the official Carers' Week dates to work in with the usual Support Group meeting dates and to avoid congestion at an already busy time for Carers and services.

A 'Teddy Bears Picnic in the Park' is planned as a combination event for Carers Plus and Playgroup Plus to be held on Monday 3rd November in the park next door to Holdsworth. Children, parents and staff are invited to bring along their favourite teddy or soft toy and enjoy a picnic morning tea, music and games.

A Carers 'Pamper Pilot' is planned for both the Creative Carers and Eastender Support groups on the 28 October and 3 November (respectively). The Pamper Pilot aims to introduce Carers to social support services and activities available to them in their local areas. They will be visiting the Magnolia Healing Centre in Rose Bay and will be offered various choices of Pamper

Sessions including therapeutic relaxation, massage, facials, group therapy, counselling & fun activities such as belly dancing. Refreshments will also be provided.

A Historical Tour of Canada Bay is planned for the Chinese Carers Group from Ultimo Community Centre on Tuesday 7 October. The Tour will include Morning Tea at the Pavilion Café, a guided tour of two historical parks (Henry Lawson and Abbotsford Quarantine Reserve), and a lunch at the famous Sydney Rowing Club. This is a joint venture between Holdsworth and Ultimo Community Centre.

Telling it as it is

Holdsworth is publishing a book of carers' stories to coincide with Carers' Week 2008.

Written by the carers themselves, these stories have emerged from a series of writing workshops in which each person has been writing the story of his or her personal experiences as a carer.

The carers groups at Holdsworth include many who are the parents of children living with a wide range of intellectual disabilities, including very new carers with young babies, as well as the spouses and children of people living with memory loss. The writing has been a source of great joy and catharsis for many of our people as they have so much to tell and share with others.

Tapping into their creative sides and working with professional writers has helped them to acknowledge the journey they have taken as carers and to confront with enthusiasm the wide range of emotions every carer has to deal with. It is hoped that the small book will be a source of encouragement to other carers as well as a good vehicle for advocating on behalf of carers. Part of the purpose of the book is increasing the recognition of the importance of caring both by the public and by the carers themselves.

The book will be launched in Carers' Week and be available from Holdsworth from mid October. See www.holdsworth.org.au



New bus outing for seniors

Holdsworth is proud to announce a new Bus Outing Service - Cheap and Cheerful Thursdays - for seniors living in the Woollahra Municipality.

The fortnightly bus outings, which will run on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month, are designed to provide senior residents with an opportunity to socialise and enjoy the company of other like-minded people. Residents will be visiting various locations in the Sydney metropolitan area followed by lunch at local clubs and cafés.



Cost: \$10.00 transport fare (cost of lunch is extra).

Pick-up points:

8.45 am Holdsworth Community Centre

9.00 am Woollahra Seniors Centre

9.10 am EJ Ward Community Centre

9.20 am Edgecliff Centre, street level bus stop

Participants are welcome to bring their carer to accompany and assist them and they must be a resident of the Woollahra Municipality. Prior booking is essential.

The first bus outing commences on 4 Thursday September with a tour of St James Church followed by an Eastern Suburbs tour and lunch at Maroubra Seals.

To request a brochure for Cheap and Cheerful Thursdays, or for more information, please contact Aged Services on 9302 3600





continued from p1

Malcolm has promised to return to Holdsworth later this year at about the time the Federal Parliament's Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth hands down its findings from its *Inquiry into better support for Carers* so that we can formulate further responses to the government. For information on the inquiry see www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fchy/carers/

Carers appreciated the opportunity to be heard and also to learn from each other's experiences in dealing with the 'system'.

Malcolm was presented with a framed memento of carers' stories to thank him for his visit to the Centre.



And the winner is . . .

Tina Levy won the portrait session with *Absolute Photography* in the prize draw that was on display at the centre in June. The picture of her son Hugo is part of that sitting.



Our thanks to Vanessa at *Absolute Photography* for her generosity. Contact them at 9386 5887 or www.absolutephotography.com.au



Top Students

One of the more exciting and rewarding aspects of our recent success in recruiting volunteers has been the involvement of local high school students.

We have been particularly fortunate to have formed a strong partnership with Sydney Grammar and several boys from years 9, 10 and 11 come to the centre on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and also during the school holiday program, to support our afternoon programs for children and young people living with disabilities.

The Grammar boys are a tremendous help and join in the activities with enthusiasm and a great sense of fun. As well as contributing to the enjoyment for the children in the program, the boys have learned about the challenges and joys for people whose lives are so different to their own. Several options for continued and expanded partnership with Sydney Grammar are being discussed and we have nothing but praise for the staff and boys involved.

Several other schools have supported Holdsworth by having pupils spend their community service time here. As well as the disability programs, Playgroup and Community Links (home visiting) have benefited from their involvement. Students from Ascham, Kambala, SCEGGS, and soon Waverley College, have been here this year and we hope to build on this as a valuable part of our Volunteer Program.

If you think you or someone in your family, school or company can assist please call our Volunteer Co-ordinator Holly Brown on 9302 3600.



Photo courtesy of Ashlee Betteridge, Village Voice newspaper

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www.holdsworth.org.au

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

