



St Anthony's Family Care

NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2010

Dear Friends,

It has been an exciting start to the year to see our new respite house taking shape before our eyes with the opening planned for late May.

Many thanks to those of you who responded to our donor survey – it was lovely to read your responses and hear that quite a few people would like to attend a Mass and morning tea here at St Anthony's. We will look to organise this towards the end of the year.

As we approach the Easter period with the resurrected Christ we are reminded to give nourishment and hope to each other.

Respite Service

The development of the new respite centre is progressing well, with the intended completion date set at mid May. We will be holding a launch to celebrate the opening in which families will be invited to attend, and we will also take this as an opportunity to recognise businesses and individuals who may have donated funding. The respite centre is located adjacent to the St Anthony's office at 8 King Edward Avenue, Croydon and will be a four bedroom, fully accessible centre featuring a large living room and outdoor area.

We have been fortunate enough to receive funding towards items for the centre. This includes \$13,000 for

playground equipment from Honda Foundation; \$10,000 from ADHC for electrical and furniture; \$40,000 from Community Builders Fund for



building costs; and \$15,000 from Ian Potter Foundation for furniture and equipment. We will continue to seek

avenues for raising funds to purchase items and equipment for the centre so as to create an engaging environment for the children.

Lastly our Support Staff attended their first training day of the year, which was focused on 'Improving Communication in Respite'. The information was presented by St Anthony's Early Intervention speech therapist, Catherine Turland, and was well received by all staff who attended. Our Respite Coordinator also took the opportunity to present a range of updated procedures regarding the respite service to staff to assist them in their day to day work with children.

Migrant Services (Family Story)

Teriza Maluel migrated to Australia in 2005 with her husband Ateem and has been accessing St Anthony's Migrant Services for over two years now. Teriza has two children, Garang aged 4 years and Athieng aged two years. Teriza attends the playgroup based at St John's Primary School Auburn on Tuesday mornings.

Teriza's son Garang started Kindergarten this year but used to attend the playgroups up until the end of 2009. During Term 4 of 2009 Garang participated in our transition to school program during the playgroup and learnt all about 'big school' and what to expect. Teriza has said that, "Garang loved going to playgroups each week and when he started school this year he was

used to the school, and had friends that he had made at playgroups in his class", this really helped him settle into the routine of school.

Teriza continues to attend the playgroups with her daughter Athieng and says that, "Athieng likes going to playgroup very much as there are lots of things for her to do". Teriza is very enthusiastic during playgroups and always gets involved with the activities, songs and dances as she knows that this is important for her children's learning and development.

Teriza and her family also participate in our school holiday program and have lots of fun as a family socialising with peers from playgroup. During the January school holidays all the families were

given the opportunity to go swimming and have fun in the sun.



Autism Nexus & Early Interventions Options

We held our first consortium meeting on Friday 26 February 2010. This is an important part of our funding agreement and will be held quarterly. It is also a good time to catch up with other consortium partners, to reflect on service delivery in terms of what works well and how we can better improve programs / therapies that we deliver to children and families.

St Anthony's Early Intervention Service and Autism Nexus are continuing to receive referral and enquiries from families and other service providers under the Department of Families, Housing,

Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), Helping Children With Autism (HCWA) program and medicare funded services. Our therapists are keeping up with demand for services and we are also in the process of recruiting a new Occupational Therapist to replace our current OT who will be commencing maternity leave in early April.

The Early Intervention Service and Wollondilly Council have located two suitable venues for establishing speech therapy services to Picton and Warragamba (Silverdale) on Thursdays. Catherine Turland

(Speech Therapist) will be providing therapy for children and we are currently sending out information flyers to child care centres, family day care providers, neighbourhood centres and other service providers.

As therapy providers, EIS staff are continually updating our knowledge through professional development. Staff are booked to attend training in "Therapeutic Listening". Any training opportunities provide staff with ideas on how to further improve program delivery towards optimal early intervention outcomes for children and their families.

Family Support Service

2009 was another busy and productive year at St Anthony's. After the positive feedback from those who attended the Seasons for Growth Siblings Group, invitations have now been sent out to the families for the next Group which will again be facilitated by Sister Jeanette Foxe. This term we will target children from 7- 9 years old. This group is important as it supports siblings to understand and manage the issues and feelings of grief and loss they experience in having a brother or sister with additional needs. It also assists them to understand that the reactions associated

with their feelings are normal and helps develop their skills for coping, problem-solving and decision-making, assists them to restore confidence and self-esteem and build their peer support network. We again acknowledge the support Burwood Clubs have shown the project with their generous donation through the community Development Expenditure Scheme.

Our Family BBQ Fun Day was held on Saturday 21 November 2009 for families accessing St Anthony's disability services. All the children had great fun participating in pass-the-parcel, craft activities and lots of

games, and of course the children took full advantage of the adventure playground. Despite the hot weather, the families that came along thoroughly enjoyed themselves and gave the chance for a few mothers that had attended the Mothers' Weekend Away, a few weeks prior, to reconnect and meet each other's families.

We would like to offer more social events for families in our disability services throughout the year and have started looking at opportunities to fund these events.

Early Learning Centre

This year we welcome to the Early Learning Centre a number of new families that have joined us.

The Early Learning Centre staff are looking forward to another busy year with many social functions being held during 2010. We have

already had our first event for the year with the Family Social held on Friday the 19 February. The social is usually held at the beginning of each year so parents and carers can meet and spend time together out of the normal pick up and drop off times.

We are also investigating fund-raising options for the ELC and are keen to hear from families and community members on ideas on how further funds can be raised.

Diane Campbell, Chief Executive Officer



Sister Carmel Whybrow, Appeals Officer

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For further enquiries:- Ph: 9747 5782 Fax: 9747 1969 Email: enquiries@safc.org.au Website: www.safc.org.au