

At the Heart **hope springs NEWS**

Spring 2002



The Carer Resource Room at Preston Creative Living Centre

Officially opened on a Saturday the 10th August 2002.

Two years ago on the initiative of Peter Reilly, seven groups offering support for carers of people with mental illness in the Northern Region of Melbourne formed the Northern Network of Carers of the Mentally Ill meeting monthly and for the purpose of mutual support and advocacy.

Last year being the International Year for Volunteers, funding was made available for groups supporting volunteers. Frank Filardo and *hope springs* successfully applied on behalf of the Northern Network of Carers of the Mentally Ill for funds to set up a resource room to be situated at Preston Creative Living Centre. A computer and office furniture were purchased and installed. There were sufficient funds to connect the computer to the Internet. (Email address: nncmi@infoxchange.net.au).

The stated aims of the Resource Room are:

1. To provide resources, online and printed, about mental illness to carers, consumers and family members.
2. To provide a respite space for carers to relax, meet, chat, and resource each other.

The room will be used to link people with other networks via Internet and e-mail, provide written information such as a Directory of relevant services, books, brochures, kits, videos, articles, etc.

Networks will be developed with Mental Health Services and Case Managers, PDS Services, social workers, counsellors and psychologists in our local area.

It will facilitate communication through the production and distribution of newsletters, minutes of meetings, and notices of upcoming events.

Computer skills training and the practice will be offered for 'computer-shy' people to encourage competence in using the room's computer and accessing resources through the Internet. A basic training program has been developed for those wishing to learn how to use the computer. Help is available from Kate Verghese 9434 2861 and/or Peter Sanders 9459 8859.

Advanced training is also available through Infoxchange.

It is hoped that this wonderful facility will be a place of encouragement and growth for all those people who use it.

TheMHS Conference - Sydney 2002

Going to an annual The MHS Conference reminds me of being a little boy in a lolly shop. So many interesting people talk, to so many bright and delicious presentations and lectures to choose from, so that all you can do is sample the offerings and savour the experience.

This year the conference was at the Sydney Convention and Conference Centre on Darling Harbour - a very interesting place to be. Over 500 people converged from all over Australia and from New Zealand.

Some of the goodies I sampled were:

- A workshop called Challenging the stigma and discrimination.
- Renowned keynote speakers

A Puerto Rican professor on Equity of access to MH Services

A wonderful consumer talking about an holistic approach to recovery.

A UK social work Professor talking about promoting MH and quality of life through social inclusion.

On each of the four days there were three sessions of one to one and a half hours with 12 presentations to choose from.

- I went to sessions on:
 - Inpatient and Residential Rehabilitation - on allowing residents to make new decisions for themselves
 - The effect is of relocation of Psych Units on staff job satisfaction and negative behaviour of patients
 - The National Resource Centre for Consumer Participation and also the use of the Internet to facilitate this
 - Mindfulness as a way of engaging a person's spirituality
 - Needs Assessment
 - Mingles - a drop in centre that works
 - Improving employment opportunities for people with schizophrenia
 - Client-directed practice
 - Innovations in consumer and carer approaches to mental health delivery, including a report on the award winning service C.O.P.E.S.

All in all it was a wonderful time away, with lots of new ideas to unpack, friendships made and renewed and an enjoyable time had with other members of the ARMC Consumer and Carer Advisory Group.



Meet Kate Verghese, a valued member of the *hope springs* Pastoral Care Team

Kate recently attended an Energizing Workshop on Effective Caring

On Saturday 10 August hope springs invited their volunteers and other carers to a an energizing workshop on Effective Caring

Veronica, the CEO of the Preston Creative Living Centre welcomed us and as we sat around sun drenched tables munching chocolate peanuts we shared our stories of caring.

Anne Muldowney from Carers Victoria encouraged us to think about drawing a line between what a carer can and cannot do and how her organization could lobby government in understanding what we actually need.

The day heated up as Wayne and Peter dialogued around what support we were willing to accept. Culture, loyalty, commitment, fear, love, guilt and duty were tossed and mixed and churned into this thing we call caring.

And we saw towards the end of the day as we viewed the video "Experts at Balancing" it is what we did do best

It was a great day to rebuild our energies and gain support in our caring role.

So keep tuned to the next energizing workshop by hope springs!!!

PERSONAL PROFILE

We are a family of 7 (actually 8, now that my brother in law has come to live with us)

Kate finding working 3 jobs in disability, studying and being wife, mother, daughter and friend a delightful tangle!

Ben now a hemi centenarian has taken up the challenging position of Deputy Principal at a local boys school.

Kitt is studying Human Resource Management and tells us she will be hiring and firing soon.

Luke in year 11 hoping to study law and reduce our need to compromise the argument.
Asher is lapping up the novelty of secondary school with involvement in table tennis and saxophone.
Tashka the mini foxy with a taste for freshly washed socks and Buttercup the cat who is definitely going through pussapause.
Having spent 18 years in Gippsland We are enjoying our new life in Melbourne reconnecting with old friends and networking new.

We have mastered the Melways, Met System, ring roads and shopping plazas and revel in the Multi ethnicity of our Northern suburbs. Sydney Road and Preston Market – what a treat!
One of my greatest enjoyments has been exploring the many bicycle paths and a future ambition will be to head off on my bike touring Australia.

Moving to Melbourne has opened some opportunities for this. I am currently undertaking a Diploma of Community Services / Mental Health at Swinburne. This has stretched my knowledge and increased my desire to work in mental health and /or in Dual Disability.

HOW and WHY DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED IN hope springs?

I first become involved in hope springs early in 2000 through Rosanna Unting Church
During our time in Gippsland, Ben and I were coordinating annual camps that were catering to families in which very often one or both parents were experiencing a mental illness.
We had heard of this group *hope springs* that offered pastoral care to people with mental health issues so when we moved to Melbourne it seemed a natural progression to be involved with people who were attempting to reduce the stigma and isolation that a mental illness can bring.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN *hope springs* NOW?

- ❖ Volunteer at Mary Guthrie House (my first experience of Bingo!)
- ❖ Bringing volunteers together for sharing and support
- ❖ Coordinating the Marimba percussion group
- ❖ Assisting in the operation of the Carer Resource Room at the Preston Creative Living Centre

Dates for the Diary - 2002

Monday 23 September
8 pm Volunteer Support Meeting
Arden Crescent Rosanna

Sunday 20 October
5 pm Carers Week Worship Service
Arden Crescent Rosanna

Monday's 30th September - 18th November
6 pm - 8.30 pm
Journey of Hope
Family Support and Education Program
Finchley Support Service
393 Camp Road Broadmeadows
Enquiries Camel Thomas 9482 4199

5th & 12th October
10 am - 4.00 pm
The 14 Principles Course
Darebin Community Mental Health Service
83 Hotham Street Preston
Enquiries Camel Thomas 9482 4199



"Dear Andy: How have you been?
Your mother and I are fine. We miss you.
Please sign off your computer and come
downstairs for something to eat. Love, Dad."

*Remember Yesterday is History.
Tomorrow is a mystery.
Today is a gift, that's why it is called
PRESENT.
Seize the day*



*Question not but live and labour
Till your task is done.
Helping every feeble neighbour,
Seeking help from none.
Life is only froth and bubble
Two things stand alone.
Kindness in another's trouble.
Courage in your own.*

Adam Lindsay Gordon

