

Young carer informed and active

Carer support and respite can take many forms. Our staff often work creatively to find meaningful ways to best meet carer needs. This was the case recently with a young carer Liam.

Liam is in his final year at primary school and as well as his school responsibilities, he helps care for his mum, Camille. Camille has a physical health condition that requires some assistance with moving about and managing at home.

Liam is linked to our Young Carers Program. He enjoys the contact and is keen to share how it has helped him. "It's great to have the opportunity to talk to someone on a regular basis about things that are bothering me," he said. He also likes that his carer support worker helps him plan and develop things for himself such as having time out, engaging in fitness activities and meeting school commitments.

Liam says he enjoys being a young carer because it gives him the unique experience of knowing what it is like to care for someone. He says it even helps



Liam gets out and about on his bike

with his school work at times as he has learnt about the human body and different medical conditions.

To give Liam some transport and also free up some time away from his caring role, the Young Carer Program provided Liam with a bike. This enables him to get to school quickly and easily and have more time with his friends in the local area.

Liam loves his new bike and says he likes that he can take himself away when he needs a break. It

(Continued page 2)

Benefits of carer support:

- Someone to talk to
- Better health and fitness
- Opportunity to socialise
- Regain independence



3 BBQ Boys new phase



4 New courses in 2016



7 Carer Awards



8 Recent events

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has improved his health and fitness, ability to socialise and his independence. Camille says she has noticed a big difference in Liam since he got the bike.

Reflecting on their family and caring, Camille comments that both of her children are very sensitive to other people's disabilities and medical conditions due to being young carers. "It's a quality I am really thankful they have," she said.

Liam has joined in a number of Young Carer Program events, is enjoying his involvement and says his favourite respite activities are riding his bike and experimenting with graphics on the computer.



Liam and his family at the Little Dreamers Young Carers Festival in October

Farehd Amadi is another young carer featured in this issue, after being nominated as a Victorian State finalist in the National Carer Awards recently. You can read about Farehd on page 7.

While on the subject of awards, Carer Services was recognised for innovation in supporting families with a diagnosis of younger onset dementia care by Alfred Health. We were named runner-up in the category Quality Improvement, Project Initiative or Innovation in Service Promotion, part of an Alfred Health competition to highlight progressive projects.

And in November, Alfred Health was named the Premier's Health Service of the Year for a large health service at the 2015 Victorian Public Healthcare Awards. Alfred Health Chief Executive, A/Prof Andrew Way said it was a privilege to accept the award on behalf of the hospital's dedicated and skilled staff.

"We are extremely proud to care for Victorians... placing them front and centre," A/Prof Way said.

We too look forward to putting you, our carer community first in 2016 and wish all our readers a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

SUPPORT FOR CARERS

Are you caring for a family member or friend who is an older person, or who has a disability, mental illness or dementia?

Alfred Health Carer Services is a part of Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres nationally, providing a single point of contact for aged, disability, mental health and young carers. We help people to access carer support services (including urgent respite care). All enquiries to:

1800 052 222* (24 HOURS)

*Freecall except from mobile phones

We assist family carers who live in the local council areas of Port Phillip, Stonnington, Glen Eira, Bayside, Kingston, Casey, Cardinia, Greater Dandenong, Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula.

We have offices at Caulfield Hospital and in Frankston and Dandenong.

This Newsletter

Carer South News is published quarterly by Alfred Health Carer Services.

How to contribute

Stories, news and photos are welcomed. For submissions, feedback and changes to the mailing list, phone **9076 6439** or email info@carersouth.org.au.

Email

info@carersouth.org.au

Website

www.carersouth.org.au for community news, events, workshops, carer support groups and other resources.

Mail

Carer South News
Alfred Health Carer Services
Caulfield Hospital
Caulfield House
260 Kooyong Road
Caulfield Vic 3162

The BBQ Boys... "From Little Things Big Things Grow"

The title words of the iconic Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody song could be about the BBQ Boys...a carer support group for men in Melbourne's south.

"The BBQ Boys saved my life and marriage!"

In 2009, carer support worker, Nathan Diep reviewed research and consulted with local men's groups and male carers. He found that:

- 20% of carers are male
- Engaging with male carers can be challenging as men have a lower tendency to seek help
- Men have a higher prevalence of poor health and social isolation.

He also discovered male carers weren't getting the help they needed. Some were socially isolated by their caring role and didn't feel as though support groups met their needs saying, "I'm the only male carer here." They didn't feel comfortable sharing their stories and being candid in a predominantly female environment.

As a result, male carers were not getting the benefits a support group can provide such as:

- Meeting others in similar situations
- Recognising that some feelings are normal
- Sharing ideas on coping and relevant support services
- Having a sense of companionship and feeling understood.

The first all-male carer group gathering occurred around a BBQ in early 2010. During the past five years, the group has thrived, becoming a great support for the men involved, a number of whom have described it as a lifeline. It has enabled

its participants to have respite, regain a sense of identity and develop confidence to advocate for better support in the community.

The group has now evolved to be an independent,



Nathan Diep (third from left) and newly elected president Peter McDonald (third from right) with male support group members at their new headquarters in Frankston

"The group gave me time to be me; I feel free and safe to talk."

incorporated organisation. Newly elected president, Peter McDonald says that becoming independent has contributed to a growth in confidence and abilities of the group's members. "We acknowledge the efforts of Nathan to bring the group to this phase of development and thank Alfred Health Carer Services for their support," he said.

The BBQ Boys Carers Group Incorporated offers support to male carers by providing a safe environment to socialise, learn, relax and share common experiences.

The group meets on the first Tuesday of the month 11.00am–2.00pm at Frankston NEAMI office, 1 Douglas Grove, Frankston. Eligible members care for someone who has a disability, mental illness, dementia or someone who is frail aged.

For more information and referrals please email info.bbq.boys@gmail.com

"It is very hard being a male carer because you don't have the skills to care and to learn without support was difficult. I have learned a great deal from other blokes."

2016 workshops

Our Aged and Dementia Program has a new calendar of workshops in 2016 featuring:

Carer Support and Wellbeing

You need to take care of yourself so you can care for someone else. Courses are single-session and focus on you. Topics include *Mindfulness*, *Surviving Carer Stress*, and *Anxiety and the Caring Role*.

Dementia Education

Dementia changes the person you care for. Learn more about dementia and how you can live well with the condition by attending one of our single-session workshops: *Effective Communication or Managing the Changes*, the three-session *Dementia and Caring* workshop, or the seven-session *Creative Ways to Care* course, proven to increase your confidence, and positively impact on the symptoms of dementia.

Information about Services

At the *Aged Care Questions* course, you will learn about services and supports available and how to access them. We'll explain fees, respite, home care packages and *My Aged Care*. This is a must for carers trying to navigate the system.

Practical Information

A course specifically for men is currently in development. There are more men than women in Melbourne's south, over 75 years of age, who provide care for a spouse who is dependent due to illness or disability. This series of 'men only' sessions will give much sought-after advice and practical guidance on a range of topics including hygiene, cooking and future planning.



You can see all courses on our website, print out an information sheet and register online if you wish. All the workshops are free and refreshments are provided. See www.carersouth.org.au or telephone **1800 052 222** for further details or to have information mailed to you.

Full details, including dates, times and venues will be available soon for February to June 2016.

Are you a Young Carer keen to work?

A job ready workshop will be run in January with Youth Transitions training and employment program.

The workshop is to help young carers develop the skills and confidence to apply for jobs.

It could also help with any work requirements for your VCAL certificate.

The workshop will cover:

- Where to look for your first job
- How to make your resume and cover letter stand-out
- How to use your skills as a young carer to get the job you want
- How to answer those tricky interview questions.

Date: Wednesday 8 January, 2016

Place: Carer Services, 51 Playne Street, Frankston

Book: Call for more information **1800 052 222**



Mindfulness for Mental Health

Many carers positively reviewed our Mindfulness workshops in 2015 saying they helped them to learn new skills to support their own wellbeing. As a result, we have planned a workshop for carers of a person with mental illness early next year to help you to kick off the year in a positive frame of mind.

Date: Thursday 18 February, 2016

Place: Best Western Buckingham International, Highett

Book: Caroline Robinson on **9076 6150**

Dementia Yarn Up

Carer Services recently hosted an event for 90 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Dandenong to launch the *Dementia Yarn Up* music video. The event was broadcast live on *Yarning Health*, a weekly program on 3KND.

Former AFL footballer, Nathan Lovett-Murray spoke about the production of the video filmed in Gunditjmarra Country in western Victoria. It was made with local young people to raise awareness of dementia and its prevalence in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, promote a healthy lifestyle and diet, and to encourage respect for people living with dementia. Alzheimer's Australia Vic, the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation and Indigenous Hip Hop Projects partnered to produce *Dementia Yarn Up*.

The screening of the video was followed by an energetic performance by the Indigenous Hip Hop Projects dancers along with the audience and Carer Services staff too!

The day closed with a yarning circle where Elders



Guests young and old at Dementia Yarn Up launch

from the community discussed their concerns about dementia with Professor Tony Broe, Head of Aboriginal Health & Ageing at the Neuroscience Research Centre in NSW.

Watch *Dementia Yarn Up*:
www.fightdementia.org.au/yarn-up-dementia.

Listen to the interviews:
www.vaccho.org.au/news-media/yhr/episodes-2015.

For more information, call Cyndie Fox, Carer Services Aboriginal Access and Support on **9212 3017**.

In brief Innovative practice recognised

Research shows that 1 in 2 carers of a person with younger onset dementia (YOD) receive community supports either too late or not at all. This means many YOD carers miss out on receiving help to manage their caring role and support their wellbeing. Carer Services is working on ways to change this. Over the past three years we have

conducted consultations and developed new ways of working with YOD carers. We were awarded runner-up in the category for Quality Improvement, Project Initiative or Innovation in Service Promotion in an Alfred Health competition to highlight progressive projects.

Caulfield staff care for homeless youth

To celebrate the AFL Grand Final week, Caulfield Carer Services staff shared a lunch to raise funds for Ladder. Ladder is an organisation that supports homeless youth and is sponsored by the AFL Players Association. Staff member and Collingwood supporter Lorraine was proud to make a donation to Ladder on our behalf.

Call of nature answered

The campaign for *Changing Places* continues to deliver results with another of Melbourne's family destinations opening a disability-friendly facility in time for summer visits. Melbourne Zoo has a commitment to ensuring all new developments are designed with access as a priority and that includes public toilets and change facilities. The MCG opened a facility earlier in 2015.

Like all *Changing Places*, the state of the art facility features a height-adjustable, adult-sized changing bench, a tracking hoist system, space for two people and a safer and cleaner environment.

Victorian Minister for Housing, Disability & Ageing, Martin Foley opened the facility, saying: "Providing accessible public toilets with better facilities enables people with disabilities to participate more fully in social, recreational and community activities."

Zoo Director Kevin Tanner welcomed the addition of the improved facility and said, "We are hoping that families who may have previously found it difficult to visit will be able to join the more than 1.2 million visitors who enjoy the Zoo every year."



Minister Foley with Zoo Director, Kevin Tanner

The Zoo also has a new and accessible deck with ramps providing a treetops view of the giraffe exhibit.

Sadly Australian airports are still to adopt *Changing Places*, resulting in some less than dignified travel experiences for disabled travellers. Lend your voice to the campaign at www.changingplaces.org.au

Summer Family Fun Day

After our successful Family Fun Days at the Melbourne Star Observation Wheel mid-year, we are hosting another day early in 2016 for carers and families of someone with a disability, mental illness or who is a young carer.

This time, we are heading to the Enchanted Adventure Garden in Arthurs Seat to celebrate the new year, unwind, and have some fun!

Eligible carers will be invited – with the person you care for – and immediate family members. For anyone who hasn't been there for a while, the park has developed over the years to now include more than 20 themed gardens, tube slides, a 3D maze and lots of green space to enjoy the tranquil surrounds. The adventure park has something for everyone!

Guests will enjoy a two course lunch as well as a magic show to entertain the young ones and a



Summer Fun Day is planned for the Peninsula

photo booth for silly photos of all! More details will be mailed to eligible carer families soon or contact us for more information.

Young Carer awarded

A young carer from Dandenong has been acknowledged as a State finalist in the National Carer Awards 2015. Seventeen year old Faredh Ahmadi was nominated for her role in caring for her mother who has a genetic condition. Faredh joined with other Victorian finalists at the awards ceremony held at Parliament House in the CBD on November 30.

Petra Davies-D’Cruz, carer support worker from Alfred Health Carer Services said, “Faredh, like many young carers, works hard to achieve a balance between school, study and her caring responsibilities.

“She has achieved so much given the many obstacles she has faced. She has settled in a foreign country, learnt a new language and learnt to navigate a new system to help support her mum, all whilst being a primary young carer. I hope this recognition inspires her to continue on her path of education so that she can fulfil her dream of attending university; the first of her family to do so.”

On being recognised as a State finalist Faredh said, “I don’t mind if I don’t win. I’m just happy to get through as a finalist.”

Claire Robbs, Chief Executive of Life Without Barriers, said, “Now in its second year, Life Without Barriers is proud to once again deliver the National Carer Awards with Carers Australia.

“The Awards seek to raise awareness and acknowledge the extraordinary contribution carers make to the nation.”

There are over 2.7 million unpaid carers in Australia. More than 300,000 of these are young carers with 150,000 young carers under the age of 18.



The National Carer Awards will be held in February 2016, and a national winner will be announced in each of the four categories: Young Carer Award, Foster and Kinship Carer Award, Family Carer Award and Caring in the Country Award.

If you know a young carer who may benefit from support, please call us on **1800 052 222**.

Ageing Well Expo

Held in Mt Martha in October, the expo celebrated its tenth anniversary with more exhibitors than ever before. Around 1,200 attendees were given tips on health, carer support, housing, community services, legal support, volunteering and philanthropy.

It is a free Peninsula Health event, held with Mornington Peninsula Shire, Frankston City Council and National Seniors to cater to the high number of people over the age of 55 years living on the Peninsula.



Thank you to the many carers who joined in carer activities this year. We hosted retreats and wellbeing activities in all of our Programs; Aged, Dementia, Disability, Mental Health and Young Carers. We hear many of you are keeping in touch which is great news!



SORRENTO RETREAT

Over a dozen Aged Program carers and staff headed to Sorrento and Queenscliff for three days of laughter, support and reinvigoration! Carers Vic presented a Relax and Unwind session – which is exactly what we did!



FAMILY FUN DAY

Lots of carer families joined us for our Family Fun Days, held at the Melbourne Star Observation Wheel. We hope to see you at the Enchanted Adventure Garden in the New Year!

CARERS WEEK

We were delighted to meet so many carers at Frankston and Brighton events and at the Little Dreamer's Young Carers Festival in St Kilda!



MARYSVILLE RETREAT

A visit to Bruno's Art and Sculpture Garden proved inspirational, as carers experienced sculptures that had survived local bushfires; now restored and displayed with great pride and joy by Bruno himself. Trips to Steavenson's Falls and Saladin Lodge in the Acheron Valley were also a highlight.



ART MAKING WORKSHOP

Our Mental Health Program hosted an art making workshop in October by artist Anne Riggs. The day was social, creative and fun!



WARM UP WINTER LUNCH

Our Mental Health Program welcomed carers to Sails by the Bay at Elwood for an afternoon of networking and nourishment.