

NEWS FROM PARTNERS

The end of the year is approaching quickly, it will soon be school holidays again and Christmas decorations are appearing everywhere.

This year has been a busy one but I am sure we said that about 2008 as well.

Up coming events:

Xmas Treats Fundraiser:

Get your orders in and maybe take some pressure off yourself this Christmas try our Christmas cakes! Orders closed on Friday 30 October 2009 and treats can be collected from Partners on 27 November 2009.

SOUTH BURNETT CSSC

South Burnett CSSC welcomes Jazmine Tracey, an experienced CSO who has joined our Intake and Assessment team from Emerald. A word from Jazmine " Hi .. I have had 3 years experience with the Department. Prior to that I worked as a youth worker and case manager for children in residential homes, supported incarcerated women both inside and on their release from prison and have extensive experience working with disabled adults and children. I am also proud to say that I was a foster carer in Victoria for one teenage girl full time for 2 years and other teenage girls on respite. I am glad to be working in such a beautiful area of South East Queensland. I have found the staff here to be very experienced and very friendly."

This month we also farewell our two university students, Amanda Wislon and Alanna

Christmas Party:

The Christmas Party this year is on 4 December at Wondai Swimming Pool. We will have a sausage sizzle dinner, santa will be bringing gifts, the CTC MERV(mobile playstation, karaoke machine) will be there.

Foster Kinship Carer Week Celebrations 2010:

The Foster Kinship Carer week falls 7-14 of March 2010. We had our first planning meeting today and threw around some great ideas. If you want to be part of planning this event please contact Susan at the Partners office.

Dixon. They have just concluded their four month placement with us. Both have done very well and been an enormous help to the office as they learned some skills to fit them for their future careers as social workers.

I would like to remind carers that we have only two months to complete all our Child Health Passports and your support is vital in achieving this. As you are aware, carers need to inform general practitioners that they will require a long consultation for the health review so that the doctor has plenty of time to look at all the areas required. These consultations may not be bulk billed so I am asking carers to pay for the consultation and we will reimburse any out of pocket expense the carer may have after claiming from Medicare. If any carer has a problem with this please advise me and we will see what we can sort out.

Transforming Care Training:

I have been talking about this training for a while now and it is my understanding it is going to be a mandatory training for carers. I plan to have several sessions of this training in the new year.

Training Calendar:

The Partners team will soon be starting the training calendar for 2010. If you have any idea's about training you would like to see offered please call Cathe or Susan at the Partners office.

The supervised contact Christmas party has been set for 23 December this year to allow carer time to travel to family if they are going away for Christmas Day. Final details re this party will be made in November - if you are not sure if this will affect you please talk with your CSOs.

We are currently trying to arrange a meeting with staff from Education Qld to discuss Education Support Plans. There have been a few issues with these this year so we are hoping to iron out the problems for 2010.

I am hoping that South Burnett will be running another Carer Forum by the end of the year. Please keep tuned for advice re this and come along and share your thoughts about how we can improve our partnerships or service delivery for carers and children in care.

FROM THE FAST DELEGATE'S DESK

Hello Everyone,

Random Acts of Kindness: I read an interesting article recently in a coastal newspaper about a movement sweeping the world called "Random Acts of Kindness". So, I thought, foster carers have been doing this for years only it's called opening your hearts and homes to vulnerable children less fortunate than most kids. As I read the article I could see where the journalist was coming from. At a time when many families are struggling with higher interest rates, fuel prices, ever-increasing grocery prices, what a difference a little bit of kindness could make in all our lives.

Could this be something we can encourage our young children to take on? A bunch of wild flowers delivered to the next door neighbour or a soft toy given to a small child in the street. Maybe next month the annual South Burnett Times Sponsor a Family to a Christmas Dinner could be your Random Act of Kindness worthy of consideration. The list is endless. Give it some thought; it could just bring a smile to someone.

How Good Is It: Not so long ago, to receive crucial paperwork relevant to the role of a carer was mostly difficult to receive. How things have greatly improved for the better.

How often have you heard the saying, things can only get better. With better systems in place providing a better service to foster and kinship carers, better trained CSO's, there cannot be too many carers left who don't have up-to-date Carer Agreements, Placement Agreements, Case Plans and Authority to Care. If you believe any of the Fab Four may not be up-to-date, talk to your support worker or CSO.

Do all the children or young people in your care have their Child Health Passports! If not, contact your CSO or Support Worker.

Education Support Plans: For several months I have been hearing from Carers concerned about the budget cutbacks supporting the ESP for children and young people currently attending primary and high schools. The shortfall in real teacher aide time is having a learning impact for some students who require additional assistance. Across Queensland similar concerns are being raised why budgetary cutbacks are taking away the basic rights of children in care to improve their schooling to the average level of learning. If you have concerns about the outcome of the Education Support Plan or lack of a plan contact your FAST Delegate to discuss it.

It's Party Time: Don't forget Partners in Foster Care's Xmas Drive. Apart from stocking the freezer with a range of reasonably priced Xmas Goodies, profits will go to the organising of this year's annual Kids Christmas Pool Party. Your Xmas Goodies Drive order would be appreciated before 30th October.

FAST Delegate: Foster Care Queensland's FAST (Fostercare Advocate Support Team) program has provided hundreds of foster and kinship carers with an advocacy service that is priceless. During times of distress, carers have access to a support person that can offer advice, support and advocacy in a professional manner. FAST Delegate for the South Burnett, John Dow has been a member of the FAST team since 2002 providing the professional service to any carer who requests advice or assistance when a matter of concern has been raised.

Date Claimer: Kids Christmas Pool Party Friday 4th December, Wondai Swimming Pool.

Till next month

**John Dow (JP Qual.)
FCQ Fast Delegate
South Burnett**

PROCESS TO FOLLOW IF A CHILD IN CARE WISHES TO PARTICIPATE IN A HIGH OR VERY HIGH RISK ACTIVITY.

The Child Protection Practice Manual states that:

"When a child is in the custody or guardianship of the Chief Executive, the consent of the

team leader as the delegated officer is required for a child to participate in activities that are assessed as high risk or very high risk. Where parents

retain guardianship, they must provide the consent."

Carers may provide consent for activities that are not assessed as being high or

very high risk. Any activity that a child wishes to participate in that may be high or very high risk should be discussed with the child's CSO.

Information required by the CSO about the activity to help determine risk includes the following:

- The nature, qualifications and credentials of the organisation or individuals providing the activity;
- The level of adult supervision to be provided during the activity;
- The supply and enforced use of compulsory safety equipment;
- The potential hazards and risk level of the activity
- The insurance provisions provided in the event of an accident;
- The child's access to necessary safety equipment not supplied, for example, a mouthguard.

If the foster carer has access to these details or contact details for the person who can provide this information then it should be provided to the CSO at the time the request to participate in the activity is made.

For children aged 0-5 years it is recommended to access the Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit website which contains injury-related data from hospital emergency departments and identifies

activities that commonly result in injuries to children.

For children over 5 years of age, high risk and very high risk activities may be defined as activities where:

- There is a high risk of injury to the child or other persons if the equipment or procedures associated with the activity are not used in the prescribed manner;
- There is a high likelihood, high probability or frequency, and/or a significant consequence or impact of an injury or event occurring;
- A high level of adult supervision of all aspects of the activity is required.

Examples of activities that may be considered high or very high risk include, but are not limited to, white water rafting, rock climbing and abseiling, and high ropes courses.

The participation of 16 and 17 year olds in such activities should be discussed directly with them with a view to increasing the young person's decision making skills. Check the indemnity forms for these activities, as some activities may allow consent by a young person aged 16 or 17 years.

Because determination of the risk level may take some time, and in the case of custody orders, the consent of the child's parent/s may be difficult or time consuming to obtain, it

is best to speak to the child's CSO as soon as you become aware of the child's wish to participate in this type of activity.

It is important to note that where parents retain guardianship of a child placed in out of home care and consent has been sought through Child Safety Services for the child to participate in the activity the CSO must:

- Contact both parents to advise of the request and seek their consent;
- Explain the nature of the activity and the hazards and risks for the child;
- Provide the parents with a copy of any written information obtained from the organisation offering the activity.

NOTE: Where a child remains in the guardianship of their parents, both parents must provide consent for these decisions unless all reasonable attempts to locate and consult with one parent have been unsuccessful.

Always provide the child with information about the approval process and explain that a decision will be made, or obtained, in a timely way, so as not to prevent the child from undertaking the activity, should consent be given. Once a decision is made, the child should be informed of the outcome.

Partners' Absences for November/DECEMBER

Kellie Seng will be absent from the Office from Wednesday 11 November to Monday 16 November. Kellie Seng, Kate Roberts and Alana Law will be attending TAFE on 1 December to 4 December.

CHRISTMAS ART COMPETITION

All children are invited to enter the Christmas Art Competition. The winners will be announced at the annual Foster Carers Christmas Party. The theme is Christmas and all entries should be sent to Partners in Foster Care by the 26 November 2009. Please make sure that your name and a contact telephone number are on the back of your work.

Contacts:

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After hours the on-call phone is available to **Partners' carers**. Even if you are not sure about a situation or would like clarification on any matter feel free to call the on call number.

ON CALL NUMBER: 0429 886 855

CHILD SAFETY SERVICE CENTRES:

Kingaroy: 4164 9400

Murgon: 4169 9400

After Hours Phone Number for Departmental Carers:

CRISIS CARE -1800 177 135

CARER HOTLINE - 3235 9901

FAST DELEGATE:

John Dow
Phone: 4163 3238



SQUIGLY'S RIDDLE

Directions: Solve the clues, write the answers in the boxes provided and when you read down the first column of each group of answers, you will reveal the answer to Squigly's riddle. Good Luck!

Why couldn't the astronaut land on the moon?

- Groom's companion
- Number after seven
- Art project
- Room under the roof
- Opposite of over
- Begin
- Written paper

- Bug bites become this
- Exchange

- Birds have these
- Movie Participant
- Doral finned fish

- Lost and _____
- Saddened
- Camel like animal
- Body organ

