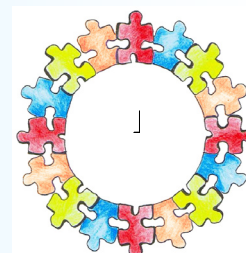


S.P.O.C.A.A.S. NEWS

Volume 1 Issue 2 : Term One 2009



A Committee of Community Living & Respite Services Inc

SPOCAAS is currently running at a rapid speed and we are very fortunate to have several people working hard towards achieving SPOCAAS success. Feedback has been encouraging and we are excited to announce that we will be hosting a first for the Echuca/Moama Region: An **Autism Awareness Fundraiser**.

A Trivia Night has been scheduled for Friday 15th May 2009 during Autism Awareness Month. This night plans to incorporate raffle draw & auctions. Prize Donations will be gratefully appreciated and we thank **Echuca Workers & Services Club** for a fee free venue. We invite everyone to book a table for what is sure to be a great night for a great cause. (Further details on Page 3)

Recently a SPOCAAS Wish List was created. Creation of the list was relatively easy: the challenge will be establishing funds & sponsors, then willing hands to deliver the "Wish". Future plans & wishes include an Open Day as the SPOCAAS Official Launch, an evening for Teachers (open to all educators from Daycare to Secondary - Principals, Teachers, Integration Aides), Makaton classes, Parent-Family-Sibling Wellness Events & ASD relevant Workshops, to name a few! A BIG wish recently granted by the **Roy Ogden Foundation**: a laptop, printer, camera & laminator will make workshops & working from home all the more productive for our volunteers. We wish to thank **The Roy Ogden Foundation** and also **Suzanna Barry** from CLRS for applying for this grant on behalf of SPOCAAS.

As SPOCAAS expands to cater for parent & community needs, we invite you to contact SPOCAAS to get involved, register with SPOCAAS and contribute to what is becoming a valuable Community Support Group. Linke Smedts-Kreskas

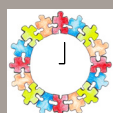
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CONTACT

S.P.O.C.A.A.S



P.O Box 979
ECHUCA VIC 3564

0428 382668

spocaas@clrs.org.au
www.clrs.org.au



Free Parent Information Packs for Families

SPOCAAS is proud to announce that we were successful in receiving a grant from EMCE to supply 50 Parent Information Packs (PIP) to families across the Region. These packs will include an appropriate text book, sensory & management aids, ASD information and a local service directory for ASD relevant goods & services.

If you are a family managing a child with an ASD, any age or ability, and would like to receive a **FREE** Parent Information Pack, then please ensure that your family is one of the first 50 families to register for a "PIP" directly with S.P.O.C.A.A.S.

Distribution of the packs is planned for
Autism Awareness Month: May 2009.

**Our Sincere Thanks to
Echuca Moama Community Enterprise!**



ECHUCA MOAMA
COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE
'resourcing our community'



www.carersvic.org.au

Carers Victoria is the state wide voice for family carers, representing and providing support to carers in Victoria. They work closely with Carers Australia and other carer associations to improve the lives of carers by providing counselling, advice, advocacy, education, and training services.

The Carers Victoria website is informative and easy to use providing an option to 'Get The Most Out Of This Website', and categories in 'For Carers' such as Finding Services which lists resources and shows videos of people such as Susan, a mother of a 13 year old son with High Functioning Autism and Asperger's.

Call Carers Victoria on Freecall 1800 242 636 for information, advice, personal support, and counselling services.

Repetitive questions and talking too much

A child with Autism may ask questions repeatedly and will most often be reassured by hearing the same response to the question over and over as it helps to reduce their anxiety. Repetitive questioning can be a result of mimicking the conversation of others such as 'What are you doing?' and the child may become distressed if the answer differs in any way from what he/she wants to hear. Talking too much is the result of a child knowing just what to say on a topic that he/she is passionate about, but not understanding that others may not be as fascinated as he/she is about it.



Websites & The Talk by Fiona O'Brien

LIBRARY UPDATE

With a growing 'Wish List' of resources from our SPOCAAS community and some resource purchasing very near on the horizon, the SPOCAAS resource library looks set to enter the New Year in a very exciting way.

The end of 2008 saw the purchasing of a new trolley for our library as well as some plastic tubs to hold our resources. During this time Di Kerrison (a SPOCAAS mum) also spent some time organising many of the resources into categories – thanks Di! The current resources are being catalogued and will soon become available for borrowing. Library membership is coming – anyone who is registered with SPOCAAS will have access to the library and more detailed information on 'how to borrow' will be sent out once cataloguing is completed– if you'd like any help in the interim, please see one of the library team for further details.

This month we have reviewed the *Australian Autism Handbook*, and being back to school time, we have also reviewed *Can I tell you about Asperger's Syndrome?* – helpful to those families in mainstream schooling who may need a resource to help explain the diagnosis to a teacher or class.

Wishing you all a wonderful and safe start to 2009! Elissa, Cassie & Sherri.

Australian Autism Handbook

(The essential resource guide for autism spectrum disorders) by Benison O'Reilly and Seana Smith

A fantastic 'one-stop' guide to Autism, the "Australian Autism Handbook" is aimed directly at helping Australian families.

With reference to personal stories throughout, the book takes the reader from the early stages of diagnosis / pre-diagnosis to dealing with other issues – finding the right school, managing the interventions and dealing with your own grief and self care.

The book is divided into different sections or topics, making it very easy to pick up and refer to parts that are most needed or relevant at the time. With thoughtful guidance, advice and support on a range of ASD topics and issues, this is one book that every family dealing with ASD should have access to.

Can I tell you about Asperger's Syndrome?

(A guide for friends and family)
by Jude Welton

A lovely book, aimed at 7 to 15 year olds, "Can I tell you about Asperger's Syndrome" is thoughtfully written in straightforward language that explains; what Asperger's Syndrome (AS) is, what it feels like to have AS, some of the difficulties that a child with AS may face, and what other people can do to help.

It's a great book to give people an understanding Asperger's Syndrome from the child's perspective and is short and brief so as not to cause 'information overload' to the reader (perfect for friends and teachers as a first introduction to the diagnosis).

Complete with 'Teacher Tips' at the back, "Can I tell you about Asperger's Syndrome" is a recommended read for all.



Both the "Australian Autism Handbook" and "Can I tell you about Asperger Syndrome" are available through the SPOCAAS resource library.

We are working on making these two books available for purchase directly via SPOCAAS. If you are interested in purchasing either book, please let us know and we will see what we can do.



Living with a Brother with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Living with an Autistic Brother can sometimes be hard and annoying. I have learnt to live with it because he will always be Autistic. I have had some tough times and some really fun times with him. I love to share my experiences with him, like going on holidays. He does have meltdowns a lot but he settles down after a while. I try to ignore his meltdowns by going to my room. It sometimes embarrasses me when we are down the street and he freaks out. He takes longer to learn things than other children would, but we finally got him through it by helping him learn his way. This meant I have to be more patient and I have to speak clearly. When he was diagnosed with Autism it was a little tough at first. Mum studied a lot about autism and we learnt how to manage it. I think I found it really hard because I was still learning what Autism meant. I have now learnt more about it and it's not as hard now. My brother is a special person and even though he may have Autism, he has a big heart that just never gives up! By Brittany

Living with Brothers that have ASD

Hi my name is Mia, if you don't know me I am 10 years old and have 2 brothers with a disability. I live with my Mum {Sherri} my Brother {Adon} and my other Brother {Thomas} I wrote this column so that you can understand how I feel from day to day. Some things that annoy me is that my brothers won't leave me alone and they cry and cry I just can't get to sleep, and some things that make me happy is when we go on a holiday and celebrate a special occasion or when I get to spend some quality time with them both. Every day I try to spend time with them to make them feel happy about their older sister. I get time to myself when I go on a special program, with Mum, my friends and my Nan and Pop. Adon can be very anxious about many things. He worries about his brother and his Mum, Sherri. He has trouble making friends and it makes him feel sad. He likes to play with certain things and he becomes very obsessed with these. He sometimes nags me to play with him and I don't always want to. This also makes him sad but frustrated too. Thomas has Autism and he is non-verbal. This makes it hard sometimes because I don't know what he wants. He will pull on my arms to take me somewhere or if he needs me to get him a drink. When he is angry, he sometimes pulls my hair in frustration which hurts me very much. He doesn't like it when mum turns the car around to go in the other direction. He gets very anxious and agitated and starts to kick Adon. But he can be a beautiful boy when he gives me kisses and cuddles. By Mia

Adolescents

**Professor Tony Attwood
& Dr Isabelle Henault**

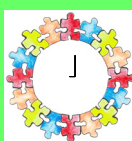
20th March 2009 9.30am to 4.30pm
Moonee Valley Racing Club
Contact Catherine Jacobs
03 97430840 (Mon-Thu 9 am-3.00 pm)

PECS Basic Workshop

16th & 17th February 09
Hotel Ibis, Lt Bourke St, Melbourne
9.00am to 4.30pm
Cost for parents is \$330.00

Contact Erin Hobbin
03 93916122

ehobin@pecsaustralia.com



S.P.O.C.A.A.S

Autism Awareness Event 2009

Trivia Night

Friday May 15th 2009 @ 7 pm
Echuca Workers & Services Club
Annesley St Echuca

**\$15.00 per head sold as tables of 10 (\$150)
Includes Supper.**

Drinks available at Bar Prices

Trivia : Raffle : Game Prizes : Auction

Tables are limited so to secure your table please contact Linke
0428 382668 or email spocaas@clrs.org.au

Back to School FIND A WORD By Georgina



pencilcase **homework**
pencils **scissors**
teachers **gluestick**
reading **classroom**
maths **art**
pens **library**
english **uniform**
principal **science**
rubbers

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k	r	o	w	e	m	o	h	q	r	s	t	u	v	m	w	x	y	z

Three Wise Men!



A Special Thanks To Ross @
 ALL NIGHTER ROADHOUSE
 44-54 NORTHERN HIGHWAY
 OPEN 24 HOURS EVERYDAY.

Thanks Santa!



S.P.O.C.A.A.S First Christmas.....Santa was a great hit.

Some Wonderful SPOCAAS Kids



Stormy skies looked ominous, but nothing could deter the delight as Santa arrived, via his special "Buggy" to greet all the children at our first ever SPOCAAS Xmas Party. Bags of "lollies galore" were given to all the good boys and girls, and I believe even a few to the good Mums and Dads. A Special Thanks to all volunteers on the day. This includes all the wonderful Mums and Dads, and Community Living & Respite Services who provided staff to "watch" the exit to the playground, and ensure the safety of our beloved children. A special thanks to SANTA (AKA) Mr Geoff "Grumps" Sands & family!

By Julie Sands



PART TWO SHOELACES : Review of Elastic Shoelaces

We have now been using the elastic shoe laces for a couple of months, and thought I would tell you about our experience. We found the laces work really well. We have the ones used by tri-athletes with the plastic toggle to tighten. Once you have done up the lace the shoe is then able to be slipped on and off. I would say as an average we are only having to retie them once or twice a week. The laces come in a variety of colors, Ben loves the orange. An item as simple as this has made a difference for Ben especially at school. We will continue trying to teach Ben to tie his laces but in the meantime these do make life easier.

Tanya Johnston

Elastic shoelaces are a good alternative for anyone who struggles to do up their laces!

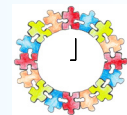


Some kids will learn to tie their shoelaces, but for others there comes a point of when to pick & choose a battle!

A KIDS REVIEW Review by Bayley Aged 10

I wore the SPOCAAS Safe Wear* and I felt very, very, very safe. I felt safe because if I got lost people would know who my mum is and where to find my mum. I thought all the writing on it was fantastic and very good because it had lots of information, who I am and everything! I chose the lanyard because if you had the key ring what happens if you go on a roller coaster and it falls out of your pocket and you get lost? The lanyard was comfortable. I liked the colour. I suggest that if it is annoying, put it in between a singlet and your shirt. If you don't have a singlet, just put it on the outside. No people laughed at me and I just felt safe.

* This is Bayley's name for the lanyard and not the actual name of a product.



If anyone is wanting something like this made up, SPOCAAS has a large supply of safe release lanyards available in navy blue and the laminated card can be tailored to you & your needs.
\$3.50 each

Dates for Your Diary?

Supporting Children with
Autism Spectrum Disorders:

Positive Behaviour Management

ECHUCA HALF DAY WORKSHOP

Presented by Cristina Isaac

Monday March 23 2009

Echuca Workers & Services Club

165-171 Annesley St Echuca

Registration 9 for a 9.30am start & finishes 12.45 pm.

\$65 Professional

\$35 Parents / carers or full time students

Morning tea provided

Booking Direct to

Ph: (03) 9795 0328 or asd_cris@yahoo.com.au

STOP PRESS.....

SPOCAAS Parents: Would you like to go to Cristina Isaac's Workshop for \$10.00?

To Qualify for a subsidised ticket

You **MUST** live in the Campaspe Shire and be one of the first 20 parents with an ASD child to contact SPOCAAS via telephone 0428 382668 or email spocaas@clrs.org.au and request a subsidised ticket.

Ticket Subsidy Courtesy of Carer Support Services & SPOCAAS

Strictly limited to 20 tickets at the Echuca Workshop on Monday March 23 2009. Sincere apologies that this does not include NSW parents, as with most things, it is a border issue! Successful parents will be required to fill in a

Cristina Isaac Registration form & make payment of \$10.00 within 3 business days of notification of being a successful parent. Registration forms are available from front office of Community Living & Respite Services in Annesley St or via email from SPOCAAS. Any cheque payment to be made out to SPOCAAS/CLRS.

All queries regarding this subsidy to Linke at SPOCAAS ph 0428 382668

Introducing Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

Autism Victoria holds sessions for groups of families who have a child who has recently been diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). These sessions are held on the first Thursday of every month from 10am-12pm. They are free for Autism Victoria members. All sessions are held at Autism Victoria, 35 High Street, Glen Iris. Bookings are essential.

Contact the Autism Victoria Family Counsellor Ph 03 98850533 or counsellor@autismvictoria.org.au



S.P.O.C.A.A.S Dates & Information



FEBRUARY							MARCH							APRIL							MAY							
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	
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							30	31																				

2009 CONFIRMED DATES

FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY
9th Evening Meeting	16th Evening Meeting	20th Evening Meeting	AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH
23rd Coffee Morning	No Coffee Morning	27th Coffee Morning	PIP's Available in May
24th CLRS Fundraiser Janine Shepherd	23rd Cristina Isaac Workshop	Next SPOCCAS Newsletter Due in April	11th Evening Meeting
Watch this page for Future Events in 2009 like:			15th SPOCAAS TRIVIA NIGHT
SPOCAAS OFFICAL LAUNCH			25th Coffee Morning
TEACHERS EVENT			
MAKATON WORKSHOP			
ASD SPECIFIC WORKSHOPS			

Permanent Venue for SPOCAAS

SPOCAAS is happy to announce that we have finally secured a permanent venue at Moama Senior Citizen's Centre. Martin St Moama, next door to Moama Medical Centre.

On Site Child Care For SPOCAAS Coffee Morning

Fee Free child care is provided by Community Living & Respite Services Inc to allow parents to enjoy a Coffee Morning uninterrupted. Parents will need to sign in children and provide an activity, a drink & snack. This service is available for anyone with preschool age children.

DISCLAIMER: The information and content of this newsletter could include inaccuracies, errors or omissions. S.P.O.C.A.A.S does not endorse or suggest any of its contents are suitable for your situation. Using any of this information is at your sole discretion & all liability for any claim or damages that may result are hereby disclaimed. Some material in this newsletter may include or summarise views, standards or recommendations of third parties. The inclusion of such material is not an endorsement by SPOCAAS and is not an indication of SPOCAAS commitment to any particular course of action. Links provided to internet sites are provided for the user's convenience and do not constitute endorsement of the information at those sites. SPOCAAS accepts no responsibility for material contained in any site that is linked to this internet site. SPOCAAS representatives provide parent to parent support through shared experiences and available resources. People should obtain appropriate professional advice relevant to their particular circumstances.

Please Support those that Support S.P.O.C.A.A.S.

Echuca Moama Community Enterprise

Brochures about how **YOU** can support EMCE to support the local community are available from SPOCAAS or contact EMCE directly www.emce.org.au or ph 03 54802353



<p>Just waiting patiently!</p>		<p>The "boys" having fun in Santa's Buggy.</p>		<p>Some Fantastic Dads.</p>
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