



SPOCAAS News

Volume Two - Issue 3 - 2010

A Committee of Community Living & Respite Services Inc

Welcome to the 2010 AUTISM AWARENESS Edition of SPOCAAS News.

As the year rushes along, it is evident that there is a focus on Autism in various ways. This is exciting for the many families managing Autism Spectrum Disorders, but I think it is agreed that there can never be too much awareness and promotion of understanding the individual nature of ASD and in turn the individual needs of the families, the schools and the community. The recent Teacher Awareness Event was a true testament to the level of interest in furthering understanding of Autism in the educational setting. A report, statistics and some photos from this very successful day are on page two. A sincere thank you to everyone who attended or contributed to the day, maybe it can be an event to be expanded upon in the future?

Some may be aware that I have another role that keeps me busy, ASD Case Consultant Practitioner for Loddon Mallee. This is a short term project that aims to provide Secondary Case Consultancy to professionals around the region, promote Autism Awareness and Understanding and provide opportunities to build capacity for ASD Specific Focus Groups/Communities of Practice. Under this role I welcome you to take a look at the website specifically created for this project, details on page 5 or contact me at Community Living & Respite Services for more information.

Hope you all have a fabulous month.

Linke Smedts-Kreskas



Community Living
& Respite Services Inc.

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Please take a moment to acknowledge the growing numbers and the individual nature of Autism Spectrum Disorders.
Find out more in this edition or via one of the links suggested.

SPOCAAS Teacher Awareness Event

The first ever SPOCAAS Teacher Awareness Event, held last month, was hailed a huge success! The positive feedback, and wonderful affirming response from both educators and the general public was overwhelming. After months of preparation, the room literally 'buzzed' with activity for the whole afternoon, and many wonderful experiences have been reported from the day.

As a result of the day, many educators expressed interest in further ASD professional development sessions involving speakers and workshops - this clearly indicates that the SPOCAAS Teacher Awareness Event was a wonderful starting point for future professional development events.

“Almost 100 teachers from 33 separate establishments!”

A big thank you to everyone who volunteered their time and resources in many ways over the last 12 months leading up to the event. The event would not have been as successful as it was without the support of all who contributed to the planning and execution of the day. And SPOCAAS would also like to take the opportunity to thank all those who attended the event. The positive response from schools in supporting students on the Autism Spectrum further cements the building of positive partnerships between families and schools, and the building of a brighter future for all students on the Autism Spectrum.

Elissa Plumridge



The room set up



Some of the Parent Volunteers



Thank you to everyone who attended!

~ Statistics from the feedback forms ~

- ◆ 51% of those that attended the event filled in a feedback form
- ◆ 66% were from the Public Setting, 24% were from the Catholic setting, the remaining represented Independent & Specialist settings.
- ◆ 45% of those that responded said that their establishment had 6 or more students with an ASD
- ◆ 42% of those answered didn't know that Autism Spectrum Disorders were recently included under the Disability Act
- ◆ 41% rated that their school received a Moderate Support for ASD students, the school receives some support but ASD continues to be challenging.
- ◆ 41% felt that they school provided limited ASD support and 20% felt that the school provided them with a high level of Support
- ◆ 63% felt they had a moderate level of knowledge and understanding of ASD
- ◆ 100% felt comfortable to refer families to SPOCAAS
- ◆ 91% felt they learnt something new about ASD at the event



Those that attended the event will receive a more comprehensive summary of the data collected.

THANK YOU TO SPONSORS: Echuca Workers & Services Club : SPOT ON Dry Cleaning Echuca



AUTISM HOUR

www.autismhour.com.au

By the time you read this newsletter, another family will know that their child has been diagnosed with autism. And, by the end of the day, six other sets of parents will have joined them. There are 130 000 Australians with autism. (source www.autismhour.com.au)



Help to make a difference during Autism Month -

As part of Autism Month in April, Autism Hour starts at 9am on April 30th. Go to www.autismhour.com.au to take the autism hour pledge and help raise awareness and spread the word about autism.



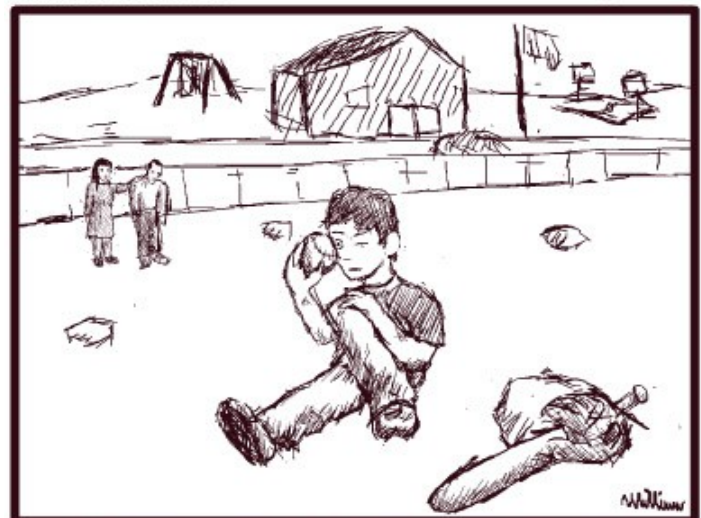
Or how about hosting a Pictionary game in May to raise money and awareness for autism? For all the tips, advice, and information you need, visit www.drawtism.com.au.

Check out www.winningconnection.com.au for information on a unique flashcard system by Winning Connection, a company based in Western Australia. The flashcards contain correct and unambiguous content, are tested and recommended by professionals, and can be easily incorporated into early intervention ABA programmes.



Autism Rhetoric

Art by William



Well honey, you *did* tell him to keep his eye on the ball...



Being **Autism Awareness Month**, it seems like the perfect time to take a look at a few titles that support families in sharing more about Autism and Asperger's Syndrome with other people (friends, extended family, school etc), and explaining what the world can look like from the autistic person's viewpoint.

The SPOCAAS library has some wonderful titles for supporting awareness of Autism, and many of these are aimed at younger readers too! Try one of the following titles when sharing with others what autism is about:

"A Book About What Autism Can Be Like" by Sue Adams

"Can I Tell You About Asperger Syndrome" by Jude Welton

"The Autism Acceptance Book: Being a Friend to Someone With Autism" by Ellen Sabin

"Talking to Friends and Family about the Diagnosis" by Anna Tullemans

And of course, many other information packed resources are also available through the SPOCAAS library – call in to the Community Living & Respite Office in Percy Street for a browse!

*Happy Reading,
Elissa Plumridge*

BOOKS & RESOURCES FOR SALE



SPOCAAS currently has a selection of books and resources for sale. Some books are in stock and are available for immediate purchase, others will be ordered at the end of the April, Autism Awareness Month. We are happy to be able to provide these books at approximately 10% discount of Recommended Retail Price.

Books and order forms are on display at Community Living & Respite Services Inc, Percy Street Echuca. We invite you to take advantage of this special offer and in turn help support SPOCAAS families with future programs.

Books in stock for immediate purchase at a discount price

- ◆ How to make school make sense \$25.00
- ◆ Can I tell you about Asperger's Syndrome \$15.00
- ◆ Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome (Tony Attwood) \$35.00
- ◆ Red Beast \$25.00
- ◆ What is Friendship \$30.00
- ◆ Why do I have to? \$15.00
- ◆ What did you say? What did you mean? \$30.00
- ◆ Kids in the Syndrome Mix \$25.00
- ◆ Mark Mt Time- Digital Bookmark Timers \$15.00





CLRS Autism Awareness Project

www.clrsasd.org.au

This is the website of the ASD Case Consultant Practitioner for the Loddon Mallee region, 12 month project that is a part of the Autism State Plan. The aim of the website is to provide a place for professionals and families alike to access information about ASD that is relevant to the region, is up to date and helps eliminate endless searches for information, including ASD events, ASD tip sheets, the Autism State Plan, Helping Children with Autism scheme, the opportunity to participate in surveys that will help determine the needs within the Loddon Mallee region and much more.

The website contains a link to a blog, which acts as the ASD newsletter for Loddon Mallee and a forum for professionals to participate in an ASD specific focus group/communities of practice. The Blog is open to everyone, the Forum is a tool for professionals to network, create an online communities of practice and develop focus groups.

**Visit the website today or contact the ASD Case Consultant Practitioner,
Linke on 5480 2388 or lsmedts@clrs.org.au.**



SPOCAAS Sausage Sizzle for Awareness



Our SPOCAAS Parents held a Sausage Sizzle on Easter Saturday at Safeway Moama. It was a fantastic success, raising over \$670.00 to go toward raising community awareness and purchasing more library resource books.

A special thanks to all the Mums and Dads that took the time out at Easter to assist with the BBQ cooking, selling of sausages or promoting our merchandise. The kids that attended did a fantastic job and should be applauded for their maturity and ability to sell sausages to everyone that even looked in their general direction. Excellent job Kids.



Thanks to Safeway Moama for their repeated support, Thomas Butchers of Tatura for great sausages (had a few ask who supplied them!) Linda for the donation of bread and making the arrangements with Safeway.

I was overwhelmed by the number of people who just wanted to donate because they are have kids with ASD, or grandkids with ASD, or they know someone who is affected. The stories that were spoken of were heartfelt and genuine. So to all those visitors and people unknown to me, Thank You! *Julie Sands*





PARENTS & CARERS



If you are a parent / carer of a school aged child with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), there is a national program of workshops and information sessions available to help you work in partnership with your child's school to improve their learning outcomes. The delivery of the workshops and information sessions will include:



WHO IS BILLY?

go to www.whoisbilly.com.au to find out!

- two day workshop and information sessions for parents/carers held over consecutive days;
- online workshops and materials offered to support you if you are unable to attend in person;
- the facilitation of parent networks and access to local expertise and information

The workshops and information sessions will complement the professional development component for teachers and other school staff.

Parent & Carer Workshop

Echuca on September 7th & 8th September 2010

For further information go to: www.autismtraining.com.au

TEACHERS

Teachers and schools that haven't engaged in Positive Partnership face to face training are encourage to register for online training modules at www.autismtraining.com.au.



Both components are delivered nationally by the Australian Autism Education and Training Consortium (AAETC) and are valuable training opportunities for families/cares and educators to increase their understanding and awareness of ASD.



TIP OF THE MONTH

It is important to understand that Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) are individual to the person, no two people with an ASD are alike. ASD is complex, no question is a silly question when you are trying to understand an individual managing an ASD.

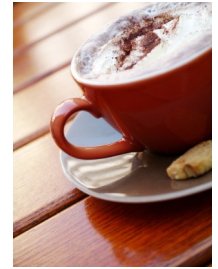


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SPOCAAS COFFEE CLUB : New Evening Session!

SPOCAAS now hosts a Morning and an Evening Coffee Club for Parents and Carers of Children with an ASD.



When: Dates are indicated on the back page.

Morning Venue: Moama Bowling Club Coffee Shop

Evening Venue: The Echuca Hotel, High Street Echuca

Morning Time: 9.30am till 10.30am

Evening Time: 7pm till 8pm

Agenda: Casual, no agenda.

Child Care: Please arrange your own childcare or bring them along.

Cost: Every parent registered with SPOCAAS is entitled to a drink. (Morning is a free tea, coffee or hot chocolate. Evening is a free tea, coffee, hot chocolate, beer or wine.)

~ Morning and Evening Coffee Club's doesn't run on public holidays and school holidays ~

Supported by Carer Support Services, Community Living & Respite Services Inc and SPOCAAS fundraising activities.

Echuca PlayConnect ASD Playgroup



The Echuca Region PlayConnect Playgroup runs every Thursday during school term time. This playgroup is aimed at families with a child or children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or ASD traits. **A diagnosis is not necessary.**

RSVP is ESSENTIAL.

All enquiries to Linke on 5480 2388 or asd@clrs.org.au.

The PlayConnect Development Worker in 2010 is Elissa Plumridge.

NEW FAMILIES ARE WELCOME

PlayConnect is a playgroup specifically for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder or ASD like symptoms and their families. Giving everyone a place to connect with other families, find ASD information and resources. The children will access play activities that are suited to children with ASD. The group will be facilitated by a Development Worker but has an aim to become self sufficient. Families are encouraged to get involved and have fun!

Early Days Workshop : Echuca May 7th

Does your child have Autism?

FREE Early Days Introductory Workshop is being held in Echuca on Friday May 7th 2010

RSVP to Early Days Hotline on 1800 334 155

This workshop is provided for mothers, fathers and other family carers of children 6 years and under who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or are going through the assessment and diagnosis process.






DATES: April & May 2010



Please note that some events are to be confirmed (TBC) and details are subject to change. It is advised that you are on SPOCAAS email list to ensure you are kept informed of changes.



APRIL 2010		May 2010	
Friday 2nd	Good Friday	Tuesday 4th 9.30am till 10.30am	Coffee Club Morning at Moama Bowling Club Coffee Shop
Saturday 3rd	SPOCAAS Sausage Sizzle at Moama Safeway	Tuesday 4th 7pm till 8pm	Coffee Club Evening at The Echuca Hotel
Monday 5th	Easter Monday	Friday 7th	FREE Early Days Introductory Workshop: Echuca
Saturday 10th 9am - 1pm	SPOCAAS Autism Awareness Day Echuca Main Street	Monday May 10th 7pm till 9pm	SPOCAAS Evening Committee Meeting
CANCELLED Monday 12th 7pm - 9pm	Evening Committee Meeting at CLRS Office Percy St Echuca. Cancelled due to Awareness Events	Tuesday 18th 9.30am till 10.30am	Coffee Club Morning at Moama Bowling Club Coffee Shop
PLEASE NOTE- Change in Date TBC	Men's Day Out is postponed. Please ensure you are a SPOCAAS members to receive your invite shortly.	Tuesday 18th 7pm till 8pm	Coffee Club Evening at The Echuca Hotel
Tuesday 20th 9.30am - 10.30pm	Coffee Club Morning at Moama Bowling Club Coffee Chop	Monday 24th 10am till 12noon	SPOCAAS Morning Tea at Moama Senior Citizen's Centre. Onsite Childcare— Please RSVP.
Tuesday 20th 7pm - 9pm	Coffee Club Evening at The Echuca Hotel	To be Decided	Mens Day Out—Invitations to follow
PLEASE NOTE Change for Monday 26th	Public Holiday. There will be no Morning Tea at Moama Senior Citizen's Centre but families are encouraged to meet informally 10am till 12noon at Moama Adventure Playground. Please note there will be no childcare.		A SPOCAAS Planning Day is being scheduled for the June Committee meeting. Invitations will be forwarded to families



RSVP's & Enquiries

Email: spocaas@clrs.org.au Phone: 5480 2388 SMS text: 0428 382 668



Child Care

- SPOCAAS Morning Tea provides onsite child care provided fee free by Community Living & Respite Services Inc.
 - ❖ Please introduce your child to CLRS staff on arrival.
 - ❖ Please bring a drink and snack for your child.
- SPOCAAS Evening meetings are Child Free unless otherwise specified.
- Children are welcome to Coffee Club and are the responsibility of the parent.

Venue's

- SPOCAAS meets for its monthly morning tea at Moama Senior Citizen's Centre, Martin St Moama.
- SPOCAAS meets for Evening Committee Meetings at CLRS Offices 26A Percy St Echuca (Old Centrelink Building)
- PLEASE NOTE CHANGE: SPOCAAS Coffee Club will meet at Moama Bowling Club Coffee Shop as from April 2010
- Please check venue details for programs you wish to attend.