

The Networker

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Free to SA children's services

network sa

Our Vision

A strong and viable children's services sector that enhances the lives of children, families and communities

Our Mission

Our mission is to make a significant contribution to the well-being of children, families and communities through supporting excellence and equity in children's services.

We develop, interpret and disseminate information that strengthens the capacity of children's services to deliver quality programs.

We support the operators of children's services to make informed and sound decisions about the governance, management and administration of their organisations, with a focus on personal, social and fiscal responsibility.

We uphold the Indigenous cultures of Australia, seeking to support the inclusion of Aboriginal children in all children's services and to deepen community understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal family and community values.

We are committed to the provision of services that foster community spirit and help to create a humane and productive society.

Vacation care adventures



What did you do during the holidays? The Pines OSHC kids went camping. They planned the trip themselves and it was a great success. This report was written by Joel.

It all started out as a committee of 4 children and 1 staff member. The committee was given a budget and they researched accommodation, location, programs, menus, and dates.

The committee selected Woodhouse which is a 54 hectare, scout owned activity area that offers things like challenge hill, laser skirmish and other activities.

After that the committee were responsible for promoting the camp and organising equipment like tents.

On the day of the camp children had to come to OSHC by 10:00 to make their lunch and prepare for the camp. The bus arrived at 11:00.

Everyone got on the bus and were very excited on the way there.

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New this month

Resource Papers for Long Day Care and Out of School Hours Care (see blue insert).

Note they are printed both sides—one side for LDC and one side for OSHC.



When we got there we took everything off the bus sat down and had lunch. About an hour later we all had to take our stuff up a very steep hill because we parked the bus too far down.

Then we all started putting up the tents it was hard work. After all the tents were up we had half an hour to explore the site.

Next we went to challenge hill it took two hours but most people enjoyed it. Then tea the boys cooked that and they did a great job.

We played night games in the pine forest it involved every one working as a team and lasted till 11:30pm.

Then we had supper and it was free choice time for half an hour, most people had it in their tents then it was lights out.

In the morning the girls burnt the bacon and egg for breakfast.

After breakfast we went to play out door laser skirmish it was great fun. When we got back to the camp site it was raining we all packed up.

After everything was in the bus we got in the bus and went to Mc Donald's for lunch it was nice to be dry. Then we went back to OSHC.

All the children were then asked to fill out surveys and everyone wants to go on another one.



A DAY AT GLEN FOREST ANIMAL PARK FOR TUMBY BAY VACATION CARE CHILDREN

After weeks of careful planning for the day, the weather threatened our excursion. Parents asked me could I run some more excursions as I brought the rain! We had 2 inches in Ungarra; 1inch came in half an hour.

Something special was when the children sat in the guinea pig cage, and patted them so much that the guinea pigs fell asleep in the children's arms. It was very moving and a wonderful day. You could tell the children were engaged as there were no behavioural problems, and even though the children got rained on, they were so engaged they didn't even realise it was raining.

We used one bandaid for a bitten finger and the only reason the child got bitten was he handed his hand to the bird without any food in it.

Laurette Waddell Smith
Tumby Bay OSHC



Children learning human rights through stories

(Louise Phillips, Queensland University of Technology)

Storytelling as a way of knowing

Bruner (1986) defined storytelling as a way of knowing that reveals the storyteller's inner mind and offers listeners a way to interpret the world.

A story will trigger different personal connections, different messages and different levels of meaning for each person; so a story shared with a child recurrently will change its meaning as the child's understanding of the world changes.

Greene (1995) advocated sharing our stories and opening ourselves to others' stories, thus creating a "connection between narrative and the growth of identity" (p. 186); and other authors have argued that we develop a deeper sense of identity through narrative (Aveling, 2001; Bruner, 2003; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2001). (Sufferers from the neurological disorder *dysnarrativia* [the inability to tell or understand stories] have no sense of self and cannot sense what other people might think, feel or even see.)

Storytelling shapes meanings not by relaying the truth but by offering a shared understanding of what we know (Emihovich 1995, p. 38).

A well told story invites the listener to enter its world, identify with its characters, share their experiences, then emerge with new insight and understandings.

Jaffe (2000, p. 175) argues that storytelling, 'can serve as an important medium for effective communication of curriculum content, with long-lasting repercussions for children as learners and participants in a complex and demanding world'.

Egan (1986) argued that carefully crafted stories can enable children to understand abstract concepts like death, love, honor and courage; and advised teachers to regard a unit of learning as a story to be told.

Saxby (1992) argued that storytelling can be a way to discuss social justice with young children, who have a natural disposition to explain and explore their inner and outer worlds through story.

Children as knowing critical thinkers

Silin (2000, p. 259) suggested that the lens of developmentally appropriate practice has led many early childhood educators, 'to underestimate what children know about the real world and to overestimate their own ability to protect them from it'; while Canella & Viruru (2004: 88) argue that children are defined consistently as in need of surveillance, limitation and regulation - for their own good.

Other research has shown that children can understand and discuss real local and global issues (MacNaughton, 2001; MacNaughton & Davis, 2001; Silin, 1995, 2000; Soto, 2005), so shielding children from certain topics to 'protect' them may make them feel vulnerable & powerless.

Stories about real, contemporary (possibly contentious) issues can encourage young children to empathize with another, making them more able to respond, engage in discourse and take action. For example, in 2000 I was invited to support a teacher who had read "The Rabbits" (John Marsden and Shaun Tan) to a group of preschoolers, some of whom were disturbed by the phrase, 'and they stole our children'. I told them a story from the book *Murawina* (Sykes, 1993) which draws from the childhood experiences of Aboriginal Australian women. The children responded passionately to the grave injustice that the young girls had experienced. They wrote to the Australian Government demanding that it say sorry to Aboriginal Australians (Phillips, 2005).

Children as active citizens

Giroux (2003) argues that children appear in public discourse 'as objects, defined through the debasing language of advertising and consumerism' (p. xiv). Such objectification belittles their status in society, perpetuating a belief that they cannot understand, let alone discuss and act upon, complex issues.

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In contrast, Jans (2004, p. 31) observed that, 'children ... are strikingly sensitive about global social themes, like the environment and peace', yet many educators regard this ability as a foundation for children's citizenship in the future, rather than seeing it as evidence that young children can and should be citizens now, engaging in meaningful public debate in their communities about issues that affect them.

When children encounter stories about injustice, then engage in critical discourse via words, dramatic form, dance and visual art, they can gain new insights to those stories.

Greene (1995, p. 132) suggests that this can lead to, '... the education of persons to become different, to find their voices, and to play participatory and articulate parts in a community in the making'. As Rose (2004, p.104) argues, 'to ignore the potential of the arts to challenge thinking in brilliant, innovative, and subtle ways is to neglect an essential way of knowing'.

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□ CEIEC December 2006. The CEIEC is happy for any or all of this paper to be distributed for information and study purposes, provided that any such distribution acknowledges that the material originated in the CEIEC.

Excitement grows as National NAIDOC celebrates its 50th anniversary

Statement by National NAIDOC Week Chairperson, Aden Ridgeway

Although the year has just begun, I am already excited about this years National NAIDOC celebrations as we celebrate a remarkable milestone, the 50th anniversary.

Year after year, NAIDOC celebrations bring pride and enjoyment to our cities, towns and remote communities. And this year is no different. Our deadly theme for 2007 is 50 years: Looking Forward, Looking Blak.

Once again the highlight of the year will be the National NAIDOC Awards and Ball to be held in Darwin on Black Friday, 13 July, a fitting coincidence to celebrate the achievements of Indigenous Australians.

Past National NAIDOC winners have included Catherine Freeman, Ernie Dingo, Pat and Mick Dodson, Kyle Vander Kuyp, Anthony Mundine and Deborah Mailman.

And of course the hard work of Indigenous people in communities must not be forgotten. Previous Lifetime Achievement Winners Arthur Murray and Elizabeth Morgan Hoffman have focused their lives on fighting for justice and advancing the cause for Indigenous Australians.

It is now time to nominate outstanding Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders who have made a significant contribution in their chosen field - whether it is music, arts, culture, education, sport, employment or politics.

But don't leave it too late as nominations close for the National NAIDOC Awards on Wednesday 18 April 2007.

But before this years NAIDOC winners are announced, we need a poster to celebrate our 50th year. We are calling for Indigenous artists to submit designs for the 2007 Poster Competition.

The poster competition, a feature of NAIDOC celebrations since 1972, must incorporate the theme for the 50th anniversary. The winner will not only have their design on NAIDOC posters throughout the nation but he or she will also receive a \$5000 cash prize.

Entries for the poster competition close on Friday 30 March 2007.

To nominate someone for a NAIDOC award or to enter the Poster Competition visit www.naidoc.org.au and download the relevant forms.

For more information visit www.naidoc.org.au.

NAIDOC Week celebrations for 2007 will be held from 8 to 15 July.

NAIDOC celebrates the survival of Indigenous culture and the Indigenous contribution to modern Australia.

All Australians are encouraged to participate in NAIDOC Week activities.



Last year's NAIDOC Poster Competition Winning Entry was by Charmaine Green, from Geraldton Western Australia.

The painting is called *Life Circle*.

'Our past and our future are interconnected. In the circle of life as we move from the past to the future we must always remember and respect everything in the past. Our history, our culture, our traditions, our ancestors and our own experiences. This way we can walk into the future with respect and confidence.'



Professor Larissa Behrendt

International Women's Day Breakfast 6:45am -9.00am, Thursday 8th March

at Adelaide Convention Centre, North Terrace, Adelaide

Guest speaker will be Professor Larissa Behrendt, Professor of Law and Indigenous Studies and Director of the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning at the University of Technology, Sydney.

The cost is \$35 per person.

To book, phone Chris Hockey on 08 8223 3388 or email at adelunifem@unifem.org.au



Chess Training Opportunities

Child health education support services (chess) is the result of an interagency commitment to improve the health care and learning of all children and students and to support their families and communities.



Health Support Guidelines updated

The DECS Health Support Planning guidelines were first released in 2001. After five years, we have now updated these, with multiple links to key websites to enable education and childcare staff to easily locate information and support to assist planning for children with health care needs.

In addition, all the care plans and forms for staff have been updated and made available on a CD Rom and the web.

Training

Subsidised training is available for children's services staff. Refer to the Training Schedule (yellow insert in this newsletter) to see where and when the training is scheduled.

Participants in the **Introduction to health support planning** workshops will receive a free copy of the guidelines and CD Rom and have an opportunity to identify how they can set up safe and manageable health support planning at their worksite.

There will be update information on work occurring in the mental health area and lots of opportunity to share problems and solutions.

The **Medication management workshops** have been scheduled because medication management has been identified as one of the areas of greatest potential risk in services.

The nurse trainer goes through the 10 rights of medication management and talks about how to keep children, and staff safe – and help parents understand about why we have the rules we do in this area.

If you have not taken advantage of the offer of subsidised training please do not delay.

There are vacancies in the South but less for other sessions. Check the Chess website – www.chess.sa.edu.au

Deb Kay

Postgraduate Careers in Human Services - University of South Australia

Seeking professional renewal or looking for a career change? UniSA's School of Social Work and Social Policy offers a range of HECS-funded postgraduate programs for human service professionals from health, justice, law, business, management, industry, education, psychology, social work and social science backgrounds.

The professional doctorate involves one year of preparatory course work and two workplace-based research projects in the following programs:

Doctor of Human Service Research

Graduate Certificate in Rehabilitation Counselling

Graduate Diploma in Rehabilitation Counselling

Master of Rehabilitation Counselling

The following three Mediation and Conflict Management programs are nested and draw from common courses, as do the three Rehabilitation Counselling programs, allowing you to upgrade from one program to another. You will enjoy the benefits of flexible approaches to learning and networking with a range of professionals.

Graduate Certificate in Mediation (Workplace Relations or Family)

Graduate Diploma in Conflict Management

Master of Conflict Management

For more information, please contact the School of Social Work & Social Policy on 08 8302 4378; Web: <http://www.unisa.edu.au/eas/study/programs.asp>

or contact the Director of Postgraduate Studies, Associate Professor Dale Bagshaw

Email: dale.bagshaw@unisa.edu.au,

Telephone: 08 8302 4375



Book Review

Transforming Community Committees and Boards – From Hell to Heaven

Our Community Pty Ltd Melbourne 2003

\$36.00 from www.ourcommunity.com.au

While this is only a small book of around 60 pages, it does pack a punch. The information it contains is a strong and valuable resource to new board / management committee members and CEO's wishing to give information to new boards as part of their orientation, as well as excellent review material for the more seasoned board member.

The information covered goes from 'What is Governance' to 'Evaluating Board Performance'. There is an excellent chapter on what a not-for-profit board does and the book even contains some checklists that could be useful for evaluating performance and future planning.

I would recommend this book to new board or management committee members. It is an easy read, not too heavy, but is also interesting and informative.

Well worth a look!

Noel H. Jensen
Chairperson
Network SA

Mira's Story

In the December Issue of *The Networker*, it was reported that Mira Lisichin of Gilles Street OSHC had been the winner of an OSHC Triple A Award in 2006. Following is a brief account of Mira's journey to OSHC.

Mira arrived in Australia in April 1970. As newly weds in Croatia, she and her husband were looking to emigrate to Canada but part way through this process they went to a meeting where the Australian consular staff spoke of the advantages of their country and so they "swapped". Mira's comment – "if she had realised that would mean having Christmas in summer, she would never have come to Australia"

The young couple arrived in Fremantle and stayed in WA for a short time but her husband wanted to go to Sydney. Their son was born in WA. Eventually they boarded the train to Adelaide with an idea that they would find work in Adelaide for a while, save more money and then head off to Sydney. Mira's comment – "when she stepped off the train in Adelaide it 'felt right' and she had no wish to move on to Sydney." The family found accommodation in the city and Mira has lived in the city all her years in Adelaide and so Gilles Street PS was her local school. Her daughter was born after she arrived in Adelaide.

Gilles St. PS has always attracted a diverse clientele and as a city based school it attracted enrolments from professional couples where both parents worked in the city even though these families lived further out in the suburbs. A "who's who" of enrolments in that school over the years is very interesting and diverse. Today the client base at the school is still diverse, both culturally and in terms of where the children live.

In 1976 it was time for her son to start school. Neither Mira nor her children spoke any English; there was very little support for children and families in this situation. Mira had no concept of preschool and so her little boy went off to school without knowing the language, the expectations or any other children. At that time Gilles St. PS was a very poor school.

In 1977, Max Green arrived as the new (and young principal) and this was an important key to Mira's

future pathways. Max recognised the fact that the school was poor and he encouraged volunteers in the community to support and develop initiatives. Through this process he actively worked to seek grants and implement initiatives that would support the development of the school in its community.

Max was very quick to recognise the need for care for children to support families' work choices. He worked with the Education Department and the Adelaide City Council to identify support. Mira recalls a lady, Mrs Naylor, who did some work providing activities for children in the parklands after school and in the school holidays she volunteered to continue this work at Gilles St PS. Mira's memory of this – "she was a wonderful lady – a beautiful grandmother and mentor"

There was an ongoing process of identifying volunteers and it was through this process that Mira had the opportunity to chat with others over coffee and begin to learn some English.

The OSHC service began to evolve more formally too and money was found to purchase a pool table (still in use) and some toys for the children.

Mira was invited to join the P&F, she had no idea what this meant but from there she became involved in making school uniforms to support the school which was still struggling financially.

People watched her skills in this area and she was encouraged to develop these skills and so several years followed in which she undertook several different courses up to the level of an advanced diploma in fashion design.

She still has a wool evening gown that won a prestigious prize and was on display at the Royal Adelaide Show for 10 days and in her final year she refused to enter any competitions but a carnival costume she made was voted the best garment by the lecturers at the time.

At this time her husband died and policy changes in support for adult students changed, and in Mira's position, she needed job security and an income. She turned to OSHC at Gilles St which

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had continued to evolve, she started working several days a week and this quickly reached a point where in 1983, she was the principle supervisor in vacation care – earning \$3.50 per hour. “I loved working with children, I would have never chosen this path but I just loved it. I have never sewn since”

In 1985, the position of OSHC Director was advertised and after following due process Mira won the position – “I had to find someone to help me to write the application”

From here on the service has gone from strength to strength, Mira has been on the OSHC committee and a member of the school council for many years. In that time the school and OSHC have been synonymous. During 2006, Max retired, so some change is now inevitable but this service has a rich history that should be preserved and modeled for the partnership it has with its school.

Mira is very proud of her achievements and the richness of the experiences that are offered for children, the service has grown and her job has grown with it. She has had a high profile in the OSHC sector and was an early member of the OSHC Association.

She now works full time but spends less and less time with the children which she laments.

Mira's regrets

OSHC used to be a family focused service, but the changed accountability requirements have altered this and it now has a business focus with increased paperwork and endless administration.

She is sad that the concept of services being able to operate as single staff services was ever agreed to. She believes passionately that this not only compromises the safety of children and staff but reinforces the concept that “less than best” is OK

She is not convinced that the additional requirements demanded by OSHCQA are valuable – across the spectrum, the majority of people do not recognise the value or importance “good outcomes” for children.

Mira's joys

Her love of children and their families is paramount

Her passionate support for the school over many years has been legendary

Finding this unexpected career path and the people she has met along the way have been the greatest blessing

Kay Thomas
OSHC / New Projects Coordinator
Network SA

Great opportunity for young women

Lovin' It Changin' It Conference

13 to 14 April 2007

YWCA Sponsored Registration

The YWCA is offering sponsorship opportunities for young women wishing to attend the two day conference, Lovin' It Changin' - Young women living life, career and community, being held at the Hotel Y in Melbourne, 13 to 14 April 2007.

Benefits from participating in the conference include developing leadership skills, knowledge, experience and networks. If you are interested in sponsored registration, simply fill in the conference registration form and submit a sponsorship form at the same time to the YWCA.

For more information contact Angela De Conno on 08 8227 0155 or to download a copy of the registration form check out the YWCA website www.ywca.org.au Registrations and sponsorship applications close 5 March 2007. All applicants will be informed by 14 March as to the level of sponsorship they have received.

60% increase in workplace complaints about discrimination and harassment

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission has reported a 60% increase in workplace complaints to HREOC since Work Choices became law. HREOC President John von Doussa, QC has issued a timely reminder to employers that they are bound by federal and state anti-discrimination laws.

Work-related complaints to HREOC have increased from about 70 to 110 a month since Work Choices commenced last March, according to preliminary and unpublished data from the Commission.

Changes to unfair dismissal laws seem to have had a particular impact. In the first three months after Work Choices banned unfair dismissal claims for smaller employers (April-June 2006), HREOC received 126 complaints regarding dismissals, compared to 26 in the same period in 2005.

Reference: HREOC website guides at [HREOC info for employers](#) and [HREOC info for employees](#).

When Dad's word is not OK

The Industrial Relations Commission in NSW recently rejected an unfair dismissal action by an employee who had listed her father as a referee without disclosing their relationship. The employer had checked the reference, but did not realise the referee was her father because they had different surnames. The reference was a factor in the employee gaining the position. She was dismissed after 3 months for unsatisfactory performance.

The Commissioner stated: 'It is my finding that it was incumbent on the applicant to have completed her application with (the recruitment firm) in a truthful, accurate and forthright fashion disclosing all relevant information, and then taken her chances in the employment process... ...That she did not, was wrong and fatal in this application ...'

When seeking referee reports, you need answers to these questions ...

Is this person a credible referee for this position?

What is the relationship between the referee and the applicant?

Has s/he worked with the applicant? In what capacity? For how long? Recently?

Has s/he observed the skills and knowledge you require being demonstrated by the applicant?

Would you feel comfortable dealing with a complaint of discrimination or harassment?



New workshop from Network SA

Presented by SA Equal Opportunities Commission

Nipping Problems in the Bud and Complaint Handling

This 4 hour course emphasises the role a manager can (and must) play in the early intervention of grievances involving inappropriate behaviours that have been reported to them, verbally or in writing, or that they observe. Although structured within an EO framework, the principles and skills learnt are applicable to other types of grievances. See pink insert for details.

Northern Area Local Hub Group

I have been successful in winning a PSSP Individual Contract with the PSC (Gowrie Training Centre) as coordinator for a Northern Area Local Hub Group. This hub group is funded and supported by the Inclusion Professional Support Program an initiative of the Australian Government.

Our main outcome is "Building relationships and partnerships and sharing knowledge between local health, education and children's services practitioners to improve outcomes for children and families"

For the north I am in the process of coordinating our first hub group for Term 1. I am consulting with some local health authorities to talk about 'Food Allergies and Intolerances' and the impact these have on menu planning and nutrition in children's services.

I am very excited about this project and equally excited about the outcomes. Networking and sharing knowledge is what a large part of being a professional in any field is about but even more so in educating and caring for our children-our future.

I look forward to keeping you posted via the newsletter about our up and coming groups.

Our Objectives include

- To promote a collaborative approach to support and improve outcomes for children and families
- Providing opportunities for practitioners to share information knowledge and experience within their local area
- To provide opportunities for networking and stronger links across services types in your local area
- Creating a forum where local health, education and child care practitioners learn together to improve the quality of programs and services offered to children and families

- Providing an opportunity for practitioners to share their knowledge and expertise with the wider community within their local area
- To create a shared vision and commitment across services in support of children and families
- To increase knowledge, skills and ability across the health, education and children's services through professional dialogue, critical reflection and professional development
- To link areas of professional development needed across the health, education and child care sectors within the local hub area
- To identify key training needs across service types within the local area and provide specialist speakers, customized workshops and other professional development to meet these needs

Professionals within the north will receive information very soon from their Early Years Band coordinator regarding our first hub group. Hope to see you all there!

Yours resourcefully!!!!

Debbie Grose
Director
Gawler Community Child Care Centre
Wk (08) 8522 2079
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Network SA Resource, Advisory & Management Services Inc. is a non-profit community service providing information, support, resources and training in the children's services sector.

We work with mainstream and Aboriginal children's services.

The Aboriginal Resource & Management Support Unit (ARMSU) of Network SA provides specialist management and operational support services and cultural awareness programs. ARMSU is SA's Indigenous Professional Support Unit, funded through the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Thank you to Combined Charities Inc. for their generous support, as a sponsor of ARMSU Talking Culture.

Services provided to the children's services sector by Network SA & ARMSU include:

Advice and support for mainstream children's services on management matters (funded through the Inclusion & Professional Support Program via the Lady Gowrie Child Centre)

Training and Professional Development services (some sessions funded through the Inclusion & Professional Support Program via the Lady Gowrie Child Centre, others fee-for-service and by negotiation)

Advice, support and training for Aboriginal services (funded through the Inclusion & Professional Support Program)

Establishment support for new OSHC services

(funded through the Inclusion & Professional Support Program via the Lady Gowrie Child Centre)

Aboriginal cultural awareness activities for children and training for staff teams (fee for service)

Mentoring support for new Directors (may be funded through the Inclusion & Professional Support Program via the Lady Gowrie Child Centre, or fee-for-service by negotiation).

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Contributions are welcome.

Closing dates for each edition are 20th July, 20th September, 20th November, 20th January, 20th March and 20th May.

The material contained in this publication is of a general nature only and not intended to be advice on any particular matter.

Please share this newsletter with others in your service.

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

- Martin Luther King