

Western Youth Newsletter

Western Youth is a mental health promotion newsletter for those working with young people in the west and northwest region of Melbourne. It is produced by the Mental Health Promotion & Partnerships team at ORYGEN Youth Health and distributed every quarter.

The purpose of the newsletter is:

- To profile innovative initiatives for young people within the west/north west Melbourne metropolitan region
- Link up those working with young people across different sectors (education, health, mental health, arts, recreation, drug and alcohol, forensic, local government, NGO's)

- Provide a central database of successful youth health/mental health promotion initiatives and key contacts

We would like to invite you to make a contribution to our future newsletters. It can be as short as a few lines. We are looking for information about projects/programs or initiatives rather than service/agency details.

To contribute please contact Maree Sidey on 8346 8223 msidey@unimelb.edu.au

This newsletter is available in an electronic or print version. To subscribe please phone Sandra Biggs on 8346 8213 or send your contact details to sbiggs@unimelb.edu.au

Spotlight on...

Western Young People's Independent Network (WYPIN)

The Western Young People's Independent Network (WYPIN) is a youth service targeting refugee and migrant young people living in the Western region of Melbourne. WYPIN was established in 1989 by a group of young people who were interested in challenging racism in the community and wanted to empower young people to develop programs and activities in line with their needs and aspirations. WYPIN's Committee of Management is made up of young people and there is a focus on youth participation throughout the service.

WYPIN's main focus is as an advocate and voice for young people of refugee and migrant backgrounds in the Western region. The service supports these young people around a range of settlement issues, including access to education, employment and recreational services. WYPIN works with young people to assist them to feel connected to their new community as well as encouraging them to develop and explore their identity.

WYPIN is well known for using drama and performance with young people as a community

education tool and to explore issues around race and ethnicity.

WYPIN has also facilitated programs and discussions that recognise Indigenous Australians as the first Australians and that Anglo-Australians were also once new settlers and migrants. Discussions around Australia's Indigenous history have helped refugee young people feel more accepted in the mainstream community as part of Australia's ongoing history of migration.

WYPIN is seen as a critical youth voice on refugee issues in the Western region of Melbourne and plays a key role in advocacy and policy development.

Programs include:

- After school homework program
- Youth Committee of Management
- Anti-racism peer education
- Youth participation programs
- Support of ethno-specific youth groups
- Recreational access programs

Current Project

Anti-Racism Peer Education

Using drama and dance, young people from

WYPIN educate their peers against racism and promote the value of cultural diversity. Drama provides an alternative form of expression and a voice for young people of non-English speaking background.

The group have developed a presentation to educate their peers on issues of racism, discrimination, cultural diversity and mutual respect. The presentation is performed to school groups throughout Victoria.

The performance is a fun and interesting approach to an important issue. It uses hip-hop, dance and drama and has been very positively received by all the audiences it has faced. The performance lasts for approximately 10 minutes, and is followed by group discussion at the end.

In recognition of the time and effort young people put into the performance participants are paid for their time. The performance fee also goes to supporting the on-going activities of the group, such the homework support program and self development programs.

For more information about the program, please contact Kavitha Chandra-Shekeran, WYPIN's Community Development Worker on 9362 0257 wypin@vicnet.net.au

The 'Spotlight' section is a regular feature of Western Youth. It allows for amore detailed description of an initiative. If you would like your project to be profiled please contact Maree Sidey, Mental Health Promotions and Partnerships, ORYGEN Youth Health, 8346 8222 msidey@unimelb.edu.au

What's Happening in...

Education

Family Support Worker Initiative

With the changing demands on our families in recent times, schools have extended their responsibilities and duties to cater for the growing need for family support. Five schools in the Wyndham district have combined resources to enable them to employ a Family Support Worker (FSW). The aim of this program is to assist the school welfare coordinators or teams in the provision of case management services to 'at risk' children and their families.

Ronda Mason was appointed to this role a year ago, sharing her time between the five schools. Ronda provides each school and their community with a valuable service for families in need including practical assistance, information and general support. She liases directly with staff from each school on welfare issues and students needs, she assesses the needs of parents, undertakes home visits, makes recommendations and referrals to outside agencies and provides short term counselling.

All cases are managed by the FSW in a confidential and professional manner. Ronda has organized and facilitated parenting groups as well as providing schools with specific programs for children with welfare issues. This has enabled school welfare coordinators to provide school based support for students while the FSW goes outside the school boundaries to connect families to local welfare agencies.

For more information on the FSW contact Nella Cascone, Assistant Principal, Iramoo Rimar School: 97412803 cascone.nella.c@edumail.vic.gov.au

Update: Festival For Healthy Living

The Festival for Healthy Living recently launched *A Step by Step Guide for Schools* to help school communities run their own Festivals.

As outlined in the previous edition of Western Youth, the Festival for Healthy Living is a strategy using the performing arts in schools to promote mental health and emotional wellbeing.

The *Guide*, accompanied by materials on disk, leads school communities through the process of establishing a team and local steering committee; exploration of ideas with artists, teachers and students; developing performance pieces; and putting on a community-based show, often including visual arts exhibitions.

The launch of the *Guide* was also a celebration of the achievements of the Festival so far. Students from Debney Meadows Primary School sang a warm musical welcome. Dr Maureen O'Rourke from the Victorian Schools Innovation Commission spoke of the important role the arts play in the development and growth of young people and their communities. The publication was officially launched by the Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Daniel Andrews, MP. Students from Maiden Gully Primary School,

who had participated in the Festival in Bendigo last year, left us uplifted and optimistic about problem-solving life's challenges with their circus-based performance.

If you are interested in finding out more about this publication and the accompanying professional development please call Helen Butler or John Lane on 9345 6047 festival.hl@rch.org.au

Secondary School Nurse Program

The Secondary School Nurse Program is a policy initiative of the Victorian Government to reduce risks to young people and promote better health in the school community. At present there are 16 nurses in the Western Metropolitan area covering 24 schools and 17 nurses in the Northern Region covering 31 schools.

Secondary School Nurses are employed by DHS who worked together with DE&T to develop this program. Our roles differ depending on the different school's needs but our key roles are Health Promotion and Primary Prevention.

Some of the many programs we are facilitating and or promoting in our schools are:

- Boys and Girls groups for Year 7 on Confidence Building, Body Image, Healthy Eating ,Conflict Resolution and Puberty.
- Digging Deep: exploring feelings for boys in Year 8 and 9
- Lets Party: harm minimisation program
- Core of Life: Parenting and Birth
- Girls and Boys groups for Year 9 on Self Image, Assertiveness and Relationships
- S.T.E.P Breakfast Clubs
- Immunisation talks
- VCE Supportive Friends
- Creating Conversations
- Loss and Grief
- Talking Sexual Health

We also offer workshops on reproductive health and general health and professional development workshops for staff on SSAFE and Student Mental Health.

We endeavour to network and wherever possible work jointly with other agencies. We work with Primary School Nurses to assist young people

in dealing with any difficulties in their transition from primary to secondary school. We also provide appropriate primary health care through professional clinical nursing that includes assessment, care, referral and support.

For more information or if you want to contact one of the nurses please contact: Carmel Hegarty, Western Region SSN Team Leader DHS on 92757258 carmel.hegarty@dhs.vic.gov.au or Ruby Callanan, Northern Regional Nurse Manager DHS on 94579135 ruby.callanan@dhs.vic.gov.au

The Friends Program

The Friends Program is a universal program for both Primary and Secondary schools that prevents anxiety and depression. Training days are being provided in Melbourne which enable educators to deliver the program without specialist support.

This is a fantastic opportunity for all schools in Victoria to be trained in this outstanding Australian program. It has been heavily research tested and can testify that 80% of students that undertake the training with an anxiety disorder show no signs following the training or in the following six years. With current Australian statistics showing 20% of students having a mental illness of which depression and anxiety disorders are the most common, this program is unmatched anywhere in Australia or overseas.

For queries regarding training contact Cynthia Turner (07) 3846 4443. The Friends resource can be purchased from Stephen May at Australian Academic Press, contact (07) 3257 1176. More information from www.friendsinfo.net

Arts

Girls Act Up

The *Girls Act Up* project motivated young women who find themselves on a destructive journey to make positive, long term changes through the use of dance, music, art, drama and self discovery. Through workshops facilitated by Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company young women who are in secure accommodation were able to express their talents and explore many of the issues that have confronted them throughout their everyday lives.

'The young women have such amazing talent,'

said Jan Adams, Coordinator of the project. 'This project has enabled them to express their talent in a safe, supportive and non-judgemental environment.'

'One of the success stories involved a young girl who connected up with Somebody's Daughter following discharge from her secure accommodation, and performed with the Daughters in front of the politicians at Parliament House, Canberra.'

The project, funded by the R. E. Ross Trust, has resulted in a resource booklet and CD being produced. The artwork, drama and songs reflect some of the issues that the young women have experienced. The booklet also provides useful health information to young people and is being distributed to young people and people who work with youth. The project provided the young women the opportunity, encouragement and support to continue their relationship with Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company once they leave Young Women's Secure Welfare.

For copies of the CD and Booklet contact Women's Health West on 9689 9588 info@whwest.org.au

St. Martin's Youth Theatre

Now entering its seventh year, the St Martin's Performance Ensemble is a fantastic opportunity for young people between the ages of 15 and 25 to undertake an extended training program in performance. Entrance is by audition and tuition is provided by professional practicing artists.

The program is aimed specifically at those who are seriously committed to the craft. Terms One and Two introduce students to aspects of Voice, Movement, Text as well as specialised classes. The final term is spent in the rehearsal and presentation of the Season of New International Writing.

Upon completion of the program graduates receive a Certificate of Achievement that acknowledges their completion of the course and details any specific extra projects undertaken with St Martins throughout the year.

'I gained self-confidence. Heaps of it. Technique. A more appreciative and critical eye. It was a continual voyage of discovery. I learned something valuable every week – about theatre, about acting, about myself.'

If you know a young person who might be interested in the program please contact Emma Baily on 92520753 emmabaily@stmartinsyouth.com.au

Y-GLAM Performing Arts Project

Y-GLAM Performing Arts Project, a program of the Moreland Community Health Service, is for same sex attracted and transgender young people (SSATY) aged 14 to 25. The project has been running since 1998, staging six sell out theatre seasons in Moreland and producing a video.

In April, Y-GLAM staged their seventh theatre work, *Oh No... Not Another Homo!* at the Mechanic's Institute Performing Arts Centre, Brunswick. The season was part of National Youth Week and was extremely successful. Written and performed by young people, the play wove together stories of coming out in Melbourne in the 1960's, 1980's and 2000's.

As well as creating and staging new theatre works, Y-GLAM provides SSATY with the opportunity to make friends, learn theatre making skills and make connections to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community. Y-GLAM also gives them a chance to communicate with the broader community about the issues they face.

For more information please call Jemma Mead or Vicky Guigeliano on 9355 9978 gsjemmam@infochange.net.au

Health

Ybblue

Ybblue was launched in conjunction with Youth Week on April 8th 2003. Ybblue is a national awareness campaign supported by Beyondblue – the national depression initiative. It targets the friends and families of 17–25 year olds, asking them to look for the warning signs that someone they care about is at risk, listen to the problem and talk about seeking help together.

The Website is www.ybblue.com.au and is supported by a full media campaign including television, radio, billboards, bus signage, magazine ads and newspaper ads.

Six 'warning sign' designs have been produced and there are sets of posters A2 and A4 and postcards which need to be distributed around

the country, to ensure the program reaches all of Australia.

You can help by:

- distributing the cards and posters
- letting Ybblue know if you have an event they could be involved in
- providing a link from your website to Ybblue.com.au

If you can help, or for more information relating to Ybblue please contact Lynne Garrick on 0402 456020 or 07 3721 8086 lynneg@toowongprivatehospital.com.au

Children of Parents With A Mental Illness

The draft *Principles and Actions for Services and People Working with Children of Parents With A Mental Illness* was released on April 29th 2003.

The document has been produced as part of the Children of Parents With A Mental Illness (COPMI) initiative undertaken by the Australian Infant, Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health Association Ltd. (AICAFMHA) for the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.

Copies of the draft principles can be downloaded from the website www.aicafmha.net.au Please take this opportunity to provide feedback on this important document. If you are unable to access the internet, please contact Sue Garvin, Company Secretary of AICAFMHA, on 08 8132 0786 secretary@aicafmha.net.au for a copy of the document.

Young Mums Group

Young Mums Group at Sunshine is a new pregnancy care program for pregnant women aged 18 years or less and selected 19 year olds, who may benefit from a multidisciplinary service.

Multidisciplinary care will involve midwives and an obstetric consultant with expertise in teenage pregnancy in addition to social work, dietician and paediatric support. Some prenatal visits can be school based to prevent loss of school hours, and some home visits can be performed to help mothers prepare their house for the newborn and address parenting issues.

In the postnatal period the Young Mums Group links into a paediatric service with an interest in adolescent and newborn support. The service is

affiliated with the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology at the University of Melbourne and has an evidence-based research focus. Young mothers will be invited to join any ongoing research studies.

For further information please phone the Young Mums Group at Sunshine Midwife on 8345 1680.

Giving and getting the most from your GP

Priority Youth has launched its charter of rights and responsibilities for young people using GP services. The charter, titled *Giving and getting the Most from your GP* acknowledges young people as active partners in their health care and has been endorsed by the National Divisions Youth Alliance.

The document will be widely distributed across GP surgeries, youth services, schools and other places young people frequent by the end of May.

It has been developed as part of an extensive consultation with young people in Hobsons Bay and Wyndham. The Priority Youth project is coordinated by representatives of the Westgate GP Division, Secondary School Nurses Program, Hobsons Bay Youth Services and the South West Primary Mental Health Team. The Grange P-12 staff and students, Y-Hoap, Wyndham Youth Services and the GP reference group from Westgate GP Division, have given the project valuable support.

We have also completed our survey of young people in Hobsons Bay and Wyndham. The survey asked questions around young people's perceptions of GPs, why they use GPs and how GP services could be improved. We had 265 responses from this survey and have analysed the data both quantitatively, qualitatively and matched young people's recommendations with materials GPs can use (e.g. young people's magazine list, a list of health resources targeting young people). Priority Youth members will present a summary of the findings to local GPs and plan to conduct local feedback sessions for interested service providers as well as presenting the survey findings to GPs and other delegates at the National GP conference in November.

For more information, please contact Mike Williams at Westgate GP Division on 9399 4862 michael.williams@westgategp.com

CEED

The Victorian Centre of Excellence in Eating Disorders (CEED) was set up in 2002 as part of the Victorian Government's commitment to improving the healthcare of people with eating disorders. It aims to reduce the risk, duration and impact of eating disorders in people of all ages, by building Victoria's capacity to undertake effective prevention, early intervention and clinical care.

Partners in managing the new organisation are: Melbourne Health through North Western Mental Health; Women and Children's Health through the Centre for Adolescent Health; Doutta Galla Community Health Services; and Eating Disorders Foundation of Victoria Inc.

CEED now has a website, at www.ceed.org.au which provides:

- A database of all the eating disorder services in Victoria
- Professional resources such as on-line journals, clinical guidelines and training
- A calendar of education and training events
- Information about eating disorders
- A professional interactive discussion forum through the mailing list

There is also a new seminar program aimed at health professionals working or interested in working in the field of Eating Disorders, providing professional development, lively discussion, networking and peer support.

Seminars are held on the first Thursday of every month at Vic Health, 15-31 Pelham St, Carlton, from 4.30pm to 5.30pm. For more information contact Sarah Harry on 9342 8245 Sarah.Harry@mh.org.au

Networks

WMSSATY

The Western Metropolitan Region Same Sex Attracted And Transgender Youth (SSATY) Network was established in 2002 and meets bi-monthly. Membership is open to interested staff from the education, health, welfare and community sectors, Council and to SSATY.

The Network aims to develop a community in the western metropolitan region that embraces diversity as it relates to the sexuality and gender

identity of young people and does not discriminate. This is undertaken with awareness of and sensitivity to the unique and diverse nature of the region, the community and local SSATY. The Network is currently developing a needs analysis survey to conduct with SSATY that will inform all future activities. A SSATY Friendly Service Directory will also be created this year.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the network please contact Jemma Mead, Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service, on 9364 3200 gsjemmam@infochange.net.au

Working with children and young people whose family is affected by mental illness

Carerlinks West and The Centre for Adolescent Health would like to invite workers who are working with children and young people who have a family member who is affected by a mental illness to a meeting on Wednesday June 18.

The meeting is aimed at updating workers on initiatives which are occurring in the region such as the Paying Attention to Self Program, the CHAMPS camp and Statewide and National Initiatives such as the AICAFMHA project and the Families and Mental Health Network.

The meeting also aims to share information regarding resources and ideas for working with these young people and to identify needs and service gaps in the Western Region. We also plan to discuss the idea of forming an ongoing network for workers in the west.

The meeting will be held at Carerlinks West, 576 Barkly St, West Footscray from 10am to midday. Morning tea will be supplied.

For further information contact: Danielle Forer on 9345 7950 danielle.forer@rch.org.au

Western Schools Health Promotion Network

The Western Schools Health Promotion Network (WSHPN) is an initiative of ORYGEN Youth Health, RCH Mental Health Service, Department of Education and Training, School Focused Youth Services and Catholic Education. It is a network of educators, and health, welfare and community workers who have an interest in education and promoting young people's mental health.

The Network meets to discuss new health pro-

moting initiatives, particularly in schools, to provide a basis for intersectorial collaboration, and to generate and support best practice initiatives.

Meetings are held bi-monthly at 9.30am at the Western Metropolitan Division of General Practice, cnr Ashley and Barkley Sts in Braybrook.

For more information contact: John Mullane, Western Region Mental Health Promotion Officer on 0418 321 403 jmullane@unimelb.edu.au or Judy Maguire, Manager Student Wellbeing and Support, DE&T on 9292 6500.

Employment

JobCo. Worker Support Group

JobCo. is a not-for-profit organisation that has been around for 9 years and while the organisation has grown, we have maintained our specialist employment services in the mental health field. We are committed to the implementation of counselling interventions that are effective at meeting the diverse support needs of people with a mental illness and assisting them to maintain their employment.

In late 2002, JobCo. recognised that research was increasingly identifying the effectiveness of mutual support groups. Thus, we began the Worker Support Group for people who are employed and experiencing a mental health issue.

The group meets fortnightly between 6:30pm and 8pm at our Brunswick Office and is facilitated by two Probationary Psychologists/Employment Counsellors. The first sessions of term are open for new members to join and the remainder of the term's sessions are closed. This was done to develop an environment of trust so that group members could have the opportunity to explore deeper issues.

The group discusses a wide and varied number of issues related to maintaining work. Some issues that have been explored are:

- disclosure in the workplace
- medication and its impact on work
- empowerment
- personal development
- social support systems
- coping strategies for stress and pressure

- goal setting
- assertiveness

To meet the needs of the group, sessions are split so that the first half is structured with the focus on the above issues and the second half left open to the group to discuss any work-related issues.

To find out more about the Worker Support Group or receive a brochure please contact Jane Nguyen on 9386 0999 jane.nguyen@jobco.com.au

Youth Affairs

Participation in Practice

The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria and the Office for Youth are currently working in partnership on a Participation in Practice Project (PIP). The PIP project aims to develop a series of tools to assist young people and organisations to develop effective models of youth participation. It involves producing three handbook resources to do this. In recognising that different models of participation are required for different situations the three publications will consider young peoples participation in consultations, on boards and committees and in community building.

In preparing the resources, the Participation in Practice Project Officer has been consulting with young people, organisations, local government and generally anyone who has experiences of youth participation. The first booklet, *Young people and Consultation – asking young people about their ideas and opinions*, is almost finished and the Project Officer is now looking to hear from people with experience in involving young people on boards and committees.

To contribute or if you are interested in finding out more about the PIP project, please contact Jen Rose, YACVic's Participation in Practice Project Officer on 9612 8920 jenmrose@yacvic.org.au

Drug and Alcohol

YOT Groups

The DASWest Youth Outreach Team (YOT), located in Footscray, has recently established two groups for young people. The first is a consumer reference group that will be involved in various projects at YOT, ranging from consultations

around a client satisfaction survey to ways to improve the waiting room.

The second is New Directions, a post detox group for those young people who have been in the DASWest detox unit. The weekly, open-ended group will operate as a relapse prevention group and will serve as a way for young people to engage and connect with the service, residents and workers from the unit.

For further information please contact Susan Saxe on 9689 5533 Susan.Saxe@wh.org.au

Social Action with Youth SAY Project

Julie Morsillo is a PhD Researcher in Community Psychology at Victoria University. Julie is working in partnership with the Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service, St Albans, on a program called Social Action with Youth (SAY). She believes that the secret to getting young people involved in projects to improve their local community, is to inspire them to believe they can really make a difference.

Recently, Julie ran a workshop for Brimbank Youthlink with local youth workers and youth educators. In the workshop the participants undertook a number of activities that Julie uses with the young people to inspire them to community action, including a *passion game*, discussion on *Quest for Wellness* and a *Passion Chart*. They also watched a video on the young peoples community projects from Julie's first youth group – a group of Year 10 students at Keilor Downs Secondary College who worked with Julie as part of their 'Working Community Program' subject.

Presently, Julie is working with her second group, Generation Q, a social group for same-sex attracted young people who are working on a community theatre project. Then next semester she will work with recently arrived refugee young people with their Bridging Program at Western English Language School, for the 'Personal Skills 2' subject.

For more information about Social Action with Youth or to request a professional development workshop contact Julie Morsillo on 9354 0004 morsillo@bigpond.net.au

Youth Mental Health Promotion

Youth Mental Health Promotion is a broad area but it incorporates some fundamental practice principles. If you can answer yes to one or more of the following questions then it is likely that your initiative is mental health promoting.

- Does your initiative enhance protective factors and decrease risk factors for young people?
- Have young people been involved in the planning, development or delivery?
- Will it provide an opportunity for young people to learn new skills and/or make a contribution to the community?
- Are there opportunities for young people to form close relationships, reinforce healthy behaviours, etc.?
- Is there cross-generational interaction?
- Have you promoted a sense of belonging and being valued?
- Are there broader social values that you are trying to address/shift through your activity?
- Has there been an emphasis on strengthening links between different aspects of young people's lives, e.g. school, community, family?

The next edition of Western Youth will be produced in August 2003. If you would like to contribute please contact: Maree Sidey 8346 8223 msidey@unimelb.edu.au