



Carers, and Other Caring People

Any number of experiences over the past few months have led me to want to acknowledge carers of people with disabilities, and other caring people who support the carers.

The family group *Committed About Securing Accommodation* (CASA) organised a meeting of people with disabilities and their families with a number of politicians recently. Since it was held at i.d.entity.wa, I welcomed everyone, and then had the privilege of listening while 19 families, and one person with an intellectual disability, briefly spoke about their need for supported accommodation.

One family member spoke very strongly about being involved for years, trying to ensure that services are available to people when they need them. He pointed out that nothing has changed: people are still waiting, and having to keep going in incredible situations. Many people pointed out that their lives were totally unacceptable in a civilised society.

For someone like me who has worked in disability for over 30 years, it was a challenging and daunting observation. And I agree with it on many levels. I have been hearing carers' stories of the horrific consequences of having to wait too long for services over the whole time I have worked in disability. A colleague and I took some consolation from the fact that much has changed for many, many people with disabilities and their carers/families over the years. Those people's lives have benefited greatly. The thing is, they get replaced by other people who have to fight the same battles, and go through similar debilitating situations, and finally be

By MAUREEN JEWELL
Executive Director

forced to almost beg (if not **actually** beg) for appropriate support.

It happens over and over again. The people change, but "the system" does not – or not enough, anyway.

Unfortunately, though, "the system" is made up of people. You and me.

Tempting as it is, I can't let myself get away with blaming an anonymous "system", or "someone else". I want to be part of the solution. And so do all of the people with disabilities and families who were there that day. And many other people, too.

One of the things at that meeting that provided me with hope that, together, we can change the system (long term) was the politicians. Margaret Quirk, MLA (Minister for Disability Services), WA Senator Ruth Webber, Judy Hughes, MLA (Member for Kingsley), and Martin Whitely, MLA (Member for Bassendean), all listened attentively. When they spoke, they demonstrated understanding of the need and the issues, and they spoke of what they have done, and would and could do to improve "the system".

There are many, many people working to change things. While I am speaking of Members of Parliament I would like to acknowledge and thank Simon O'Brien, MLC (Member for South Metropolitan), for the work that he has done over the years that he has been Opposition Spokesperson on Disability. He has worked tirelessly on a wide range of issues, and his

leadership has been invaluable, alongside his advocacy and other hands-on work with individuals and families. I extend a warm welcome to the new Opposition Spokesperson, Graham Jacobs, MLA (Member for Roe). The disability sector is looking forward to working productively with him, too, into the future.

As well as these and many other Members of Parliament, the Accommodation Campaign, Disability Services Commission, Developmental Disability Council (DDC), the Politician Adoption Scheme, Ministerial Advisory Council, disability organisations and many other individuals and organisations in the community are part of the groundswell to improve things now and for the future.

One of those individuals is Andrew Kilgallon, a family member who retired from i.d.entity.wa's Board of Governors in December 2005 after 5 years on the Board. His enormous

**"Signs are there.
Things are going to
improve"**

contributions to various committees (including the Fathers Video Working Party)

will be missed, along with his other involvements. i.d.entity.wa is forever in his debt.

Organisations, services, programmes, and the many individuals who are involved seem to have unlimited commitment, ideas and strategies. Progress **is** being made. It's not quick enough and not far-reaching enough yet. But the signs are there. Things **are** going to improve.

My thanks to the families/carers who keep on reminding everyone what is needed, and to all of those other caring people and organisations who are caring for the carers.

	Page
<i>Carers, and Other Caring People</i>	1
<i>New Executive General Manager Appointed</i>	2
<i>New Families Welcome Morning Tea</i>	2
<i>Second group of staff commence traineeships</i>	3
<i>Brave Young Sibling</i>	3
<i>Carers' Pamper Weekend Away</i>	4
<i>Rejuvenation at "The Deck"</i>	5
<i>Big Days for SIBS</i>	6-7
<i>Letters to the Editor</i>	7
<i>For Sale</i>	7
<i>Small Street Tenth Anniversary</i>	8
<i>Stormy's Story</i>	8

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Mr David Rowell (*Chairperson*)

Mr Graham Baker

Mr Richard Diermayer

Mr Stephen Scott

Ms Fiona Shepherd

Ms Maureen Jewell (*Executive Director*)

To contact the Board, please write to:
The Chairperson,
i.d.entity.wa
PO Box 5
South Perth, WA 6951

"**identikite**" welcomes contributions from families, carers and clients, whether it's your view on current issues, or a personal experience you would like to share with other readers. Your comments on the content of "**identikite**" are also valuable, together with suggestions for any issues you would like to see covered in the future. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Write to or fax:

The Editor, "**identikite**",

PO Box 5, South Perth, WA 6951.

Telephone: (08) 9474 3303

Facsimile: (08) 9474 3315

Email: paed@identitywa.com.au

New Executive General Manager appointed

I am delighted to be able to announce the appointment of our new Executive General Manager, Operations, Gerry Chandler. She took up her position on 6 February 2006.

Gerry completed her studies at Claremont Teacher's College in 1982, and worked firstly as a teacher in the Special Class in a government primary school. She then worked for six years at Kenwick Special School (as it was called then).

Gerry left Kenwick School to study for her Bachelor of Social Work at Curtin University (graduating in 1991), and also completed her Masters in Social Work (1997). As a social worker and manager, Gerry has worked at Holyoake (the Australian Institute on Alcohol and Addictions), the WA Alcohol and Drug Authority, Bentley Health Services, and most recently at Fremantle Hospital. She has also lectured at Curtin and Edith Cowan (Bunbury) Universities and TAFE (Bunbury).

Along with her understanding of intellectual disability, Gerry has a well-developed knowledge of aged care, mental health issues, health promotions, and support for carers and other family members. She has experience in strategic planning, policy development, implementing and managing organisation and service change, and budget management at a service/department level.

Over the years, Gerry has been actively involved in her local church and in the community and has served on committees and boards of various community organisations. She shows great integrity, and is excited to be working in intellectual disability again, and in a Christian organisation. The short time that she has been here indicates that she will be an asset to i.d.entity.wa.

MAUREEN JEWELL, *Executive Director*



Gerry Chandler, our new Executive General Manager, Operations

New Families Welcome Morning Tea

Eight new families were welcomed to i.d.entity.wa's services and enjoyed a delicious morning tea at Kensington in February. Parents had a chance to meet each other and share stories. Information was given on the wide range of services offered by i.d.entity.wa and a number of funding sources that families could access.

The occasion proved to be very beneficial for the families attending. A lot of new information about services was shared, and this is so helpful in ensuring that families do not miss out

on the support they could be getting. It is so important to get support when caring for a child with special needs. YOU as parents are the most important person caring for your child. Your health and wellbeing is essential for you to continue this role in the long term.

The morning tea was a great opportunity for families to meet each other and to enjoy a delightful social gathering. Thank you to all those who attended. – **EILEEN DIELESEN** and **TONY HARMON**, *Family Counselling and Pastoral Care*

Second group of staff commence traineeships



(From left) Helen Wynn (HR Administrator), Chris Gray (Trainee), Danica Ikac (Trainee), Jennifer Townson (Trainee), Ian Barrett (Trainee), Melanie Holland (Austral College), and Wanita McDade (Trainee).

i.d.entity.wa is very excited to announce that a second group of staff commenced traineeships with Austral College this month. A total of eleven staff are now undertaking a Traineeship.

Due to the introduction of Disability Work Traineeships by the Commonwealth Government last year, i.d.entity.wa has had great pleasure in offering traineeship opportunities to staff. The Traineeships are aimed at staff with no formal TAFE qualifications and who are not undertaking related studies.

The duration of the Traineeships is approximately 12 to 24 months and all costs associated with the training are incurred by the organisation. Opportunities are available to undertake either New or Existing Worker Traineeships:

New Worker Traineeship – Employees need to have been employed for less than 3 months (full time) or less than 12 months (part time) and work a minimum of 20 hours week, OR

Existing Worker Traineeship – Employees must have worked with the employer for more than 3 months full time (more than 35 hours) or 12 months part time (between 20 and 35 hours per week). This type of traineeship will cease as at 30 June 2006.

It is anticipated that a third group of staff will commence traineeships in the middle to latter part of this year.

Brave Young Sibling

I was very moved to read this letter from a family and would like to share this with you all:

“My little boy Lloyd (5) is receiving an award from St John Ambulance/Charles G Hospital, probably on Wednesday 15th March. They are going to give him the award after school at mulberry tree daycare in Roleystone and we wondered if you would like to report on this.

Lloyd saved his brother's life a week last Saturday – he woke up early thinking Harry was making a lot of noise, he looked down at him and then tried to go back to sleep but thought the noise wasn't right. He got down to look at him and decided that Harry was sick and came and woke us up. This was at 5 in the morning. Lloyd then had to wait an hour with his sister for our friends to come and collect them. He never cried and accepted that we had to leave for hospital straight away.

Harry had had a seizure in the night which must have happened much earlier – he was unconscious and foaming at the mouth and not breathing properly. At Armadale emergency they couldn't stabilize him despite all the anti convulsive drugs they gave him. They had to put him onto life support and transport him to Intensive Care at PMH along with doctors etc. He is much better now but if Lloyd hadn't had the presence of mind to think

something was wrong and then act on it Harry probably wouldn't have survived. He had already taken fluid back into his lungs.

Lloyd is very good with Harry at all times, he

looks after him and plays with him and has endless patience and is never jealous – we feel this alone is worth an award.

We would like Lloyd to receive as much acknowledgement as possible for his actions – his brother is registered with DSC and is often very sick and relies a lot on Lloyd. “

Well done Lloyd. We are all very touched to read about your bravery in saving your brother Harry's life and in your caring and gentle attitude towards him. You have shown us that Siblings are special people and YOU are special.

EILEEN DIELESEN, Family Counsellor/Group Facilitator



Lloyd Barker (right) with brother Harry (left) and sister Alexandra.



Carers' Pamper Weekend Away

A wonderful group of eight mothers eagerly arrived at Kensington on Friday 4 November 2005 to start the journey to Mandurah Quay Resort to enjoy a weekend of pamper!

We arrived and checked in to two beautiful villas and enjoyed some afternoon tea together. Everyone quickly wound down to the sound of relaxing music and the smell of lavender oil burning, and the two spa baths were put to use immediately by a few of the mothers. In the early evening we headed off for a delicious Chinese meal, sharing much laughter, good food and champagne to celebrate the courage of these women to take the time out for themselves.

Over the weekend many activities and workshops were enjoyed. Saturday morning brought a delightful, interesting and informative workshop on how flower essences can be used for healing and treating the emotions. A session of sharing an item of personal/spiritual significance followed, and this brought some very deep and moving stories that bonded the mothers in their common journey together.

After enjoying lunch a few headed off into town to do some retail therapy. In the afternoon we had two wonderful volunteers give the mothers some massage, reflexology and Reiki. While the others were waiting we used massage tools and footbaths to pamper each other. After enjoying some nibbles we headed off for the cinema to enjoy a movie and then on to a restaurant for a sit-down dinner.

On the Sunday morning a wonderful facilitator trained in sound and colour therapy came and we enjoyed listening and playing with the various instruments she brought along. We were totally inspired by her meditation and angelic voice as she sang a song especially for this group. We then chose different coloured scarves and danced to some delightful music. The experience was certainly fun and at the same time healing by uplifting everyone.

After some morning tea (oh no, not more Tim Tams!) we packed up our goodies and headed out to the famous Miami Bakery for lunch and sat down for some yummy baked food. This life was so hard to get used to! Then back into Mandurah foreshore to take a lovely one-hour canal cruise where we enjoyed watching dolphins frolicking in the estuary waters. The grand finale was some afternoon tea at the Dome Café.

The weekend was an outstanding success with absolutely no negative feedback, only positive, happy, relaxed and pampered people! Everyone bonded extremely well and plans were being made to meet again with husbands and children.

A big thank you to Carers WA, Commonwealth Carers Respite Service, Miami Bakery, Sunbreakers Restaurant, Reading Cinemas and Mandurah Ferry Cruises for their generous funding and discounts that made this special weekend possible.

EILEEN DIELESEN, *Family Counsellor/Group Facilitator*





Rejuvenation at "The Deck"

Eight mothers came together for a really special weekend away in March 2006 at an absolutely beautiful holiday home in Yanchep.

When we arrived on the Friday evening the mothers were in absolute awe at the luxury and breathtaking ocean views they encountered in this very comfortable, tastefully decorated and spppaaacious home. What a home away from home it was, every little extra was provided and nothing was lacking – not one single thing to complain about. "The Deck" was a huge outdoor deck on the upper floor and there were comfortable cane lounges to relax on. Couldn't believe how fast these mothers sat down on the deck with the champagne and nibbles enjoying the breeze and view over the ocean. We enjoyed a barbeque meal that was cooked on the deck that evening.

On the Saturday after a lovely breakfast and meditation, Grant Stone arrived to facilitate a laughter yoga session. This was an absolute success with huge amounts of deep belly laughter echoing across the deck! Afterwards a lively discussion followed on the benefits of laughter as a way to improve health and reduce stress. In the afternoon three lovely massage/reflexology/reiki practitioners arrived to give the mothers a wonderful pamper. This was the highlight of the weekend for me because each mother came out with a look of bliss following their pampering. I felt like an artist who had worked hard and planned well and finally the moment had arrived when 'the painting' was completed and I was satisfied with my creative efforts. 'The painting' turned out to be truly beautiful – faces that reflected peace, deep relaxation and bliss.

In the late afternoon more champagne and nibbles were enjoyed before heading out to the cinemas to see a movie. After the movie we all walked next door to Oscar's restaurant and enjoyed a delicious meal.

On the Sunday morning we did a very long meditation and relaxation session so that the feeling of total letting go was well entrenched. After some persuasion, as there was a huge amount of reluctance from the mothers to leave 'The Deck', we headed off to visit Yanchep Park. We enjoyed a lovely walk and visited the koala enclosure and then off to the Yanchep Inn for a delicious lunch. The food was excellent and afterwards we went into the garden to listen to the live band playing and enjoyed some afternoon tea. Ten years of age had fallen away from the faces of each mother at this point and they were all eager to repeat such a wonderful weekend again. It is so important to care for yourself as a priority and to make time to enjoy life. Being the parent of a child with special needs is a very long journey and in order to make this journey without falling into ill health, an important option is to practise pampering as preventative medicine. Remember pampering is not selfish, but vital self caring in order to stay well in the long run. Give yourself permission NOW to enjoy time out and nurturing and know that this will benefit your child and the whole family.

A very big THANK YOU is extended to the owners of "The Deck" in Yanchep for their amazing generosity in providing their holiday home at no cost. Have a look on the internet (www.ozstays.com/16611) and I am sure you will agree that it is a beautiful home. Without this generous support we could not have conducted this weekend. Many thanks to Carers WA for the funding, Grand Cinemas Currambine for the discount vouchers, Oscar's restaurant for the discount dinner, Grant Stone from Laugh WA Inc. for his time donated to facilitate the Laughter Yoga session and Claire Purdy, Renee Van Vlijmen and Dawn Kelly for donating their time to pamper the mothers with massage/reflexology and reiki. You are all very special angels.

EILEEN DIELESEN, Family Counsellor/Group Facilitator



Big days for

In January two different SIBS days were celebrated.

The Big Day Out for 13 to 15-year-old Teen SIBS was an opportunity to catch up with old friends and make new ones – welcome to those who came for the first time; everybody joined in so well.

We had a day that allowed us to share some important aspects of the shared experiences of being a sib and to have a lot of fun. As you can see from the photo Circus Bizirque was most enjoyable and gave all the SIBS a chance to try out new skills and do something different!

It was a good day of catching up and sharing wisdom.

SIBS in the Suburbs for 9 to 12-year-olds was the first time we have held a SIBS day in the northern suburbs. It was great to meet so many SIBS who attended for the first time. You were all so bright and joined together so well.

We played some games to challenge our memories and energy, and discussed some of the issues for Sibs: thanks for all the interesting questions you asked. In the afternoon we lunched at McDonald's and went ice-skating.

Our thanks to the Ballajura Baptist Church for allowing us to use their hall for SIBS in the Suburbs, and St Norbert College for the use of their bus on both SIBS days.

Hope to see you all again at future SIBS activities.

TONY HARMON, Family Counsellor & Pastoral Worker





LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The following delightful fax was received by identikite's editor.

We thought you'd enjoy reading a Christmas story with a happy ending!

FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

TO: THE EDITOR
FROM: HELEN
DATE: 10-12-05
RE: **MY STORY**

MY KIND STAFF

I CAME HOME TO SEE A LITTLE BABY HONEY SUCKLE "BIRD" IN MY HOUSE!
MY STAFF COLLEEN WAS DRIVING TO WORK AND FOUND IT ON THE ROAD. DONALD, GEOFF AND ME FED IT AND TOOK IT TO COLLEEN'S HOUSE. WE WERE SO HAPPY THAT IT FOUND A HAPPY SANCTUARY FOR XMAS.

FROM

**DON, GEOFF AND HELEN -
DYMCHURCH**

FOR SALE

4 X 2 Lovely modern home located at Iluka, walking distance to Burns Beach. Purpose built wheelchair ramps front and back, wider doorways and large ensuite bathroom for wheelchair access.

P.O.A.

Ph 9305 4458



Small Street Tenth Anniversary

On 13 January, Steven, Paul, Genevieve and Melissa from Small Street in Beechboro celebrated their Tenth Anniversary.

The evening was attended by the residents' families including parents, siblings and nephews, friends of the residents, and past and present staff, including original staff members Shirley Olivari, Ed Mayvis and Carol Bonner. It was fantastic to see all the old and new faces; we were blessed to have such a large family presence and support from friends.

The house staff organised a lovely and relaxed evening of celebration with a Thanksgiving Mass and meal.

Maureen Jewell welcomed all to the evening, then Father Vinh Dong celebrated the Mass. There was a reading by Shirley from the Book of Samuel, the Responsorial Psalm was read by Paul's mother, Marion, and Ed read Prayers of the Faithful. Thank you all; it was wonderful to have you as part of the Mass.

Maureen Jewell presented me with a Certificate of Recognition for the residents, their families, and past and present staff, which is to be kept at Small Street; in turn, Paul and I presented Small Street with a park bench with a commemorative inscription for the pergola area.

On behalf of i.d.entity.wa, Maureen Jewell presented each of the residents with a blessing card and another to all who attended the evening.

A beautiful meal was prepared by staff and enjoyed by all. Robert Watson was on hand to say 'Grace' and Steven was in charge of cutting the cake!!

Everyone had a great evening; the residents enjoyed everyone's company and there were lots of laughs and reminiscing.

Thank you to those who attended, especially to the staff for all the time and effort that went into making it a very special evening.

KRISTINA KOTUA, Co-ordinator – Residential Support Services

Stonmy's Story

Why do I have eyes if I cannot see?
Why do I have legs if I cannot walk?
I have a throat and it seems a voice,
But somehow I cannot talk.
My life it seems must seem so strange
To those of you who can use all these.
But I don't need my eyes
As I use my ears and hands to see,
And in my dreams I walk so free
And talk with so much ease.
So although I'm not the same as you
I was always very pleased
That you allowed me to get to know you
And that you taught me how to see.
That although we have our differences
We can accept this and just be.
Learning from each other
I do not wonder how it might have been:
I love the way I see the world
And the way the world sees me.
You are you and I am me
And thank you for accepting me.
'Cause although I may look different
I'm as cheeky as any young boy,
As I'm sure you've come to see.
So you be you and I'll be me
And together we'll be free.

Yes! I would like to "MAKE A DIFFERENCE" for people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

☐ Please send further information, OR

☐ I wish to make a gift of \$.....for an **i.d.entity.wa** selected project.

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Address Post Code Telephone

I/we enclose a cheque/money order, or please debit my/our

☐ BANKCARD ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ VISA

Name on card.....

Expiry Date...../...../.....Signature.....

Please make your donation payable to: Alister McLean Foundation, Free Post 971, South Perth, WA 6951
Thank you, your gift to the Foundation is tax deductible.