

carers at kids

the children's hospital at Westmead

Newsletter October 2009

Carers Week October 19-24

Carers Week is a time to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of carers. It is also a time to give them a break and reinforce to carers that they need to look after themselves too. Carers Week highlights to the community the sacrifices a carer can make and the challenges they face.



During Carers Week at The Children's Hospital at Westmead we have daily lucky door prizes, morning teas, an art therapy class, meditation with crystal bowls, a Transition for Carers Forum, Navigating the Maze seminar and more. Come and join us to help celebrate Carers Week.

Keep an eye out for our special bulletin about the events we will be holding here at The Children's Hospital at Westmead.



ALSO IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

Changes to Carers payments

Free counselling services

Interrelate Family Centres

Free counselling services for carers of people with disabilities under Interrelates carers program

Interrelate Family Centres is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation and a leading provider of quality relationship services in NSW. The Interrelate centres are funded to provide counselling and mediation for families where there is a son or daughter of any age who has a disability.

Under the Carer Program personal counselling is available which can help to solve issues where family members are feeling isolated, confused or overwhelmed.

Counselling can also explore practical issues such as housing, education or employment of a child with a disability, or when financial difficulties arise in connection with the care of a family member with a disability.

Interrelate can help look at alternative arrangements for care of a person with a disability, including when the person with a disability wants greater independence.

Counsellors can help with problems about who is going to care for a son or daughter with a disability when the parent dies, and when it's time to make wills and other plans for future care of a family member with a disability.

Family counselling may be able to assist with:

- Exploring financial and other implications of decisions about the person with a disability's care
- Planning for changes in the future
- Life in the family where someone has a disability
- How to have a life (outside of family) when caring for someone with a disability
- Future care of a family member with a disability

Interrelate also deals with case management to find other services that might be useful such as financial assistance; accessible disability support agencies; housing assistance, and social and community activities that can help individuals or the family as a whole to make time for themselves and each other. Case management also helps investigate study and employment options for any family member, including the person with the disability.

Case management can deal with ways to best manage times of transition when the carer can no longer continue the caring role, or the child with the disability wants to live independently of family. The individual and family goals for the future are explored as well as the strengths in the family that can and need to be built on. Case management also explores the support needed to deal with the stress of caring for a person with a disability.

Interrelate counselling can help with family dispute resolution in cases where blame is happening from one or both sides; there is hostility or rigid positions; or where parents are in constant conflict with each other and there is little capacity left to look after the children's emotional needs. Counselling also provides guidance and direction to negotiate entrenched positions. Family dispute counselling can also help when legal action is needed and if courts haven't worked.

Iana Thurston, Interrelate Sydney North Area Manager, says to receive this service it's as easy as calling your nearest branch and saying that you are a carer and would like to have some counselling.

"Anyone in the immediate family is eligible for the counselling, be it a brother, a mother, or a grandparent of the child with the disability," Ms Thurston says. "The program is there to help everyone in the family. This service is available nights as well as Saturdays, with a range of counsellors available to help".

Thea Keane, Lismore Area Manager, Relationship Services, at the Interrelate Family Centre, stated in an interview in the Working Carers Gateway newsletter: "The carer-specific funding is a service which many carers are not aware of.

"We are keen to get the message out there. Carers often don't use counselling services as they are too busy just getting through each day. Carers are often so focused on the task in hand that they can't see that there might be alternative solutions to a problem. They are in survival mode and even if they do see a solution, they may be too busy or too stressed to do what it takes to implement it. Sometimes counselling can help because there is someone else there who cares and who can help to support them or refer them to appropriate services.

Interrelate Family Centres continued.

“Also this service is unique because it can support the whole family. It provides a safe place where delicate and troubling family issues can be raised. These issues are very hard to raise in a family, as are issues about what will happen to the person with a disability when the primary carers are no longer able to offer that care. It is much better to have these discussions and do this type of planning before a crisis arises and we can help with that, too.”

Head Office

PO Box 6307
Baulkham Hills NSW 1755
(02) 9840 8777
Toll Free: 1300 736 966

Service Centres

Burwood.....	(02) 9745 5544
Coffs Harbour & CCS.....	(02) 6651 1010
Dubbo & CCS.....	(02) 6882 4699
Dural.....	(02) 9653 9533
Gosford.....	(02) 4363 8050
Kirrawee & CCS.....	(02) 9545 3566
Lismore & CCS.....	(02) 6621 4970
Newcastle.....	(02) 4957 8888
Orange & CCS.....	(02) 6360 0895
Port Macquarie.....	(02) 6584 9293

Family Relationship Centres

Coffs Harbour FRC.....	(02) 6659 4100
Dubbo FRC.....	(02) 6815 9600
Gosford FRC.....	(02) 4363 8000
Lismore FRC.....	(02) 6622 7003
Newcastle FRC.....	(02) 4016 0566
Sutherland Shire FRC.....	(02) 9525 6488
Taree FRC.....	(02) 6551 1200

Information for this article taken from the Interrelate website www.interrelate.org.au and the “Working Carers Gateway newsletter” www.workingcarers.org.au

For more information please look at the websites or call Interrelate on the above numbers.

Changes to Carers payments

On July 1 some changes occurred to the carer payments of children under 16 yrs with severe disability or severe medical conditions. The changes recognise more situations in which a carer can qualify for payment.

The basis of assessment has changed from a narrow medical model to one that recognises the impact of the significant care provided to children with a disability or medical condition. The new assessment process recognises and assesses the total care load of the carer.

Other changes include:

1. More circumstances in which carers may qualify for Carer Payment, encompassing:
 - One child with severe disability or severe medical condition
 - Two or more children with disability or medical condition
 - A disabled adult and one or more children with disability or medical condition
2. Access to Carer Payment for short term care for periods of at least three months but less than six months
3. More sensitive and generous arrangements for carers of children who have been diagnosed with a terminal condition
4. More generous arrangements for carers of children in hospital
5. Automatic qualification for Carer Allowance based on qualification for Carer Payment
6. Provision for a wider range of treating health professionals able to complete medical forms

Carer Payment

Carer Payment provides income support to carers who, because of the demands of their caring role, are unable to support themselves through substantial paid employment. Carer Payment is income and assets tested and paid at the same rate as other social security pensions.

Changes to Carers payments continued

How do I get further information?

For information about rates, other available assistance or your potential eligibility you can:

- visit the payment page on Centrelink's website www.centrelink.gov.au
- visit www.fahcsia.gov.au and follow the links to carers and general benefits and payments
- Telephone Centrelink on **13 27 17** or for TTY service **1800 810 586**
- Visit your nearest Centrelink office.

Information taken from the Carer Payment fact sheet supplied by The Australian Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).



We want to hear from you!

We would like to be able to share your stories, experience and knowledge. If you have something to say, we are listening.

Give us a call on **9845 3590**, email kellyb1@chw.edu.au or speak to a volunteer in the Parent and Carer Resource Centre (they will take your details and we will get back to you).

If you are an organisation and you would like to advertise through us and let people know about your service, please contact Kelly on 98453590 or kellyb1@chw.edu.au



Did you know?

- Women blink almost twice as much as men.
- The smile is the most frequently used facial expression. A smile can use anywhere from 5 to 53 facial muscles.
- The average person walks the equivalent of twice around the world in a lifetime.

Companion card

There is a website where you can find out more information about the card and the services that allow the use of the card. There is a large list of places that now accept the companion card. Visit: www.nds.org.au/nsw/companioncard.htm



Spotlight on volunteers

Our Parent and Carer Resource Centre wouldn't be able to run without our wonderful volunteers. We thought you might like to get to know them a little better, so we are going to interview one each month.

Our volunteer for this newsletter is one of our Monday ladies – Pam.

Pam tell us a bit about yourself?

My name is Pam Ryan and I live in western Sydney with my husband Paul and my daughter Michelle who is 18 and currently doing her HSC. We have been fortunate to have travelled. Along the way we have enjoyed touring around Britain, Ireland, USA, Canada, Fiji, Singapore and Hong Kong. I enjoy reading, knitting (but nothing complicated), retail therapy and watching a good movie. I have recently joined Inner Wheel. I miss doing physical culture and playing tennis which are no longer possible because of knee problems.

How long have you volunteered at The Children's Hospital at Westmead?

I've been volunteering at the Hospital for four years since The Parent and Carer Resource Centre opened.

Why is volunteering important to you?

I think volunteering is important to me because in some small way I feel that I am giving something back to the community.

What do you like about volunteering?

I like volunteering because you get to meet some very nice people and it also helps you appreciate the different ways people live and some of the difficult circumstances with which some of them cope. A lot of the parents of children at The Children's Hospital at Westmead are amazing the way they cope with their very sick and sometimes disabled children.

What did you do with yourself before volunteering?

I worked mainly in an accounts department, before I left to have Michelle. Then when Michelle was little I did some adult literacy teaching. When she started



Pam, one of our wonderful volunteers.

school I volunteered to help with a reading program to help children having difficulties in that area.

Where were you born?

I was born in Ashfield in inner west Sydney but lived in Enfield while growing up.

What's your favourite food?

Unfortunately my favourite food is chocolate - Lindt or Cadbury Dairy Milk. Fortunately it is getting more expensive and the blocks are getting smaller!

What do you do for relaxation? I like to read when I get the time and on rare occasions when I'm home alone and have time, I like to watch old movies.

If you could invite any four people to dinner who would you invite?

Dr Charlie Teo, Craig Lowndes, Kerry Packer and Maggie Tabberer

Some kind words from you about Pam:

"Needed to use internet and phone, very helpful volunteer Pam thanks."

"Great place to be - thanks to the lovely volunteers."

Calendar

If you have courses or activities you would like added to our newsletter please don't hesitate to phone us on 9845 3590 or email Kelly Bowler kellyb1@chw.edu.au

Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health

Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health has lots of events and courses. Follow the link below then select Carers Event Diary to find out more about the events and other information regarding carers. Here are some of the courses available. For more information check the website www.nscchhs.health.nsw.gov.au/carersupport/aboutus or call **02 8877 5349**

Health & Caring Issues Support Group Hunters Hill 02 9817 0101 hhracarersaged@bigpond.com	8 & 27 October, 12 & 24 November and 3 December
SNOG Brain Tumour Support Group North Shore Private Hospital, St Leonards Sydney Neuro Oncology Group 02 8425 3369 snog@snog.org.au	14 October, 2 December
Korean Carers of Children with a Disability Support Group Second Tuesday bi-monthly Ryde hhrccs@bigpond.com 02 9817 0101	20 October & 8 December
Carers of Young Adults with a Disability, Hunters Hill Maria Antonich hhracarers@bigpond.com	21 October, 7 & 8 November, 16 December
ARAFMI Support Group, Wahroonga Suzanne Wood/Kate Debus 02 9888 1819	28 October, 25 November
New Multicultural Mental Health Carers Group Support Group, Chatswood Loviner Lee 02 9888 1819 loviner.lee@arafmi.org	2 October, 6 November, 4 December

The Spastic Centre

The Spastic Centre holds a range of information sessions for people with cerebral palsy and their families throughout the year. To find out more information about dates and what's on visit www.thespasticcentre.org.au select services then information sessions for more information call Alissa Griffiths on **02 9479 7225** or email agriffiths@tscnsw.org.au

Carers NSW

Carers NSW have a number of courses running. Check their website for current courses www.carersnsw.asn.au click on "what's on" where you will find a list of courses available or call Lorna Downes on **0400 331 075** or **02 9289 4226**

Learning Links

SUPA (Supporting parents of children with AD/HD)	22, 29 October; 5, 12, 19, 26 November; 3, 10 December (8 sessions)
Understanding depression and anxiety in children and adolescents	2 November
Play and learning for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder	3 November
Practical strategies for helping young children with Developmental Verbal Dyspraxia	9 November
Makaton – basic Peakhurst	13 November
Makaton – stories, songs and rhyme to use with sign Miller	16 November

Learning Links has a number of courses which involve a fee. For more information visit their website www.learninglinks.org.au or call Dana **02 8525 8222**

Autism Spectrum organisation

Intervention approaches for Autism spectrum disorder, Frenchs Forest.	20 November
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For more information call Vicki Gibbs **02 8977 8331** or visit their website www.autismspectrum.org.au

Leukaemia Foundation

The Foundation holds numerous courses that are free. To find out more information go to the website www.leukaemia.org.au click on "services" then "education and support programs" or contact them on **02 9902 2222**

The Parent and Carer Resource Centre

It's your place!

If you need to take "time out" or if you want to locate information about a range of services, the Parent and Carer Resource Centre is the perfect place for you! We are located on level two opposite Kid's Health. Phone 9845 0580.



Available at the centre:

- Carer service directories
- Daily papers
- Microwave
- Computer and internet access
- Free tea and coffee
- Access to Driver Reviver Room
- Free book exchange
- Regular activities and events for parents and carers
- Local information

If you would like to unsubscribe to this newsletter or any of the Carers news please email Kelly on Kellyb1@chw.edu.au

the **childr^{en}**'s hospital at Westmead

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