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ISSUE 12

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www.mifsa.org

So much is happening at MIFSA!

DEVELOPING AND EXPANDING OUR EXISTING SERVICES
ESTABLISHING NEW PROGRAMS
WELCOMING NEW PARTICIPANTS AND NEW STAFF

They say a picture paints a thousand words so please enjoy some of our work over the past few months represented in both words as well as photos.

Sharing some of the photos from our programs offers an opportunity to reflect the energy and optimism of many of our participants. The people in the photo on this page are an example of this positive vibe. The photo was snapped during a cooking group, and here are the comments of those enjoying that experience.

“MIFSA has provided me with an introduction back into society where I feel welcomed and in some way cared for. Since joining MIFSA I’ve seen my skills grow, my confidence soar and opportunities open up for me.”
Brandon

“I love cooking, and MIFSA is giving me the opportunity to be creative and busy, which in turn is helpful for my sense of well being.” Diana

“I have found great opportunities to volunteer, participate in adventurous activities, do courses and meet the loveliest people who are very accepting of me. At MIFSA I have found so much support and understanding.” Deb

We hope you too enjoy this edition of MIFSA News and if you haven't called in for a while why not contact us, send an email or drop by sometime.



Vision & Mission

Our vision is that every person with mental illness is able to make a valued contribution to society, without stigma or discrimination, due to an increased understanding and awareness of mental illness in the community and the availability of appropriate services as required.

Our mission is to provide education, support, rehabilitation and recovery based programs in a safe, quality environment to assist people with mental illness and their natural support network living in South Australia to enjoy the best possible quality of life.



Activity Programs

As I write, the prolonged heat wave is causing records to tumble as Adelaide enters new territory. But as stated in the headlines, these are not records we want to break! At MIFSA we are also entering new territory. Fortunately, we can be more optimistic about the developments in the Activity Programs which operate in and from Keswick, Panangga and Port Lincoln.

As Team Leader of the three teams, I will use this opportunity to give a brief report. I want to thank current members and participants for their particular interest in getting a sense of the broader direction and planning of the programs, which resulted in me addressing the Members Meeting on February 26th of February. What follows is a summary of that discussion.

Prior to the new funding, the metropolitan sites ran various programs within and from the Activity Centres and were funded by Home and Community Care (HACC) and the State Department of Health. Keswick programs were supported by staff totalling 1.6 FTE (full time equivalent), and Panangga was staffed by a total of 1.0 FTE. Of course, MIFSA Eyre did not exist – there was no funding, no staff and no programs!

Early last year the Commonwealth Government introduced a few new initiatives and Natasha Miliotis got busy writing tenders, writing more tenders, and then writing some more! This resulted in new MIFSA programs being established, including PHaMs and Respite.

One of the successful tenders was for the Day to Day Living funding provided by the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA). This has meant that the metropolitan sites have expanded, and MIFSA Eyre Activity Programs was born.

In terms of staffing, there are additional Coordinators and Activity Officers at each site and the new position of Activity Programs Team Leader was created to work strategically across all three teams. I was appointed to that role in August 2007 and it is my responsibility, with the support and input from many others, to ensure the uniform implementation of the expanding programs and any new procedures and requirements for the new funding.

The Department’s vision is to fund social, recreational and educational group activity programs for people living with mental illness within a rehabilitation and recovery framework. This fits with MIFSA’s “sharing the journey” motto already in place within MIFSA’s programs and works from the basis that all people have the potential to have meaningful contributions to society.

Practically, this means that there is opportunity, encouragement and even expectation that participants get involved in the development of activities and programs. An example of this is the current work to get a photo-board up in the Activity Centres.

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art group at Panangga



MIFSA Dolphins



music group at Keswick





From the President

The Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (MIFA) is the 'umbrella' organisation nationally for mental health organisations like MIFSA. Natasha Miliotis and I are both involved with MIFA, as members of the Directors' and Presidents' groups respectively.

Many of you will know Margaret Springgay, who is the Executive Director of MIFA, based here at the Mental Health Resource Centre. The national president is Rob Knowles, who is President of the Mental Illness Fellowship of Victoria.

MIFA has been influential with both the current and the previous national government over the last few years, largely due to Rob and Margaret's efforts. As national coordinators of such events as Schizophrenia Awareness Week, they have helped to put mental illness, and how society ought to respond to it, high in the public consciousness.

One important turning point in recent years was the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's report "Not For Service" in 2005, which undoubtedly affected the Howard Government's decision to announce a \$1.9 billion injection of mental health funding, some

of which has already translated into new services in South Australia. MIFA was a key informant to that report, and the HREOC Commissioner personally briefed the MIFA Board when it was released.

Now HREOC has asked MIFA to assist in assessing progress and/or lack of it. As Margaret Springgay writes, the Commissioner says it is time 'to identify critical actions or structural changes necessary to improve the flexibility and capacity of services to respond to the needs of people with mental illness across Australia and to protect the rights of people with mental illness.' The invitation goes on to say, 'I believe that now is a critical time to urge Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to demonstrate a commitment to a human rights based approach to the reform of mental health care and delivery of services to people with mental illness in Australia.'

In our feedback we will certainly be repeating the findings of national survey from last year (in which many of you reading this participated), which identified housing and employment as the top two



areas needing attention. All of us have a role to play in making sure these are 'hot button' issues for the new Rudd government, so it's good to know that our national Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commissioner is keeping attention focussed on mental illness, and that MIFSA's voice, through our national organisation, will be heard.

David Meldrum

From the Executive Director

Those of us who are blessed, or is that cursed, to be connected with an email address will know about the huge volumes of information which are received electronically. Part of my job is to forward newsletters, e-bulletins, flyers, notices of meetings and invitations to consultations to our growing staff team.

Over the past few years I have seen an interesting and heartening increase in 'consumer' and 'carer' involvement in the development, planning and evaluation of mental health services. Several years ago more often than not we needed to seek out opportunities to inform and share knowledge about the needs of people affected by mental illness and their carers. Now, there is scarcely a week that goes by during which I haven't passed on information regarding a "Health Consumer

discussion", "Consumer Consultation" or "Invitation to have input into..."

You may ask: 'that's great in practice, but what about in theory?' Yes, this shift is also reflected in a range of frameworks, acts and reports. For those who love to read, check out just some of the documents which highlight the need and importance of consumer participation: the National Mental Health Plan (2003-2008), Senate Select Committee on Mental Health Report (March 2006), Not for Service: Experiences of injustice and despair in Mental Care in Australia, Summary (2005) and Let's Get To Work: A National Mental Health Employment Strategy; Mental Health Council of Australia (2007).

As we know it's not just about consultation either, increasingly Peer Specialist and Carer Consultants are also being utilised



in the delivery of mental health services. In the wider health sector the concept of 'peer workers' is not new. Peer workers have been utilised internationally in a range of areas including cardiac, drug rehabilitation, diabetes, in fact just google peer workers and a health condition and its hard not to find a match and an existing program.

Continued page 4>



From the Executive Director *continued*

As a member-based and member-driven organisation the experience which comes from living with mental illness is fundamental to our culture and practice at MIFSA. In fact the motto for our national organisation is “the lived experience”.

Whilst we work hard to build an understanding of the importance of peer workers in the delivery of mental health services in SA, at MIFSA we do not designate specific Peer Positions. We have 80 MIFSA employees with over 75% of staff able to draw on lived experience; either as people living with mental illness or as carers/family members of someone affected by mental illness.

We have developed pathways from participant to volunteer to paid staff worker, which may also involve MIFSA peer worker or community educator training. Our programs are developed with two important bodies of information: lived experience and evidence based/research backed knowledge. We also continually challenge ourselves around a number of related topics such as utilising the range of skills that are derived from lived experience, the purpose and motivation behind disclosure and ensuring flexible workplace practices.

In fact as my email account registers further opportunities to advise/provide feedback/have input into, you too will find a number of opportunities in this edition of MIFSA News to have your say. With your support and guidance as MIFSA members we continue to shape our organisation and provide input into the reform of mental health service both in South Australia and nationally.

Natasha Miliotis

Member participation is crucial at MIFSA The following is one of the objectives in our Constitution:

‘To provide opportunities to our membership and the community to contribute to the operation of MIFSA in a variety of roles, including as volunteers.’

Education Program

EDUCATION SESSIONS FOR 2008:

Education sessions have been on the increase with a busy time scheduled for April and May. We have numerous metro sessions booked for both Keswick and Panangga (see timetable below) and regular sessions at the Australian Taxation Office. Sessions are also scheduled for HOMESTART, Essence of Hope Carers Support Group, Clarence Park Community Group, TAFE SA, and Cheltenham Community Centre.

Country Education sessions will be held at Victor Harbor, Berri, Renmark and Nuriootpa, visiting schools in these areas as well as conducting sessions for the community groups and the general public.

Whether you are a MIFSA member or community member, program participant or member of the public, why not join us for the following education sessions.

KESWICK ACTIVITY CENTRE: MHRC CONFERENCE ROOM, 1 - 2PM

14th May	Emotional Wellbeing
11th June	Personality Types
23rd July	Assertiveness
13th August	Anxiety, Stress and Relaxation
10th September	Schizophrenia and Psychosis
15th October	Depression

PANANGGA ACTIVITY CENTRE: 11AM - 12:30PM

2nd April	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
7th May	Schizophrenia
4th June	Bipolar Disorder
18th June	Understanding Anger
6th August	Personality Types
17th September	Depression
12th November	Emotional Wellbeing

Over the years the Education Program has spoken to more than 80,000 people. Educating the community, creating awareness and reducing the stigma associated with mental illness is our primary focus.

Robyn Miller
Acting Education Coordinator



Psychosocial Groups Program

Family Splash Down Day

The Psychosocial Groups Program team arranged an afternoon in January for MIFSA members and their families at the Adelaide Aquatic Centre. Approximately 35 people came for a cool afternoon of swimming and fun. The PGP team were able to provide cool drinks and giveaways and everyone received a goodie bag of chips, chocolate and assorted munchies. As MIFSA does not directly provide a service for people under 18 years of age, it was great to see the younger members of the MIFSA family having a good time. It was held in the last week of the holidays, when temperatures were higher and ideas for keeping the kids of all ages occupied were lower.

By the end of the day, a host of smiling faces and tired bodies all appeared satisfied and content. The PGP team were happy to host this "Family Fun Day" and next year hope to plan more. If you have children, or grandchildren under the age of 18 years, who would be interested in similar activities in the summer months, please contact our office so we can compile a registration of interest for you to attend in 2009. Email paula@mifsa.org or ring 8221 5160. In the meantime keep cool during this hot weather!!

Paula Ryan
Psychosocial Groups Program



Living with Psychosis

We will work in small groups to:

- share experiences and increase knowledge and awareness of psychosis and its impact on participants and relationships with others
- understand anxiety, its effects on health, and how to manage it
- identify early warning signs and positive strategies to manage health
- explore personal values and identity related to and apart from psychosis
- understand motivation, realistic goal setting and structuring time
- acknowledge and feel good about strengths and achievements.

These groups will run for 2 hours, including a break for refreshments, over six weeks.

SESSION TIMES AND VENUES:

Location	Dates and times
Marjorie Black House Unley	18th June - 23rd July Wednesday 10am - 12noon
Elizabeth House Christie Downs	18th June - 23rd July Wednesday, 2pm - 4pm
Bagster Road Community Centre Salisbury North	19th June - 24th July Thursday, 10:30am - 12:30pm

Dealing with Depression

We will work in small groups to:

- better understand depression
- share ideas with others who have similar experiences
- understand anxiety, its effects on health, and how to manage it
- explore how depression can affect our relationship with others
- identify helpful and unhelpful coping strategies
- explore how our thinking can affect our moods
- prepare plans for keeping well in the future.

THESE GROUPS WILL RUN FOR 2 HOURS, INCLUDING A BREAK FOR REFRESHMENTS, OVER SIX WEEKS.

SESSION TIMES AND VENUES:

Location	Dates and times
Level 1, Education Centre Modbury Hospital, Modbury	29th April - 3rd June Tuesday 2pm - 4pm
Clarence Park Community Centre Clovelly Park	30th April - 4th June Wednesday, 10am - 12noon
Elizabeth House Christie Downs	30th April - 4th June Wednesday, 2pm - 4pm
West Lakes Community Centre West Lakes	1st May - 5th June Thursday 10am - 12noon
Community Campus Elizabeth Grove	2nd May - 6th June Friday 10am - 12noon
Payneham Community Centre Payneham	2nd May - 6th June Friday 10am - 12noon

The focus is about thriving, not just surviving

Well Ways Program

A PROGRAM FOR CARERS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF PEOPLE WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS

The 2008 Well Ways programs are well under way with two programs running at Keswick and one at Marion. The programs are attended by both parents, husbands, wives, sisters, brothers, children and friends who share a common need and desire to make life better for a person with a mental illness, their family and friends and particularly for themselves.

Starting on the first day of April families and friends are starting a new Well Ways program at the Grenville Hub at Elizabeth, which will be conducted from 12:30pm each week (see below).

If you wish to attend these sessions please contact me asap and I will endeavour to include you in the continuing program.

The Well Ways program to start at the West Lakes Community Centre on Monday 14th of April at 6pm will be conducted by Mark and Carol, and other programs at Christies Beach from 7th of May at 6pm by Terry and Anne, and at Keswick from the 27th of May at 12:30pm by Stella and myself. Check other venues to follow – Enfield and Payneham etc.

Bookings are always very important.

The Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia nationally recommended fee for the twelve month program is \$250. The program includes 12 sessions over 12 months, meals, education, support and excellent up-to-date literature and resources. Thanks to the support of the Carer Support & Respite Centre (east & south metro) and the Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre (north & west metro), the fee payable is only \$25, and this includes MIFSA membership.

We truly appreciate these two organisations for their support of all carers.

The Well Ways Program is based on the bio-psycho-social and stress vulnerability models of recovery. So if you experience frustration with services and the dilemmas of caring associated with mental illness, then this program is for you.

For more details and assistance please make contact. Best Wishes to all.

Maureen Lewis
Well Ways Program Coordinator
mlewis@mifsa.org

Well Ways: building a future

Well Ways helping families and friends find better ways

Well Ways consists of a block of eight weekly sessions followed by four sessions over the next twelve months.

Well Ways 2008 Program:

LOCATION	DATE COMMENCING
Room U3a, Grenville Hub Playford Boulevard, Elizabeth	Tuesdays, from 1st April, 12:30-3:30pm
West Lakes Community Centre Cnr Brebner Dr & West Lakes Boulevard West Lakes	Mondays, from 14th April, 6-9pm
Board Room, Panangga Centre, 64 Elgin Avenue, Christies Beach	Wednesdays, from 7th May, 6-9pm
MHRC Conference Room, 1 Richmond Road Keswick	Tuesdays, from 27th May 12:30-3:30pm
Enfield	June - TBA
Payneham	July - TBA
Salisbury	July - TBA
Stirling	August - TBA

Carer Facilitators who conduct the programs are trained and qualified by Mental Illness Fellowship of Victoria

Well Ways is evaluated by the LaTrobe University

Contact Maureen Lewis, Well Ways Coordinator
on 8221 5160 or email: mlewis@mifsa.org

Mental Illness Fact Sheets

For order forms or to place orders
please phone MIFSA, 8221 5160

Cost:

Full Series (1 copy of each 30 sheets)

MIFSA members	\$12.50
Non-members	\$15.00

Bulk Packs (50 copies of one title)

MIFSA members	\$10.00
Non-members	\$12.50

Small Packs (20 copies of one title)

MIFSA members	\$ 4.00
Non-members	\$ 5.00

Plus postage and handling:

Add \$4 for one pack, \$10 for 2-10 packs

All prices include GST

Carer Involvement Workshops

AN INVITATION TO CARERS

The Mental Illness Fellowship of South Australia is facilitating carer involvement workshops as part of the Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) Carer Engagement Project.

The aim of the Carer Engagement Project is to:

- hear and record the real life experiences of mental health carers
- encourage carers to identify their current and future information needs
- provide a method of ongoing monitoring of carers' experiences by the MHCA

Workshops facilitated by MIFSA will be held in April and May in Modbury, Marion, Keswick, Murray Bridge and Victor Harbor.

As a carer of a person with mental illness you are invited to attend a workshop:

- to share your knowledge and experiences
- add to the 'snapshot' of experiences and needs of carers in 2008
- hear about strategies and services available to support you
- enjoy some delicious food

Places are limited, so to express your interest in being involved in a Carer Involvement Workshop call Pam or Lynne at MIFSA on 8221 5160

DATE	LOCATION	VENUE
April 16 10am - 3:30pm	Murray Bridge	Dundee's Hotel & Wildlife Park Jervois Road, Murray Bridge
April 23 10am - 3:30pm	Modbury	Community Learning Centre Tea Tree Gully Library, 571 Montague Road, Modbury
April 30 10am - 3:30pm	Keswick	Conference Room, Mental Health Resource Centre 1 Richmond Road, Keswick
May 21 10am - 3:30pm	Victor Harbor	Flinders Room, McCracken Country Club, McCracken Drive, Victor Harbor
May 28 10am - 3:30pm	Marion	Sturt Room, Marion Cultural Centre 287 Diagonal Road, Oaklands Park

Background Information:

The Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) has received funding from the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs for a Carers Engagement Project. In the past the MHCA has brought the issues of mental health care to national attention in such documents as the 'Out of Hospital Out of Mind' report of 2003 and the 'Not for Service' report 2005, with both available on the MHCA website www.mhca.org.au

MIFSA, along with a number of other member organisations of the Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia, will be assisting the MHCA in rolling out the workshops throughout Australia for mental health carers in early 2008.

Personal Mentors and Helpers Program

The Personal Helpers and Mentors Program (PHaMs) started at MIFSA in January. We provide one-on-one support for people whose lives are severely affected by a mental illness. We use a strengths-based recovery model. This means that we focus on what a person can do rather than their deficits and we support them in achieving their own goals. People can self-refer or be referred by a carer, a professional or another community organisation.

MIFSA operates this program from two sites: PHaMs West is based in the Keswick Centre and covers the western metropolitan area (postcodes 5010 to 5022) whereas PHaMs South is based with the Panangga Activity Centre in Christies Beach and covers the Adelaide outer southern region (postcodes 5157 to 5174).

The PHaMs program has really taken off with an increasing number of participants and we have received excellent feedback to date. We have networked with a variety of services and we are collaborating closely with government agencies and community organisations. We are definitely spreading the word around about PHaMs!

Both teams have recently recruited new workers. The western team would like to extend their warm welcome to John South. Many of you would have seen John in his counselling role at MIFSA. PHaMs South would also like to welcome to the team Andrea Streckfuss and Amanda Carter. We wish them well in their role of PHaMs worker.

If you would like to know more about the PHaMs program, please contact us and we can answer your questions and send you a brochure outlining the program.

Western region – Fiona Johnson: 8221 5160
fiona@mifsa.org

Southern region – Emilie Gagnon-Milot: 8326 7889
emilie@mifsasouth.org

Respite Program

Would you like to be involved in an exciting new Program? We are looking for a pool of sessional Respite Workers to provide home-based respite to support carers and individuals experiencing mental illness. The Program will facilitate the caring journey for carers and the recovery journey for care recipients.

Respite Workers

(Several positions – based at Keswick)

Positions offered at a minimum of 3 hours per session on a casual basis.

Requirements for the role include:

- Sound knowledge of mental illnesses including impact on individuals, carers and the community
- Ability to resource relevant community services and means of accessing them
- Ability to successfully interact with people living with mental illness and their carers
- Sound self-management, communication, organisational and interpersonal skills
- Current SA Drivers Licence and willingness to use own vehicle.

Initial inquiries may be directed to Amanda Porter or Marie Choi, Team Leaders, MIFSA Respite Program on 8221 5160. A Job and Person Description and Application Procedure is available by contacting Lynne Forrest, Administration Officer on 8221 5160, by email to lynnef@mifsa.org or at www.mifsa.org

Please address applications to: Respite Program, MIFSA, PO Box 310, MARLESTON SA 5033.

Applications close 5pm, Friday 18 April 2008.

Wednesday Forums and Support Works

AT KESWICK ACTIVITY CENTRE:

All sessions 1pm - 3pm

Date	Topic	Facilitator:
16th April	Effective Communication	tbc
14th May	Emotional Wellbeing	Andrew Kelly
11th June	Personality Types	Sophie Angell
23rd July	Assertiveness	Andrew Kelly

The Forums are information and discussion sessions so come along and join in – everyone is welcome.

Further information phone Suzi, 8221 5160



Sunflower Shops are located at:

CHRISTIES DOWNS

Shop 4, Flaxmill Shopping Centre, 303 Flaxmill Road
Phone 8236 2456

GOODWOOD

145 Goodwood Road (just south of the Capri Theatre)
Phone 8272 7162

SEACOMBE GARDENS

577 Morphet Road
Phone 8298 3051

April and May Special
all Summer Clothing Half Price!

Volunteers Wanted

Looking for voluntary work? Enjoy meeting people? Committed to supporting MIFSA? MIFSA provides its services ONLY through the generous and enthusiastic support of volunteers.

The following volunteer positions are available:

Panangga Activity Centre:

QUALIFIED HAIRDRESSER

To cut members hair on a weekly, fortnightly, or even monthly basis. If you have suitable qualifications and are willing to support MIFSA members in this way please phone Yvonne or Berny on 8382 5588.

MEAL PREPARATION

To prepare lunches on Wednesdays.
For more information or expressions of interest please contact Yvonne or Berny on 8382 5588.

Volunteers are vital at MIFSA

VOLUNTEERS OFFER MIFSA THREE PRECIOUS GIFTS: THEIR TIME, ENERGY AND TALENTS.

In turn we strive to offer exciting programs where volunteers work. We look for opportunities where volunteers can develop new skills and share their existing talents.

In recent months a number of teams of volunteers have developed in various program areas. New people bring extra pairs of hands, fresh ideas and fantastic energy.

There is a buzz at MIFSA and people are telling us about it! More importantly, people are joining in.

The MIFSA staff team can certainly work, but volunteers increase what we can produce and expand what we deliver. Volunteers make MIFSA vital!

In fact, some areas of MIFSA like our Sunflower Shops and Board of Management would simply not exist without the generous work of volunteers. For many years volunteers have made sure that our Sunflower Shops are a great place to find a quality bargain. More recently, under the skilled leadership of our Sunflower Shops Coordinator Elsha, a team of "sorting" volunteers has developed.

Twice a week the shed at Keswick is filled with conversation, laughter and a lot of hard work as second hand clothes and goods are chosen and sorted. The team work is amazing, even though during hot summer days the shed swelters and in the colder months it can feel like an Antarctic winter!

We continually seek out ways to improve what we do at MIFSA and in coming months there will be further improvements in the area of volunteering. For example, some of our newer programs are working towards incorporating volunteering opportunities into their work. So if you are thinking of joining in... why not come and have a chat... and give volunteering at MIFSA a go!

Thank you to all our volunteers, thank you for your work and for your energy.

2008 National Survey of Volunteering Issues

VOLUNTEERING AUSTRALIA INVITES ALL VOLUNTEERS AND NOT FOR PROFIT ORGANISATIONS THAT INVOLVE VOLUNTEERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2008 NATIONAL SURVEY OF VOLUNTEERING ISSUES.

The survey helps Volunteering Australia understand what issues are emerging in the sector and what factors help and hinder effective volunteering. VA uses this information to formulate policy positions to put to government, and also to target where our research and consultation efforts should be directed.

This is the 3rd National Survey of Volunteering. It includes questions and themes from previous years' surveys to enable us to compare and track volunteering trends, as well as including some new themes such as corporate/employee volunteering, the measurement of volunteer contribution and volunteers' sense of community belonging. The survey has also been refined to make it easier for you to respond.

The 2008 National Survey of Volunteering Issues report will be released during National Volunteer Week. The Survey can be accessed at: www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=hXAB4w0PEXR32ntM2N5GNA_3d_3d



I was fine 'til I retired

ARE YOU OF A CERTAIN AGE, GETTING TO WHAT YOU BELIEVE IS THE END OF YOUR WORKING LIFE? LOOKING FORWARD TO A LIFE OF BRIDGE, GOLF, FISHING, AND FOLLOWING THE NAGS ON SKY TV? SOUNDS GOOD - BUT IT MAY NOT WORK OUT TO BE SO ENJOYABLE. IN FACT, YOU MIGHT BE BETTER OFF IF YOU ESCHEW RETIREMENT IN FAVOUR OF (GASP) STICKING AT THE JOB.

How can this be? Surely one of the main reasons you work is to save to retire so you can do the things you want to do? Amazingly enough, we're usually happier when we're working and we have trouble adapting to retirement.

Work provides a sense of social connection, structure for daily living, intellectual challenge and indeed, meaning - more so than our leisure activities, argues Darren Wickham, an actuary at Mercer Human Resource Consulting. In a paper he presented last month to the biennial conference of the Institute of Actuaries of Australia, he argued that the idea of retirement is outdated and unnecessary in 2007. We're having too much fun at work, and we should stay there.

WORK SATISFACTION

It might sound ludicrous to many a wage slave, but it's not a new idea. In the 1990s, researchers led by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, then Professor of Psychology at Chicago University, did a study of people at work and at leisure (he describes the study in his book 'Flow: The classic work on how to achieve happiness').

A hundred men and women of various ages and occupations wore an electronic pager for a week. They were beeped eight times a day at random and asked to fill out a booklet, giving details about what they were doing when they beeped and how they felt. When at work, about 54 per cent reported feeling 'strong, creative, motivated, active and positive'. But away from work, only 18 per cent reported experiencing these sensations. While working, 16 per cent reported feeling 'dull, weak and dissatisfied', whilst outside of work, 52 per cent reported experiencing these sensations. But at work, when asked what they would rather be doing, most said they would rather not be at work but engaged in leisure activities.

Why the paradox? Because when it comes to work, we don't heed the evidence of our senses; we believe the prevailing cultural stereotype that work is bad, an imposition to be avoided. When we're at leisure we're free to choose, so we think we ought to be happier.

Only when we retire do we discover what we've lost, says Christopher Sharpley, Adjunct Professor of Psychology at the University of New England. He says that retirees commonly experience depression after giving up work. 'Immediately after retirement there's a strong upsurge in wellbeing for the first six or so months, which is commonly known as the 'honeymoon' period,' he says. 'Then after one or two years, there's a decrease in wellbeing, which can often turn into quite serious depression.'

Hobbies and interests turn out not to be as rewarding as retirees had imagined. Without a sense of purpose, their self-esteem suffers. The lack of an ordered structure in their lives leaves them bewildered and aimless. Men are particularly badly affected - women seem better able to cope without the imposed structure of a job. Relationships may become strained, and conflicts arise over what the couple should do with their time; how much of it should be spent together; whether they should travel, and if so, how much and whether they should do so together. Often partners find they have little in common ('I married

him for better or worse - not for breakfast, lunch and dinner!'), and the divorce rate is higher after retirement.

Interestingly, money isn't an issue, argues Sharpley. People on a much reduced income are no less happy than those who retire on three-quarters or more of their previous income (the minimum the superannuation industry says you need).

DON'T RETIRE

Human beings are happiest when they're rising to meet a challenge; the reward is the sense of satisfaction and achievement in overcoming it. That's what work provides. If we don't have that, we become depressed. When counselling groups of men, Sharpley's advice is, don't retire. 'Think of yourself as undergoing a transition to a new form of work, something challenging and engaging, whether it's a recreational activity, voluntary work, or starting a small business. Those who see it as a transition to a new form of work do best,' he says.

SENIORS, THE GDP NEEDS YOU

Actually voluntary retirement is a recent phenomenon, argues actuary Darren Wickham in his paper, entitled 'Is it time to retire 'retirement'? Retirement began in the 1960s as a means of relieving the (then) high rate of unemployment and of easing older, less productive workers out of the workforce to make way for younger workers, he argues. But times have changed. Unemployment is the lowest it has been for 33 years and the next few decades will see an increasing shortage of labour as the birth rate stays low (currently at 1.7 children per couple and falling).

And the nature of the economy has changed from being heavily dependent on manufacturing, mining and farming (where older workers are at a physical disadvantage) to a service and information economy where the age of workers is less of an issue (in fact, being more experienced, older workers may be more valuable than younger workers). So instead of the concept that we'll work continuously until 65 and then retire to a life of leisure, we should aim for a life where we work for a period, leave work to do other things - raise children, study, run a part-time business or do something else - then go back to full-time work until the next transition, and so on.

The superannuation industry - cheerleaders of the idea of forced retirement and leisure - won't be too keen on the idea. But Wickham argues the rules governing super funds could be changed so that people could access their money when they take a break from the workforce and then go back to contributing to it when they're back at work.

"I was fine, till I retired" by Peter Lavelle, first published by ABC Health & Wellbeing and ABC Online, 18 October 2007, is reproduced by permission of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and ABC Online. © 2007 ABC. All rights reserved.

Further information can be found at ABC Health & Wellbeing: <http://www.abc.net.au/health/thepulse/stories/2007/10/18/2062814.htm>

To get weekly health news and information, subscribe to the ABC's free e-mail alert at: <http://abc.net.au/health/subscribe/>



The origins of anxiety disorders; why worry ... ?

ANXIETY DISORDERS ARE THE MOST COMMON FORM OF MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY AUSTRALIANS. MORE THAN ONE IN TEN OF US ARE AFFECTED EVERY YEAR. ADVANCES IN RESEARCH MEAN WE NOW UNDERSTAND THESE CONDITIONS BETTER THAN EVER.

Like many other mental and physical illnesses, anxiety disorders seem to be caused by the interaction of genetic vulnerability and environmental stressors. In other words, some people inherit a tendency to become seriously anxious and worried by things which do not warrant it.

We know that anxiety disorders run in families. For example, close relatives of people with social anxiety are 2-3 times more likely to develop social anxiety and close relatives of people with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) are up to nine times more likely to develop OCD themselves.

Recent research at the University of Otago in New Zealand and elsewhere has now identified a genetic profile of those who are more susceptible to anxiety disorders (see article in SANE News 43 (2007) *Mind and body: crossing the divide.*)

When people vulnerable in this way have everyday experiences or life events which might worry others for a limited period, these become 'amplified' in their brains. This causes them profound worry over a much longer period.

The experiences could include common stressful events such as:

- experiences during critical stages of early childhood
- sudden change in school or workplace
- sudden change in living arrangements (for example, moving out of home for the first time)
- financial problems
- physical health problems
- break up of a relationship

We all experience such events at some time in life, and they are certainly stressful and even distressing for a time. For people who are susceptible, however, these stressful times can trigger an 'oversensitivity' to any form of stress (even imagined or feared).

The brain then 'learns new habits' and begins to react to everyday events as though they were dangerous or highly distressing in some other way. This anxiety can exhibit itself in a range of disorders. Someone with panic disorder, for example, may become highly anxious when travelling by train because they become filled with a fearful conviction that there is a bomb on board, and that the carriage is about to explode. They would have difficulty breathing, sweat profusely and become highly agitated, exactly as if there really were a bomb on the train. After a number of panic attacks such as this, there would not need to be anything to trigger another - they would experience them quite randomly as the inner 'panic button' was pressed again for no actual reason.

Because we now understand that an anxiety disorder is something the brain has mistakenly 'learned', treatment focuses on helping people affected to 'unlearn' it, through psychological therapy.

People affected by anxiety disorders may often have another condition which requires treatment too, such as depression, bipolar disorder or schizophrenia, for example. While these other conditions may need medication, this is not generally prescribed for anxiety disorders except for short-term use before the long-term benefits of psychological therapy take effect.

Meeting and sharing experiences with others affected can also be extremely helpful. Call the SANE Helpline for information about support groups and useful websites around Australia 1800 18 SANE (7263).

Visit SANE Australia at: www.sane.org

Used with permission from SANE News, Issue 44, Summer 2007



Have your say

The *Have Your Say* website: www.haveyoursay.com.au is an on-line 'letters to the editor'.

Like a newspaper, it is open to submissions from anyone. There are no passwords or 'login' numbers and no membership forms.

The letters are read by an editor and posted onto the site as soon as possible. Just click on the SUBMIT link and send an email. *Have Your Say* contributions are published with the authors name and state, so please include these with your submission. Your email address will not be published or released to any other party.

Have Your Say will publish original creative work as well: poetry, short stories and cartoons are welcome.

Send your work as an attachment (Microsoft WORD preferred) to the email. Include your name and address for confirmation purposes.



Housing for mental health, 2008 - 2012

STATEMENT BY THE MENTAL HEALTH COALITION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Safe, affordable and stable housing is essential to recovering from mental illness and maintaining mental health.

The growing housing affordability crisis requires specific focus on support initiatives for people already disadvantaged in the housing market for reasons other than affordability.

There is growing evidence that the lack of affordable housing is a serious and worsening problem for people with mental illness.

Many people with mental illness in SA cannot access the accommodation or supports they need and this reduces their ability to recover and maintain their mental health and limits the effectiveness of public spending on mental health.

The default accommodation options for people with mental illness are increasingly prisons and hospitals which goes against the broadly accepted social policy of deinstitutionalisation.

The Mental Health Coalition of SA calls on the Commonwealth and the South Australian governments to work together on a five-year 'Housing for Mental Health Plan 2008 -2012' that invests on a sufficient scale to provide long term, coordinated housing and support options for people with mental illness in SA who are currently in severe housing stress.

A successful five year Housing for Mental Health Plan 2008-2012 in South Australia will:

- Recognise that access to safe, affordable and stable housing and an appropriate level of support is a critical building block of our mental health system
- Set the goals of providing access to appropriate housing and support options for all people with mental illness
- Invest \$50m per year in South Australia to create 500 new units per year of public and/or community housing for people with mental illness as a core component of the solution
- Ensure that timely, coordinated and targeted programs deliver housing and supports for people with mental illness including for people exiting hospital settings
- Monitor and report to the community, progress towards achieving the goals of providing appropriate housing and support options for all people with mental illness.

Current evidence of housing need for people with mental illness includes:

A snapshot survey of inpatients in mental health beds across Australia showed that around 50% of patients were still in hospital because they lacked either accommodation or support

Three of the larger community housing providers in SA report over 500 people with mental illness on their waiting lists

There are over 2100 people on the public housing waiting list in South Australia with self reported mental illness (as at 30 June 2007)

During 2006/7 only 59% (442) of the people with self-reported mental illness who applied for public housing were successful

Over 1000 people with mental illness are reported to be in Supported Residential Facilities and boarding house type accommodation

The Social Inclusion Board Report Stepping Up stated that 2000 people in public housing who are also clients of the public mental health system are likely to require additional support.

The average recurrent cost of providing:

one mental health hospital bed (2002/3 figures)
= \$150,000 per year

one prison bed (2005/6 figures)
= \$65,000 per year

one unit of public housing (2006/7 figures)
= \$5,990 per year

Used with permission from the Mental Health Coalition of SA to download Statement go to: www.mhcsa.org.au



Call for Papers: Social Alternatives

ISSUE ON MENTAL HEALTH: *DIFFUSE, CONFUSE AND REFUSE*

More than 20% of the Australian population are said to be affected by a mental health issue. Figures suggest that one in five people suffer from a mental illness and that the rates of illness are set to increase. Depression, for example, is tipped by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to become second to heart disease in terms of disability burden, globally.

In spite of major education and awareness campaigns, myths, stigma and isolation still surround how mental health and mental illness are understood. How do we diffuse these misconceptions? Why is there such confusion around mental illness, mental disorder and mental health? Is this confusion the result of contemporary times and the age of dispersal we live in? Where does refusal of the dominant concepts and misunderstandings of mental health for professionals and people who live with mental illnesses lie? How is refusal enacted?

This issue invites a broad range of submissions. There are opportunities to contribute:

- either an essay style, theoretical, referenced piece from those in academia (3000 words)
- personal stories and narrative accounts from those who live the experience of mental illness (1500 to 2000 words)
- accounts from the field (all health care professionals, carers and policy makers) about directions, challenges, alternatives and the future of mental health care globally (2500 words)
- poetry addressing the themes of mental health, mental illness and disorder, personal experience and alternatives related to mental health understandings.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: 1ST JUNE 2008

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 2008, VOL 27 ISSUE 4

(Potential contributors should discuss all proposals and brief with guest editor – details below – earlier submissions of full manuscripts are encouraged. All contributions are subject to peer review)

Topics could include but are not limited to:

- do we understand what the concept of mental health is? What is this burgeoning 'crisis' in mental health? If there is a crisis, what might some of the causes of it be?
- what are some of the key ethical issues faced in mental health? What do we imagine mental health will mean in 2050?
- how are myths, stigma and barriers to understanding mental illness and disorders to change?
- is mental health and mental illness socially or biologically constructed? What is the role of psychiatry in the construction of mental health?
- what are differences in the conception of mental health cross-culturally and in Indigenous communities?

- what are some of the strategies, social and political movements that have addressed issues in mental health?
- how has the narrative approach and telling one's story come to play such a significant role in mental health research and the delivery of services?
- how is mental illness represented in fiction, visual forms, policy documents and by public bodies and groups?

GUIDELINES FOR INTERESTED CONTRIBUTORS CAN BE FOUND AT:
<http://www.socialalternatives.com/contributors.htm>

Social Alternatives is an independent, quarterly refereed journal. It is committed to the principles of social justice, commenting on important social issues of current concern or public debate. We publish practical and theoretical articles on relevant topics, as well as reviews, short stories, poems, graphics, comment, and critique.

Direct enquiries and submissions for this issue to the guest editor:
Dr Victoria Palmer Research Fellow, Mental Health, Primary Care Research Unit, The University of Melbourne
E-mail: vpalmer@unimelb.edu.au, ph: 61 3 83 44 4987

Through your eyes

COMIC (Children of Mentally Ill Consumers) are putting together a manuscript of personal experiences with mental illness for free distribution to Carers, Consumers, Educators and Clinicians, in hope of increasing awareness and reducing stigma surrounding mental illness and they want your stories.

The manuscript is called *Glimpses*.

You are invited to submit your Consumer or Carer story on your personal experiences with Anxiety Disorder, Anorexia, Bipolar, Borderline Personality Disorder, Depression, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Schizophrenia and any other mental illness.

There is no minimum or maximum word count for stories.

People have told of the lead up to diagnosis, dealing with Mental Health Services, medication issues, identifying triggers, working towards recovery and coping strategies.

What and how much you want to share is up to you and feel free to use your whole name, first name or a pseudonym.

Email, post or fax your story to Nicci Wall at:
forwalls@xi.com.au

43 Browallia Drive, Rose Park, Corio, Victoria, 3214
fax 03 5222 6847.



New in the library

THE BI-POLAR EXPRESS, by Ela Simon & Natasha Simon

This is a funny, sad story of a mother's search from childhood, through the teenage years to adult, for the correct diagnosis for her 'different' daughter, whilst desperately trying to battle with her daughter's alienation, dramas and crises.

STOP WALKING ON EGGHELLS: TAKING YOUR LIFE BACK WHEN SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT HAS BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER, by Paul T Mason M.S. and Randi Kreger

This comprehensive and supportive self-help guide helps family and friends of individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) understand this self-destructive disorder and learn what they can do to cope with BPD behaviour and take care of themselves.

I HATE YOU - DON'T LEAVE ME: UNDERSTANDING THE BORDERLINE PERSONALITY, by Jerold J Kreisman M.D. and Hal Straus

For years Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) was difficult to describe, diagnose, and treat. But in this book Dr Jerold J Kreisman and health writer Hal Straus offer much-needed professional advice, helping people with BPD and their families to understand and cope with this troubling, shockingly widespread affliction.

THE BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER SURVIVAL GUIDE: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LIVING WITH BPD, by Alexander L Chapman PhD, and Kim L Gratz, PhD

If you are living with Borderline Personality Disorder this compassionate book offers what you really need: an easy-to-follow road map to guide you through this disorder and its treatment.

GET ME OUT OF HERE: MY RECOVERY FROM BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER, by Rachel Reiland

With astonishing honesty, Reiland reveals what mental illness feels like and looks like from the inside. Her story is horrifying, but in the end, hopeful - offering living proof that healing from this tenacious psychiatric disorder is possible through intensive therapy and the support of loved ones.

BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER DEMYSTIFIED: an essential guide for understanding and living with BPD, by Robert O Friedel, MD,

In simple terms, Dr Friedel explains the nature of Borderline Personality Disorder, the factors involved in its diagnosis, and the most effective ways to cope with it.

THE DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOUR THERAPY SKILLS WORKBOOK: Practical DBT Exercises for Learning Mindfulness, Interpersonal Effectiveness, Emotion Regulation & Distress Tolerance, by Matthew McKay Ph.D, Jeffrey C Wood, Psy.D, Jeffrey Brandtley, MD

Offers straightforward step-by-step exercises for learning these concepts and putting them to work for real and lasting change.



DYING TO BE FREE: A HEALING GUIDE FOR FAMILIES AFTER A SUICIDE, by Beverly Cobain and Jean Larch

With extraordinary courage and compassion, Beverly Cobain and Jean Larch break through dangerous silence, complicated emotions, and brutal stigma to offer this gentle, healing guide for family members who have lost a loved one to suicide. Cobain's achingly honest personal account, along with tender recollections from other suicide survivors, provide powerful insight into the confusion, fear, and guilt that family members experience.

TO DANCE ACROSS THE HEAVENS, by Alvina Hill

This book is about one woman's diary account of her life and relationships while coping with a serious mental illness. It makes for compelling reading, detailing a particular period of intense mental instability. It is also a reflection on the author's life as a whole, the principal relationships that were integral to her life and the impact they had upon her formative and later years.

Library resources are available for loan by MIFSA members, please see staff to record your loan.

Housing SA Accommodation Advice

At MIFSA at Keswick on the first and third (and 5th)
Thursdays each month, 1-4pm

Housing SA provides an Outreach Service for people with mental illness. To make an appointment with the Outreach Service Officer, phone Cecile or Susan on 8221 5166.



Mental Health Fact Sheets in other languages

MULTICULTURAL MENTAL HEALTH AUSTRALIA HAS RECENTLY LAUNCHED THEIR NEW TRANSLATED FACT SHEETS.

Fact sheets include information on:

- Understanding Mental Illness
- Mental Health & Heart Disease
- Mental Health in a changing world - *The Impact of Culture and Diversity*
- What is a Mental Illness?
- What is Schizophrenia?
- What is a Personality Disorder?
- What is an Eating Disorder?
- What is an Anxiety Disorder?

These fact sheets are a great resource for all service providers that are working with families, carers, children and young people affected by mental illness, and particularly those that are from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

To obtain copies please visit <http://www.mmha.org.au/find/resources>, or contact MMHA: 02 8838 2117

The Multicultural Youth Pledge

THE CENTRE FOR MULTICULTURAL YOUTH ISSUES (CMYI) IS COORDINATING THE MULTICULTURAL YOUTH PLEDGE.

This campaign is working to set the record straight, get some balance into the discussion, counter myths and provide information about the situation of migrant and refugee young people.

The campaign is urging decision makers to work harder to engage with and promote the skills, knowledge and energy of migrant and refugee young people, develop a national strategy to tackle racism and discrimination, fund comprehensive research into the real situation for migrant and refugee young people and increase funding to support services for migrant and refugee young people.

If you would like to join the campaign visit: www.cmyi.net.au

Above articles used with permission from the Multicultural Mental Health of Australia, newsletter, Synergy No. 3, 2007

'Overall there are 1.27 million adults with a mental illness who smoke, making up 38.3% of all smokers in Australia.'

'The health system costs of treating this excess level of disease caused by the higher rate of smoking by people with a mental illness is \$432 million a year.'

'Smoking is a leading cause of disease and premature mortality, accounting for 1 in 9 deaths in Australia every year. Smoking is responsible for 80% of lung cancers, doubles the risk of stroke and increases the risk of heart attack.'

From SANE News, Smoking and mental illness, Issue 45, Autumn 2008 www.sane.org

The Tobacco & Mental Illness Project

Be Smoke Free!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO QUIT OR CUT BACK TOBACCO?

Come and join a group support program. The group is for people who are:

- Just thinking about quitting
- Wanting to cut back
- Really keen to stop smoking

The group meets on **THURSDAYS, 1:30 - 3:30pm** at MIFSA 1 Richmond Road, Keswick **New Members Welcome!**

The Group will resume on 1st May

For more information or to register, please contact Carol at MIFSA on 8221 5160 or phone the Be Smoke Free! team on 8200 2009.



Marion Support Group

Meetings are held bimonthly (February, April, June, August, October, December) on the second **Tuesday** as social get-togethers over a meal at the Marion Hotel, Marion Road; from 6:15pm

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY 8TH APRIL 2008

At Marion Hotel, Marion Road, 6:15pm onwards
Seniors menu - good food / salad bar
Everyone welcome - special invitation to Tea Tree Gully carers.
Ring Narelle by 4th April to book, 8278 5796

Extra special announcement

We are to join in a Carers Event at end of April - could be a 'Mystery Tour' or a 'Big Day Out'. More details at the dinner.
Don't miss out - more information later - it will be a great day!

Take care,

Narelle Gordon

Mood Disorders Carers Group

Offering help and support to those in the role of caring for people with bipolar affective disorder and depression.

Meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month, at the Marjorie Black House, 47 King William Road, Unley; 7:30pm

Coming Meetings:

Tuesday 29th April and 27th May 2008

Newcomers welcome; to join this group please phone MIFSA on 8221 5160

Group Convenor: Marcia Johnson Timm

THE FOLLOWING DETAILS ARE INCLUDED FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR CARER MEMBERS LIVING IN THE ELIZABETH AREA.

Essence of Hope Support Group

An education and support group for carers and friends of a family member with an experience of mental illness, convened by the Northern Carers Network in partnership with the City of Playford.

For carers in the Elizabeth area and surrounds, held second Tuesday each month, 7 - 9pm, at the Grenville Community Connections Hub, Playford Boulevard, Elizabeth.

For more information phone the City of Playford, 8256 0241 or Northern Carers Network, 8284 0388

A realisation of Bi-Polarisation and coming to terms using - living it

Ride the wild horses - act like a clown
Fly high - burn wings - crash hard - on the ground
Down to the depths where nothing dwells
Enjoy quite insanely your own lonely private hell
Scream and shout for all; nobody hears
So slip away minutes, hours, years
Same difference - no work or play day after day
While powers grind relentless, obstreperous in fearful ways
Then comes relief in the form of a pill with
Cold control - no mind - no will - to face -
To join the human race, a place in the daily rat race
To be abused, misused, avoided, rejected
Or even be protected from yourself even if not needed
To lie (to yourself) till the one-off becomes all we can fight
For to exist until the final curtain night
Is the only relief, for our won loss and grief
In a society sick, of us - and do not weep
So my friend, if I pass you by in the street
And too happily greet you, or swear out loud
At dark black clouds in a clear blue sky mined
Perhaps you may guess why or even sympathize
Because now I live in a world for too little a while
Until it is my turn to die - no time to cry
For you are strong and can do no wrong
And I did it for not being wanted or counted
Too much red ink on a page that taxes
All who live in a country fantastic
Except for some - and I am not the only one
To consider measures mean, vain or drastic
It happened to happen a long time ago
Today its me - tomorrow you? - now you're not too sure
As to how the dice will land - or an ill wind blow
To that special place M.D. P or Bi-Polarisation
Whatever we call it, nothing to sing - out loud
Or stand out alone in the normal crowd.

It can happen to anyone in any country, no choice
But far more in the West - may your mind now rest - at ease?
Or hear
that unholy voice.

© 2008 Ashton John D'Silva



Bread tags fundraiser

The tally of bread tags collected by our members and the general public, both in South Australia and interstate, is now over 1000kg additional to the 470kg already sold.

Thank you all for a fantastic effort!

Our thanks also to the efforts of our volunteers in picking up, weighing and bagging the bread tags – your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Since the last MIFSA News, bread tags collections large and small, far and near, have been received from:

Lynn Davy, New South Wales

Rosemary Althorp

TAFE SA, Pt Augusta

Gill Pitt, Kangaroo Island

Christadelphian Hall, Adelaide

Noarlunga / Seaford Catholic Parish and friends

Royal Adelaide Hospital

Bureau of Meteorology, Melbourne

Maxine Stasinowsky, Wynarka

Karen Fitzgerald

Flagstaff Hill Ladies Probus

Blackwood Retired Persons (ARPA)

Willunga Uniting Church

Judy Visser and her Avon customers

Natalie Parry, BT Finance

Carolyn Cordon and the Mallala community

Andy Kelly, TAFE SA and RDNS

Trinity Place, Pasadena

Noarlunga Salvation Army Community Church

Theo's Deli, Prospect

Carrington Snack Bar, Adelaide

Royalty Snack Bar, Adelaide

Sturt Street Snack Bar, Adelaide

Technical Service Operations Dept, Toyota Motor Corporation

District Council of Kimba

Thank you all, and the many anonymous donors who leave bread tags at our Sunflower shops, the Collection Bins, Panangga and the RAH Hospital Kiosk.

Thank you all – your support is appreciated.

Delivery Points for Bread Tags:

Sunflower Shops – see addresses above

Sunflower Shops Collection Bins at:

Sixth Ave Shopping Centre, Cnr Sixth Ave & Stephens Tce St Peters

Woolworth's Plus, 272 Shepherds Hill Rd, Eden Hills

Mental Health Resource Centre, 1 Richmond Road, Keswick

Panangga Activity Centre, 64 Elgin Avenue, Christies Beach

Recycling for mental health is world-wide

A MIFSA MEMBER HOLIDAYING RECENTLY IN VANCOUVER CANADA MET ANOTHER AVID COLLECTOR TO ASSIST PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS.

For the last ten years, social worker Jack 'the Bear' Latek has been collecting metal lapel pins to raise funds for bike racks to be installed outside Vancouver's non-profit organisations. Looking for 'simple solutions to make the city a better place to live in,' Latek began collecting lapel pins in 1998 to 'make something out of them and auction them off. Now, ten years on our MIFSA member came across Latek in his chosen spot (at the pedestrian entrance to Granville Island) still collecting, 'to help the poor and disadvantaged and to help make the community.'

Initially setting his goal at 10,000 lapel pins, Latek, an avid cyclist, was encouraged by the community response that met his first goal with the first bike rack being installed outside Vancouver's food bank.

'From little things, big things grow': bike racks in Canada and services in Adelaide; in many ways recycling the small pieces of flotsam we might otherwise discard can support people with a lived experience of mental illness around the world.

If you're in Vancouver sometime, make a point of catching up with Jack Latek and tell him that you read about his efforts in Australia.

Keep on collecting, and keep supporting mental health!

Thanks Rosemary

Thanks to the Noarlunga Seaford Catholic Parish & friends

who have been steadily working towards our initial goal of 13 million - on their own! To date they have collected 393,929 bread tags, weighing in at over 123 kgs!

Thanks to students, parents and friends of the Noarlunga/Seaford Catholic Parish for your mammoth effort; your support is greatly appreciated.

In Memorium

Thank you to those who have supported MIFSA in this way with their donations in lieu of flowers. It is through your generosity and financial support we can continue to help both people with mental illness and their carers. MIFSA gratefully accepts memorial gifts to help its work. Donations are promptly acknowledged to the bereaved and the donor.

Activity Program *continued*

Several of us have met to plan how this happens, and my only role is to facilitate the development... which is just as well, because the knowledge and creativity of the participants is far beyond mine!!

As with any funding, the new service agreements come with clearly outlined reporting requirements. DoHA measures the number of hours that participants are engaged in structured programs or activities, the number of participants who have individual plans (MIFSA is using MAPS - Member Advancement Plans - for this) and also looks for clear quantifiable outcomes through the use of a functional assessment tool. The Activity Programs are using the brief version of the World Health Organisation Quality of Life (WHOQoL) survey, which enables participants to assess how satisfied they are with various parts of their lives.

This record keeping is important because it keeps services accountable for the responsible spending of money; but of course the benefits are ultimately for participants. The target for hours of structured participation keeps MIFSA accountable for a varied program for participants to choose from. For the metropolitan MIFSA sites you will notice that many of its 'tried and true' services and activities like reflexology, art and coffee club have been maintained, while at the same time developing new initiatives such as woodwork, swimming, Tai Chi, outdoor adventure activities, cooking, music and lots of others.

Another development hot off the press is MIFSA Chutzpah! (see advertised below) for those want to use their energy and 'attitude' in productive ways. The Eyre programs are motoring along as well, as referred to in Shane Lidden's article (next page) introducing the new Eyre Programs. A quick note: If you have not visited the Activity Centres in recent times, there has been a change in Membership arrangements. While the \$10 membership buys a number of privileges that many still consider worthwhile, participants can access any of our free or low cost activities with very little formal paperwork.

For the other requirements, MAPS were developed some time ago, and the new funding has us re-focussing on this opportunity for participants to become actively involved in their own recovery journeys. And by implementing WHOQoLs we are collecting evidence to strengthen the case for maintaining activity programs and to confirm the government's confidence in these services within the mental health sector. So if you do not have a personal MAP, or you have never filled in a WHOQoL, talk to a staff member next time you visit - the more people who get involved the stronger our services are likely to become.

What all this means is that there is lots happening!! If you have not been to MIFSA before or have not been for a while... come and check it out - we would love to see you...

Mattea Malcolm
Team Leader
mmalcolm@mifsa.org

MIFSA Chutzpah!

For those with the energy and enthusiasm to try new and exciting things, "MIFSA Chutzpah!" is a group that encourages and facilitates entrepreneurial ideas, and develops project-based activities to benefit the participants as well as the wider community.

So come and join us if you want to do something different, have ideas or like being with those who push the limits!!! This group will connect with Panangga and Keswick sites.

Contact Suzi for details on 8221 5160

MIFSA Art Exhibition

The inaugural MIFSA art exhibition will open on 21 May 2008, 6pm-9pm. The exhibition will be a part of the celebrations for Schizophrenia Awareness Week. It will also be an opportunity for some of our artists to showcase and sell their work. All artists need to contact Suzi Howard at Keswick Activity Centre for further information and for the forms needed to lodge artworks.

Come along and join in the magic of this inaugural event. As entry to the opening night will be by ticket only, please rsvp re attendance, phone 8221 5160.



MIFSA Eyre welcomed with open arms!



Port Lincoln has been most welcoming and extremely enthusiastic about the establishment of MIFSA Activity Programs. Shane Dunkley, (Eyre's Coordinator), and I – that's right, MIFSA Eyre is staffed by two of us named 'Shane'!! – have been over the moon with the first few weeks' progress along with the support and interest we have received. The potential for growth, partnering with local services and development of unique programs is enormous, and the excitement of investigating, planning and implementing the opportunities is amazing.

Our "Drop a line with MIFSA" fishing program on Wednesdays is attracting enthusiastic attention and attendance. And we have even caught fish on each trip! An "Introduction to MIFSA barbecue" has also been held on the foreshore lawns here and was extremely well attended by participants, carers, and workers from various service providers. Sausages, burgers and salads were enjoyed by all – almost as much as participating in or watching the footy being kicked around!

The barbecue will continue on a monthly basis, and will provide a number of opportunities. Participants can get involved in the planning, preparation and hosting of the event, new people can get to know us on an informal basis, and we will always have a recreational activity: cricket, football, a walk along the beach... and we are open to any other suggestions for activities. In the near future we will also begin Monday and Thursday Drop-ins and Activity Programs at two different locations. We will let people know how these go in the next MIFSA News.

Shane Lidden
Activity Officer
MIFSA Eyre Activity Programs

