



NEWS

AUTISM TASMANIA

*Offering life long support to people with
Autism and related disorders.*

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Edition 2

FROM THE EDITOR / SECRETARY.....

Happy New Year! As we begin 1993 and gain momentum the coming year seems rather daunting but exciting. Mark and I have been pondering the direction the group should take so that we best fulfil everyone's needs. At the back of the newsletter we have formed a list of alternative types of gathering that could be of interest to the members and others who may have contact with people who have Autism.

As a parent I feel the need to talk to other parents, particularly those with children of a similar age who may be going through similar difficult times. As a former teacher I can also see the need for as much information as possible to be made available to those working with and teaching our children and hope that seminars and workshops to be organised during the year will attempt to fill this need. As secretary I can also see a need for regular committee meetings to decide on the business side of things. We are proposing monthly meetings that will continue to rotate around the state between Launceston, Hobart and Burnie. This means that those who are unable to travel large distances will not be too long (3 months) between meetings. With frequent meetings there will not be the pressure to go to all meetings as the next one will not be too far away.

I would like to see some meetings as informal family gatherings so that the children can come along and get the chance to know each other. I am aware that organising venues for these get togethers may be difficult if we make them family occasions; and the inclement weather is also a problem with outside venues (remember Hobart, 1 Nov. 1992). Please take the time to fill in the attached sheet and have your say; I love to get mail!

I have also again attached a membership form. If you have already filled one in the feel free to pass it on to parents, grandparents or other people who may be interested in our support organisation.

COMMITTEE.....

PRESIDENT:	Mark Ward	(003) 43 2308
VICE PRESIDENTS:	David Ollington	(002) 63 7467
	Rose Clark	(004) 42 3594
SECRETARY:	Ros Ward	(003) 43 2308
TREASURER:	Michael Rutledge	(002) 49 2422

If you are in need of some assistance or want someone to talk to I am sure any of these people would welcome a phone call. If you think you can help in any way please also feel free to call one of the committee to offer your time. It really would be appreciated.

FUND RAISING.....

Nothing yet on the myriad of fund raising ventures available to us but keep close watch for something to eventuate.

HELPFUL HINT.....

Does your child with Autism have contact with lots of professional people? Or as a professional do you work with a child that works with others; for example teacher / speech therapist / occupational therapist / physiotherapist?

You might find it helps to operate a journal between all the people working with a child - note any important happenings, where you are at, what you are concentrating on, any successes. Aim for a co-ordinated and consistent approach.

AUTISM IN THE NEWS.....

Just a few of the things that have appeared in the media over the last few months

- * Examiner newspaper - Education supplement - One page with three sections on Autism, Giant Steps, and Autism Tasmania and featuring the Triffitt and Ward families.
- * Examiner newspaper - Launceston Week - Article on the formation of Autism Tasmania and the Ward family.
- * Southern Cross network - Contact program - Feature article on Triffitt family and the formation of a Giant Steps satellite.
- * Mercury newspaper - Article on Autism Tasmania receiving the Beryl Haines Award.
- * Mercury Newspaper - Article on the formation of Autism Tasmania.
- * Mercury Newspaper - Advertisements promoting the visit and public lecture by Professor Bruce Tonge.
- * Tas TV and Southern Cross network - Country Practice - Featuring a child with Autism.
- * Sunday Tasmanian newspaper - Feature on the Triffitt family and Giant Steps.

It was great to see that the effort put into the awareness of Autism has resulted in people coming to our meetings that were previously unaware of Autism and the association. I am sure that more will follow from these beginnings.

INFORMATION.....

The association is developing a library of papers, books, videos, cassettes and other useful bits and pieces that are for loan. Please contact the secretary if there may be something you would like.

If you have anything to contribute please send it to the secretary.

PROFESSOR BRUCE TONGE'S VISIT.....

We were very fortunate to be able to organise a public meeting for those interested in hearing Professor Bruce Tonge speak on Autism - Assessment and Diagnosis.

Professor Tonge is from the Monash Medical Centre and he was on a visit to Clare House in Hobart for a seminar and made himself available to us.

The meeting was attended by about thirty people. It was great to see at such a busy time of the year for most people.

The talk was interesting to listen to and was well presented. Professor Tonge and some of his contemporaries are sure to be coming to the state in the coming year and we hope to be able to make use of their talents while they are "on holiday" in Tassie.

FUNDING.....

We have been awarded two grants so far which will help us establish ourselves. Congratulations to Mark, Elizabeth and Deidre who have been busy writing submissions.

Tascare Society - Beryl Haines Award

The Tascare Society awarded us the inaugural Beryl Haines Award which consists of a plaque and a grant valued at \$1,000. Tascare also awarded us an additional \$500 to cover our seminar proposal. Our thanks to Tascare for having the courage to support a new idea. Elizabeth is currently negotiating to bring Dr. Tony Attwood to Tasmania - those of us who were at the national conference will remember his vitality and enthusiasm.

Tascare Society - Additional Award

The original proposal to Tascare comprised two projects. We were invited to submit further detail in relation to our second project which involved bringing Darlene Berringer to Tasmania to form the Giant Steps Therapy Centre. Tascare considered the proposal further and an additional \$2,000 was granted by the society for this project. This was a wonderful Christmas present. Once again many thanks go to the Tascare Society.

Commonwealth Special Education Program - Autism Education Project

The Commonwealth Special Education Program Committee awarded Autism Tasmania a grant valued at \$3,000 for an Autism Education project to be run in three centres around the state. Some prerequisites are required prior to the funding being granted and these are presently being finalised.

WHAT'S COMING UP.....

Saturday 6th February - A meeting of the association will be held at Miranbeena Special School at 306 Mount Road, Burnie commencing at 10:30am. We have not arranged a guest speaker and the meeting will be the first of our informal 'come along and chat' sessions. Lunch arrangements will be the same as previous where we ask that you bring along a plate to share. We look forward to seeing as many as we can at Burnie and hope that some may be able to travel large distances to be involved. The Rutledges have already excused themselves as they will be holidaying in Port Arthur.

Saturday 6th March - Launceston meeting at St Michaels School, commencing at 10:30am, which is a long weekend so people may be able to travel.

Saturday 3rd April - Hobart meeting at a venue to be determined.

Saturday 1st May - Burnie meeting at a venue to be determined.

Saturday 5th June - Launceston meeting at a venue to be determined.

Saturday 3rd July - Hobart meeting at a venue to be determined.

Date to be determined - Autism Education Workshops (Commonwealth Early Sp. Ed funded) on North West Coast, Launceston and Hobart. Details to be provided later.

Date to be determined - Beryl Haines Award seminars. Details to be provided later.

MEMBERSHIP.....

The total membership at present stands at twenty seven. Many thanks to those who have joined. Cash donations amount to \$100.00. If you would like to be a member or make a donation please fill out the form attached and return it. If you know of anyone else who is interested in this most worthy undertaking please let them know of our existence.

GIANT STEPS RAFFLE.....

The Christmas raffle was quite successful. Our thanks to those who generously donated the prizes and to those who sold tickets, particularly Mick Clark who took a book to work in Burnie and sold the lot. The results do indicate the fruits of his labours.

1st prize - Gingerbread House and Wreath - Mr. Norton, Launceston.

2nd prize - Gardening book - T Purdy, Burnie.

3rd prize - Herb books - M Deayton, Burnie.

I spent several hours in Meadow Mews at Kings Meadows in Launceston selling tickets while Deidre with support from Melinda and Andrea spoke to many people about Giant Steps. Their donation box was also well supported and this certainly helped lift the profile of Autism within Launceston.

GIANT STEPS.....

Deidre and Kim Triffitt have been extremely busy in the aim to establish a Giant Steps Therapy Centre in Tasmania. Darlene Berringer is due to arrive in Tassie on 16th February 1993 and she will be here for 10 days. A full schedule of events has been arranged for her.

Our thanks to Tascare who granted \$2,000 just prior to Christmas which will help to cover Darlene's airfare.

Some events on Darlene's timetable;

Parent dinner Thursday 18th February at Villaret Gardens (near Deloraine). All interested parents invited for a 3 course meal at \$16.50 per head starting at 7pm (the food is highly recommended)

Seminar Thursday 25th February at Deloraine Community Complex commencing at 10am. Morning tea and lunch available. \$10- registration. This is an excellent opportunity for professional people to hear Darlene speak and answer questions on Giant Steps and Autism.

Interviews In association with assessment there are currently parents of eight children who are interested in meeting with Darlene. Appointments will be arranged for these interviews. Deidre would like to hear from any other parents who are interested in Giant Steps for their children.

Interservice Darlene will be meeting with representatives from Rotary, Lions and Apex clubs while she is here in an effort to gain some support and private funding to help establish the centre.

Hon. Mr. Beswick MHR

An interview has been arranged for Darlene to meet with Mr Beswick to discuss Giant Steps. Deidre also has a separate meeting with him in late January.

Funding A submission under the Commonwealth Rural Access Program (RAP) has been made for some funding for Giant Steps to bring Darlene and some Giant Steps therapists to Tasmania for training and to hold a significant conference about Autism. We are waiting to hear about funding.

Please phone Deidre on 003 681128 if you would like to participate in any of the events or would like more information.

Dance There will be a fund raising 50/50 dance for Giant Steps on Friday 12th February at the Weegen Hall near Deloraine commencing at 8pm. Please phone 003 68 1353 for details.