



NEWS

AUTISM TASMANIA

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

Patron:

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26 October 1992

FROM THE EDITOR / PRESIDENT.....

Edition 1

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the formation of Autism Tasmania and to those people who have been in contact with me. An association based on volunteer support is a large undertaking for all those involved and any assistance that can be provided, even in a small way is much appreciated.

This initial newsletter / bulletin has been put together with much haste and not too much preparation so here goes.

Two things that we need to focus on are the references to "Autistic" and to "Autistic Tendencies". We should recognise that those with Autism are people first who suffer from a disability. I would like them to be known as people with Autism rather than being Autistic people. We should also recognise that within the "Autism Continuum" no-one has Autistic Tendencies but everyone has Autism. At the meeting this point was raised and autistic tendencies were compared to being partly pregnant.

To all the teachers and others who read this newsletter please forgive the spelling.

The next newsletter will be produced by the secretary (I hope!).

INAUGURAL MEETING.....

A very successful meeting was held recently in Launceston which saw the formation of "Autism Tasmania". An exciting time lies ahead as we become established and aim to raise community awareness of Autism within Tasmania. From an attendance of 29 people for most of the day and a few others who were able to make only a part of the day the following committee was elected at the meeting:

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, or can provide some assistance or want someone to talk to I am sure any of these people would welcome a phone call.

INAUGURAL MEETING.....cont

The meeting was attended by a variety of interested people from around the state. Our thanks to those who made the effort to travel. Also thanks to Mrs. Pam Merrington for making St. Michael's School available to us. It was an excellent venue and I am sure we will make use of it again.

We were also fortunate to have as a guest speaker Berry Gainey from the TEACCH programme at the University of North Carolina. Berry has a background in speech pathology and has worked with autistic children for seventeen years. She was also able to attend a couple of schools in the north and offer assistance and ideas to teachers and therapists working with a couple of children with autism.

Deirdre Triffit spoke of the aim to establish a Giant Steps School in Tasmania based on a school of the same name in Quebec, Canada and run by Darlene Berringer. The school's focus is on daily living skills with intensive one on one therapy with teachers, speech therapists, music therapists and a shadow. They do not claim to cure the children of Autism but to give skills to cope with the world and to integrate into the regular school environment.

The philosophy combines 4 unique and inter-related features..

- a. Holistic approach to facilitate change
- b. Use of equipment and toys that have a non directive invitational approach
- c. Parent training
- d. School integration

Giant Steps School would be centre for Autism within Tasmania and also Australia.

Contact Diedre on 003 68 1128 if you would like to know any more.

IN TASMANIA.....

Prior to the association forming I put in a submission to the Commonwealth Special Education Committee Program for funding of 4 projects for the coming year. I have recently hear back that unfortunately we have approval for only one of the projects "Autism Education" and subject to the association becoming incorporated. The project will consist of workshops around the state to improve the awareness of community in general about the disorder. More about the workshops later.

On behalf of the committee an application of incorporation of the association has been forwarded to Corporate Affairs. We await their reply.

Unfortunately the submission for funding for Giant Steps was unsuccessful. More work will follow.

We are hearing from more people as time goes on. Please circulate this newsletter if possible and let people know we are around.

The association does not have any formal aims as far as services go at the stage except for the Giant Steps School so any suggestions are welcome.

Please give some thought to these and other issues as they will more than likely be brought up at the next meeting.

WHAT'S COMING UP.....

Sunday 1 November 1992

A get together / picnic on the lawn at Tolosa Street Reserve in Hobart commencing at 12 noon and going to perhaps 3pm or a bit later. Feel free to just drop in for a few minutes to say hello or come and join in the informal discussion. Unfortunately we were unable to hire a BBQ or a hut for the day so we will have to make do with eats and rugs on the grass, weather permitting of course. A few people will be travelling from other parts of the state to be there. Sorry about the short notice but please come along if you can.

Saturday 5 December 1992

A formal meeting of the association will be held at the Early Special Education Centre at 231 Campbell Street Hobart commencing around 10:30am. Access is to be gained off the Brooker Highway and into Campbell Street between Burnett and Warick Streets. A guest speaker for the meeting is Ms Debbie Lee from the University of Taseania who will speak on Autism and Education. We ask that you bring a plate to share for lunch. I am unaware of any child minding facilities available but if you have any queries please call Dianne Hollier on 002 311 625.

Other events 1992

None scheduled yet but we c/n and may be in contact.

Late December 1992 (around the 18th)

Professor Bruce Tonge from the Monash Medical Centre, who has vast experience in the field of Autism, will be in the state on other business and he may be available to give a presentation or two (or more) while he is here. More about that later as we don't know anything at this stage.

Saturday 6 February 1993 (tentative)

A meeting of the association will be held at a central location on the North West Coast at a venue to be announced commencing at 10:30am or thereabouts. We hope to have a guest speaker available and the lunch arrangements will most likely be to bring a plate to share.

Other Events for 1993

Autism Education Workshops in Hobart, Launcesto& and the North West Coast funding etc permitting.

An informal get together / picnic on the grass could be held on the North W%st Coast people and weather permitting. Please let us know if you are interested.

We hope to have much more to add in later editions.

MEMBERSHIP.....

The total membership at present stands at four (4). Official donations amount to \$0.00.

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.

NEWSLETTER.....

The initial newsletter has a distribution in excess of 40 however because of funding constraints it will not be possible, at this stage, to send out further newsletters without some contribution.

At this stage we are unsure when the next newsletter will be published so it will more than likely be at a time dictated by events. Please feel free to make any contributions towards the newsletter that you feel appropriate not that this one needed much to fill it up to a healthy size. Contributions to the Secretary please at the address on top of the newsletter.

FUNDING.....

Dare I mention the terrible word. Please keep in mind the association when you read the newspaper and other publications that may advertise for submissions for funding for a project that is related to Autism. Even being aware of something could develop into an appropriate service for people with Autism with just a phone call.

Nothing yet on raffles, walk-a-thons or any of the other myriad of fundraising ventures but keep close watch for something to eventuate.

INFORMATION.....

The association is developing a library of papers, books, videos, cassettes and other useful bits and pieces that we hope to be able to loan in the very near future.

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

If you are going to the mainland please avail yourself of the opportunity of making contact with associations in the other states and undertaking a "fact finding" mission.

Your personal experiences and knowledge are a valuable resource. If there is anything that you may like to contribute in the way of information, discussion or perhaps a presentation then let us know. I am sure others in the association could benefit from them.

If you are aware of someone from another state who has experiece with Autism and may be travelling to Tasmania we would certainly like to know if there is anything that they can do in the way of a presentation or meeting contribution.

AUTISM TASMANIA

HAVE YOUR SAY!

Please deliver your comments to a future meeting or send this sheet either with your name, so that a dialogue can be entered into, or anonymously if you prefer to;

The Secretary,
Autism Tasmania,
3 Grand View Place,
Norwood, Tas., 7250.

Telephone: 003 432308 (Home)

Which type of gathering best suits your needs in order of preference?

	Type of meeting	Preference	Would you go to this type
a.	Meetings with occasional guest speaker or perhaps a particular discussion topic eg coping with change - (a chance to share ideas and experiences).		
b.	Informal get togethers such as picnics, bbqs offering a chance for siblings and parents to meet. Venue suggestion in your area. summer ... winter ...		
c.	Mixture of the above suggestions to be held on a monthly basis alternating around the state.		
d.	Occasional seminars and workshops with professional input offering information and ideas on living with and teaching children with Autism.		

We would appreciate other comments that you may like to make in relation to Autism Tasmania: