



The Village News

A CAFS newsletter with news for grandparents, carers, relatives or friends caring for children.

Message from Kevin Zibell—CEO CAFS

Blood is thicker than water...the commitment to kith and kin.

Someone I worked with a few years ago once said to me "blood is thicker than water, and sometimes it boils quicker!" That person was talking about her commitment to her child through thick and thin, despite all of the challenges along the way. It came to mind for me when Cherie asked me to write a Christmas message for "The Village."

Most kinship carers are doing what only a few of us do in our lives—taking on a different and unplanned parenting role after the one that you looked forward to and probably planned for has finished. I salute you all for this commitment. You are providing some of the glue that holds our families and society together, and you are giving children a chance that they may not otherwise have. You will often be sacrificing what you had planned to be doing now. You are heroes in your own way.

CAFS has been part of the Ballarat community since 1865. Over that time, many people have made a contribution to the lives of children and young people through their involvement with CAFS. I thank you for being part of that effort.

On behalf of CAFS Board, Management and staff, I want to thank each of you for what you do. I hope this Christmas is enjoyable for you and your families, and I hope 2011 brings you a sense of achievement.

Best wishes,

Kevin Zibell,
Chief Executive Officer.

Child & Family
Services -
Kinship Care

Issue 5

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2011

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Merry Christmas to you all.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank you all for providing unconditional love, care and warmth to the children in your care, many of you have put off plans for yourselves to ensure that your family remains together.

We, the Kinship Care Team, appreciate that your job is sometimes very challenging and at times can be with little reward.

Christmas, for some of you is a time for much anxiety and sadness however I would like you to all remember and know that you are providing safety and stability of your kin and this is the best present the kids could ever ask for!

Next year the National Foster and Kinship Care Conference will be held in Melbourne. For more information feel free to visit the website: www.strengtheningcare2012.com.au.

I would like to wish you all a safe and enjoyable Christmas.

Warm Regards

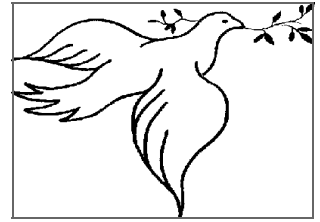
Pauline



Message from the Editor

Hi there everyone,

Christmas is a time that has evokes many emotions—happy, sad or angry for example. These can challenges us as they can happen on their own or all at once .



In this issue of "The Village" I've attempted to put in as many articles from services in the Grampian Region with a focus on Christmas, relationships and money. I hope that these articles offer support and strategies to assist in easing the pressure and emotion of Christmas.

Our Kinship Program offers at present two morning tea sessions. One in Ballarat and the other in Bacchus Marsh. Carers who attend our morning tea sessions always comment: "that its nice to be with people who know what I'm going through".

In 2012 we will be establishing another in Daylesford. If you are interested in attending this please contact me. More information about this will be posted in the new year.

Earlier in the year one of our carers wrote an article in the newsletter. The feedback from this was amazing and a number of carers who are unable to attend the morning tea sessions commented that it "...was fantastic to read the article and know that I'm not on my own."

If you too would like to write a letter or article for the newsletter I would love to hear from you. Your words will reach those who are not able to connect with others in similar situations and assist in validating the experiences of many Kinship carers.

Another idea that both groups have raised is the publication of a "Cook book" of cheap healthy recipes written by our Kinship Carers. Stay tuned.....

I have also attached a copy of "The Grandparent". A national newsletter for Kinship carers.

I would also like to take the time to thanks those who contribute to our newsletter including Central Highlands Legal Services, CASA, Relationships Australia, CREATE, CAFS many programs & Sue Anderson. I encourage all services to write in our newsletter.

Knowledge is power. The more our carers know about services the better the outcomes for the children they care for.

I hope that you and your families have a safe Christmas and may all your hopes and dreams for 2012 come true. Cherie Salmon—Editor—The Village News

10 Top Tips at Christmas:

written by Colin Handreck, Co-ordinator Financial Counselling & Gamblers Help Service—Child & Family Services

The financial challenges of recent times have seen many Australians tightening their belt and looking for ways to save money. As another Christmas approaches you may even be feeling more like Scrooge than Santa! The good news is that you can still share great times with family and friends and even save money by planning well! Here are 10 tips to help with planning towards Christmas... and perhaps even get a head start on Christmas next year!

- Develop a spending plan or budget before you go shopping. Catalogues and online browsing make it easier to identify what you may be interested in before hitting the shops. Then go shopping knowing your pre-set limits. Don't impulse buy and risk suffering from 'buyers remorse' later.
- Develop a meal plan for the main meals over Christmas and New Year and look for specials in supermarket catalogues to support this meal plan. Remember to include drinks - big savings can be made by buying drinks on special! Buy these specials during the 2 or 3 weeks leading up to the event.
- Don't book up on a credit card or a store card unless you know for sure you can pay the full amount by the due date. Some of the highest interest charges apply to these accounts. You are left with more money in your pocket for spending for yourself if you are not paying interest to someone else. If you don't trust yourself with a credit card, use a debit card when shopping.
- Be creative with gifts - not only to save money but to add the personal touch! Can you make or create something that would be appreciated as a gift... or could your gift be an offer to help someone in their garden or to clean their car. You could have a great deal of fun making a voucher to explain a gift of this sort! Works with grandchildren and grandparents and almost everyone in between! Could be a voucher for breakfast out with a grandchild or a niece or nephew.



10 Top Tips at Christmas: *continued*

- Books, CD's and DVD's can represent great gift value - they last forever and when bought on sale can look like they cost more than you paid! Keep an eye out for those 3 for 2 deals where you might be able to buy several gifts at one time!
- Depending on how much you wish to spend a magazine gift subscription can be a reminder all through the year of your generous gift.
Give gift vouchers so the recipients can benefit from Boxing Day sales price reductions after Christmas.
- If you have a credit card with some awards points accrued, Christmas may be a good time to access these points and redeem them in the form of super market vouchers to assist with Christmas and holiday food and drink expenses. Go online to your card issuers website to learn details.
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- Plan early for next Christmas! Many people start buying gifts at the Boxing Day sales and throughout the year. Some people establish a 'gift box' to have a few options on hand for birthday's throughout the year as well.

If you experience financial problems due to debts and pressure from creditors, seek help from a financial counsellor - call CAFS 5337 3333.



Credit Cards - the cost of credit

\$2,500 borrowed and paid off using three options as shown:

Payment Amount	Annual Interest Per-	Total Interest	Final Cost with Interest	Total Years to Pay Off
Minimum	18%	\$6,281	\$8781	34
\$50 per month	18%	\$2,198	\$4,698	8
\$100 per month	18%	663	\$3,163	3

Source: Money-minded

<http://www.money-minded.com.au>

Big Brothers Big Sisters mentor program.



Do you have a young person living with you who might benefit from having a friendly person they can spend some time and develop a friendship with? Or do you have some time to volunteer to develop a friendship with a young person (aged 7-17 years)?

Big Brothers Big Sisters is an international and national organisation which spans over 100 years of operation. It is the longest standing and leading youth mentoring organisation in Victoria, and has a preventative and long-term focus. Our program in the Highlands region matches a caring adult volunteer ('Big') with a young person ('Little') in need of additional adult support. Young people referred to the program often come from a diverse range of backgrounds and circumstances, many of which can include:

- Young people living in kinship care.
- Young people whose parents experience mental illness, disability or an addiction. Difficulties with making and keeping friends, difficulties at school, or behavioural concerns.

'Bigs' and 'Littles' undertake a range of shared interest activities which may include playing board games, cooking, sporting activities or making something together. The focus is on having fun and the gradual development of a friendship, rather than the activity itself.

Big Brothers Big Sisters *continued...*

The 'Big' and 'Little' commit to meeting for a few hours, 3-4 times a month for a minimum of 12 months. During this time, the volunteer, young person and their family are supported to ensure the match is positive and worthwhile. Volunteers are screened and trained before they are matched with a young person.

'Bigs' meet with their 'Littles' for at least twelve months but most friendships last longer because the young person enjoys the experience and enjoys the friendship. Research into the program also shows that young people who have been involved as 'littles' have improved school attendance and performance, increased positive relationships, improved self esteem, confidence, social skills and are less likely to become involved in risky or anti-social behaviours.

If I'm interested what can I expect to occur:

Typically a young person's parent/guardian fills out an application form and sends it to Big Brothers Big Sisters. Once this is done, a Coordinator contacts the family and arranges to come and meet with the young person in their home.

During the meeting the Coordinator will establish that the young person understands what the program is and whether they would like to participate and commit to having a big brother or big sister.

The Coordinator takes the opportunity to get to know the young person and to gauge the sort of things they would like to do with their 'Big'. This information is used to match them with someone who has similar interests and a complimentary personality.

Sometimes a young person and their family have to wait quite a while for the young person to be matched to a Big Brother or Sister because we want to encourage friendships between our 'Bigs' and 'Littles' and sometimes this means waiting for someone who is 'just right'. It is also because we rely on the generosity of volunteers and sometimes we may not have enough volunteers ready to match with a young person.

Big Brothers Big Sisters *continued...*

Screening and training mentors is also a time consuming process and we need to ensure that all volunteers are appropriate before we make a match. This does however provide peace of mind to the families of young people because they can feel comfortable knowing that their young person is being looked after by a good person who has been specially chosen.

Big Brothers Big Sisters - Highlands Region welcomes enquiries from people who would like to be volunteers or from families and agencies who are thinking they would like a 'big brother or sister' for their child.

For more information please contact Emma Hoare (03) 5336 5031 or emma.hoare@bbbs.org.au

Early Start Kindergarten Program

Early Start Kindergarten is a state wide program that is fully funded to give children known to Child Protection or Child First/Family Services a year of kindergarten in their 3 year old year. They can have 10.75 hours and they will usually go into a 4 year old program, gaining from the role modelling of the older children. This gives them many skills and experiences and can help their development in many ways e.g. language, motor skills etc. They then go into their 4 year old kindergarten year with confidence, social skills and the language to support their continuing development.

This program was started in 2009 and from this has grown a new program being piloted this year - the Access to Early Learning program. As this is a pilot program the number of participants has been capped at 12. The Enhanced Maternal and Child health service can also make referrals to this program. This program has the added advantage of support given to the family of the child and to the kindergarten the child attends.

The aim of both these programs is to provide vulnerable children with a wide range of experiences, helping to stimulate their growth and development. The program must be delivered by a qualified teacher ensuring it is of high quality and suitable for each child.



Any child of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage is automatically included - again fully funded, to participate in the 4 year old program in their 3 year old year. They will still be fully funded for their 4 year old year.

If you have a child who fits into one of these categories all you need to do is to go to a kindergarten and enroll. The kindergarten will sort out the funding for you. Places are limited with many kindergartens already with waiting lists but if transport is not a problem then "shop around". As the facilitator of the Access to Early Learning program I may be able to direct you to a suitable place. I am based at CAFS in Chisholm Street and my phone number is 53 27 1108.

We are seeing some wonderful outcomes for many of the children who have participated in the programs. Comments such as "She now listens to quite long stories" "He is now talking." "He tries all the activities. He is so keen and loves everything." "He used to be timid but now he runs in - really confident." And even "He toilet trained himself within 3 weeks!" are all coming back to us about the children. One mother stated "I love it. I absolutely love the program." Another mother said she has seen big changes in a short time; that her son had been "well below average but was now right up."

It is exciting and life changing for these children. We would like you to share our excitement!

Shirley Viner—Access to Early Learning





BALLARAT
Centre
Against
Sexual
Assault
ABN 39 089 584 391

- ◆ **A FREE & CONFIDENTIAL service**
- ◆ **Counselling & advocacy**
- ◆ **General information regarding sexual assault**
- ◆ **Telephone counselling and information**
- ◆ **Weekly visiting service to Ararat, Bacchus Marsh & Daylesford**
- ◆ **24 Hour Crisis Care**
- ◆ **Community & professional education and training**
- ◆ **Secondary consultation and groupwork**
- ◆ **Problem Sexual Behaviour and**
- ◆ **Sexually Abusive Behaviour therapeutic treatment.**

The following case scenario is used to help describe how services at CASA are utilized to assist people. The names, locations are all fictional.

CASE SCENARIO

John from Ballan calls CASA on 5320 3933 and speaks to a duty worker. John has recently discovered that his 18 year old daughter was sexually assaulted by a family friend 2 years ago and wants some information to be able to support her. CASA can offer John a duty appointment to come into our office and discuss his concerns face to face, and can also provide him with some written information for himself and his daughter. CASA can also provide counselling and legal information to John's daughter, 24 hour phone support if required, and because we provide outreach services, we can offer him support in either Ballarat or Bacchus Marsh.

John accepts a duty appointment in Ballarat where he is provided with emotional support and is given information on the effects of sexual assault on teenagers and information for parents. John also makes a referral for his daughter. CASA calls his daughter and she requests to see a counsellor in Bacchus Marsh and an appointment is scheduled to begin her counselling.

Ballarat *CASA* provides a therapeutic support service for past and recent victim/survivors of sexual assault, including children, adolescents, men, women, and non-offending family members and friends. *CASA* also provides a service to children aged 10 and below for Problem Sexual Behaviours, and for children aged 10-14 years for Sexually Abusive Behaviours. All services are confidential and free to our clients.

CASA is located at 115a Ascot St South in Ballarat. Business hours are 9.00am -5.30pm, Monday to Friday with late appointments are also available. *CASA* can be contacted by phone on 5320-3933 and a duty counsellor is available every week day between 1-5pm to accept referrals or offer information and consultation. Referrals can be made by self referring, family or friends, or by other agencies or health professionals within the community.

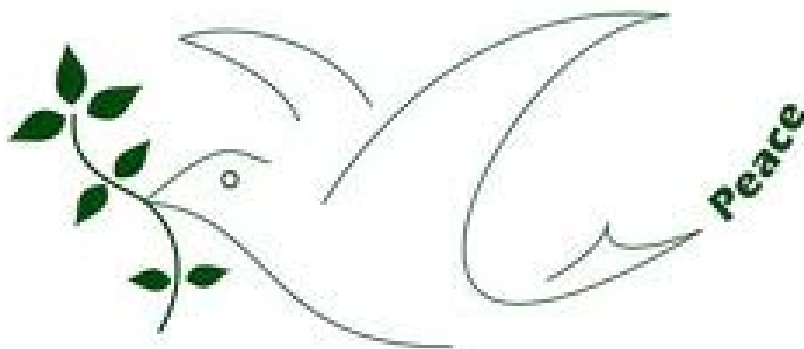
Counsellor/Advocates also travel to Ararat, Bacchus Marsh and Daylesford. Ballarat *CASA* can assist clients from the entire Grampians region through this outreach service. Next year, Ballarat *CASA* is operating two groups; one for adult male victim/survivors, and one in conjunction with *CAFS* for women victim/survivors of family violence. These will be held weekly over a period of time and will offer further therapeutic support and for some of our clients. An art therapy group is also planned for the near future.

CASA continued....

Each year Ballarat CASA runs three specific community education training programs; an Introduction to Sexual Assault, and Level 1 and 2: Responding to Sexual Assault. Counsellor/Advocates also provide information to primary, secondary and tertiary schools on a regular basis.

CASA also has a 24 hour after hours service to provide support to victim/survivors at night, on weekends and on public holidays. The free call number is 1800 806 292.

Sexual assault can be described as an act of a sexual nature that is unwanted or intimidating ranging from sexual harassment, coerced sexual activity, rape or incest... Sexual assault is a crime against the individual and society. It is not only a private problem...



Christmas is a stressful time as expectations of ourselves and our family come into focus on one day. Our family and our life may not be exactly what we dream about, but we can manage the expectations and enjoy the season anyway. Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) has some tips on preparing for the big day and handling Christmas Day itself.

Travelling:

Stress factors when travelling may include:

Expectations - what is the reason for the trip? Is there tension?

External conditions - weather, traffic congestion, distance

Internal factors - who is in control of the trip, who is driving

A car is a closed environment - hard to just get up and walk away from the tension.

In dealing with stress, some people internalize - they just grip the wheel tighter or hold on to the arm rest. Eventually though the negative emotions build up, they become irritable and react.

Most of all don't dismiss the under-laying anxiety the trip may be causing. The route may be a new one and the driver may be anxious not to miss a turn, being in the wrong lane at the wrong time is a nightmare.

The passenger may be trying to be helpful when they tell the driver to watch out - this may be because of their own anxiety about the trip. What the driver may hear is "I am not a good/safe enough driver."

Preparation holds the key.

Plan for the journey, allow time for traffic snarls, plan a break if the drive is a long one. Keep the conversation focused, a car trip is not the time to discuss the credit card debt.

On Christmas Day

- Lower your expectations of the day and focus on the joy of Christmas, not the demands and pressure.
- Reflect on positive past events by looking at some old photos or items of special significance.
- Remember family members who are no longer with you.
- Take group photos which will show over time the expansion of the family and provide an opportunity for Christmas rituals.
- Limit your intake of alcohol – behaviour can get out of hand.

Play some games - encourage the children and adults to play backyard cricket, soccer, or a trivia quiz. Sharing activities will release tension and provide a sense of fun.

Personal Relationships

Christmas is all about children. But is it? It is also a time when you can spend some time on your adult relationship.

Having time to yourselves as adults in a relationship is not something to feel guilty about. It is actually a positive process in a child's development.

The child will see you both doing something positive to maintain your relationship. After all modeling is how children learn.

Just as you are having a vacation, so is the child/ren (from you). Set it up so that they get to do something special. You could leave them with special treats to be given each day which they know come from you.

Make sure if you are going to contact them that you do it at the agreed time.

What you are building here is trust. That the child can be separated from their carers knowing they are not forgotten.

And finally, don't try to resolve year-long hurts or disagreements on Christmas Day - use the next 364 days to sort out relationship issues. RAV has counseling and relationship education programs and has centres across the State. For more information call 1300 364 277.



Christmas Cooking

Jingle **all** the **way** with **these** fun
gingerbread bikkies that **double** as tree **decorations**.

Preparation Time 60 - 120 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Makes 45

Ingredients

125g butter, at room temperature

60ml (1/4 cup) treacle

2 tbs honey

2 tbs caster sugar

300g (2 cups) plain flour, sifted

1/2 tsp bicarbonate of soda

1 tbs ground ginger

1 tsp mixed spice

1/4 tsp ground cloves

1 egg white

150g (1 cup) pure icing sugar

2-3 tsp fresh lemon juice

Pure icing sugar, extra



Notes

Store the bells in an airtight container in a cool dry place for up to 2 weeks. Freezing tip: At end of step 2, place in an airtight container. Label, date and freeze for up to 2 months. Thaw. Continue from step 3.

Method

Use an electric beater to beat the butter, treacle, honey and caster sugar until pale and creamy. Add the flour, bicarbonate of soda, ginger, mixed spice and cloves, and stir until well combined. Turn onto a lightly floured surface and knead gently until smooth. Press into a disc. Cover with plastic wrap and place in the fridge for 1 hour to rest.

Preheat oven to 160°C. Line 3 large baking trays with non-stick baking paper. Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface until 5mm thick. Use an 8cm-long bell-shaped biscuit cutter to cut bells from the dough. Place on the lined trays. Use a clean drinking straw to cut a hole from the top of each bell. Bake in oven for 15 minutes or until lightly browned. Transfer to wire racks to cool completely.

Whisk the egg white in a bowl until foamy. Gradually whisk in the icing sugar until well combined. Gradually add the lemon juice, stirring until a smooth paste forms.

Use a palette knife to spread half the icing over half the biscuits. Add enough extra icing sugar to the remaining icing mixture, stirring, until a firm paste forms. Transfer to a piping bag fitted with a 2mm plain nozzle. Decorate the remaining bells with different designs, such as dots, stripes and snowflake patterns. Set aside until set.

<http://www.taste.com.au>

Chocolate and peanut caramel tart

Wow your guests with this dessert which is surprisingly easy to master.

Preparation Time

10 - 100 minutes

Cooking Time

5 minutes

Ingredients (serves 12)

250g Arnott's Choc Ripple biscuits

125g butter, melted

380g Nestle Caramel Top n' Fill

1/2 cup unsalted roasted peanuts, coarsely chopped

360g dark chocolate, finely chopped

2/3 cup thickened cream



Method

Process the biscuits in a food processor until finely crushed. Add the butter and process until well combined.

Use the back of a metal spoon to spread and press the biscuit mixture evenly over the base of a 28cm (base measurement) fluted tart tin with removable base. Cover with plastic wrap and chill in the fridge for 30 minutes.

Combine the caramel and peanuts in a small bowl. Spread over the biscuit base.

Place the chocolate in a heatproof bowl. Bring the cream just to a simmer in a saucepan over medium heat. Pour the cream over the chocolate and stir until the chocolate melts and the mixture is smooth.

Spread the chocolate mixture over the top of the caramel. Place the tart on a baking tray and place in the fridge for 1 hour or until set.

Notes

To easily remove the finished tart from the tin, ensure the base is well chilled before adding the filling. This helps stop the base from crumbling.

<http://www.taste.com.au>

Why the Village?

In 1996 Hilary Clinton made famous the ancient African Proverb "It takes a village to raise a child"

The proverb is from Igbo and Yoruba regions of Nigeria and the basic meaning is that raising a child is a communal effort. It is to be taken to mean that the responsibility lies not only with the carers, but also with the extended family and in some cases the community.

The Village was chosen to be the name of the Newsletter because Kinship Care reflects the notion of The Village. This being grandcarers, aunts, uncles, friends, kindergartens, schools, maternal health, local GP, sporting clubs, its whoever is involved in providing a nurturing, caring environment that supports a child to reach their full potential.

The aim of The Village is to provide information about what is available to you out in the community, caring ideas, information about government changes as well as useful contact phone numbers and website.

If you would like to contribute any articles please contact us in Kinship Care.

Cherie Salmon

Kinship Care

Information & Advice Worker

csalmon@cafs.org.au

(03) 5337 3333

Child & Family

Ballarat Office
Lubrook House
115 Lydiard Street North
Ballarat

Phone: 03 5337-3333

Fax: 03 5332-1724

E-mail: csalmon@cafs.org.au

Useful websites

www.annabelkarmel.com

(Mother, baby & child nutrition, including tips & recipes)

www.babycentre.com.au

Website aim at supporting carers and new babies as well as caring for toddlers

www.mothersite.com.au

Forum to discuss any caring topics

www.kidspot.com.au

Kidspot Australia is all about simplifying the journey that is carering. Covering topic such as caring, food & activities for kids.

www.mychild.gov.au

mychild.gov.au website is Australia's online child care portal. On this website you will find information on different types of child care and how to get assistance with the cost of child care.

www.childhood.org.au

Australian Childhood Foundation

www.cwav.asn.au

Centre for Excellence in Child & Family Welfare

www.raisingchildren.net.au

Caring resource from birth—teen

www.playgroup.org.au

To find your local playgroup, activity idea for children 0-6years

www.centrelink.gov.au

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Comprehensive online health information & advice or to find your local health provider

www.create.org.au

Free activities for children who are in out-of-home care.

www.childwise.net

www.kids.vic.gov.au

This is the official website of the Child Safety Commissioner—Victoria where publications such as Calmer Classrooms & the latest research into Australian Kinship Care can be order free of charge.

www.relationships.org.au

CAFS (Child & Family Services Ballarat) is a community service organization providing support and service to children, young people, individuals and families from locations in Ballarat, Ararat, Daylesford and Bacchus Marsh. For more details on CAFS its history

