



The Village News

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

Morning Tea Ballarat & Moorabool

Welcome to our third edition of the "The Village".

Its been a busy 2nd Term for Kinship Care as we have celebrated our first birthday and launched two morning tea sessions in Ballarat & Bacchus Marsh (for Moorabool residence).

These morning tea sessions have been well attended by carers who are wanting to meet others in similar situations.

The feedback has been wonderful with comments such as:

"I no longer feel like I'm on my own".

"There are others out there who know what I'm going through."

"I feel safe talking with others who understand where I'm coming from".

"I'll be coming along to the next one."

The group get together is a wonderful chance for you to meet others who are experiencing similar situations. Both groups have established some rules.

These rules are:

Confidentiality at all times: What's said at morning tea stays at morning tea

Non judgemental attitude.

Gain support and be listen to.

Its important to have such "rules" so that we can continue to provide a safe place for you to come along and spend time being heard.

We hope to later in the year have Anne McLeish who is the Director of Grandparents Victoria come out and hear from our carers their thoughts around Kinship Care. Anne is part of a reference group that assists the Department of Human Services in reviewing the Kinship Care program. This is a fantastic opportunity for you to talk with Anne and feed into the review processes around Kinship Care.

For a long time Kinship Carers have not had the chance to have a place to talk about what its like caring for grandchildren, nieces or nephews. So please if you can take some time out of your busy lives come along.

For Moorabool residences, I am working closely with Moorabool Shire to look at ways to provide child care so that carers can attend the morning teas. We are also looking into organising a bus to collect people and take to the morning tea sessions. Nothing is set as yet **BUT** watch this space.....

I have included a list of scheduled times for our Ballarat & Moorabool Morning Tea.

If you have any questions about the groups feel free to contact me on 5337-3363.

Please note Ballarat dates and location have changed details attached.

CAFS— Kinship Care

Volume 3, Issue 3

Newsletter Date:
28th June, 2011

Inside this issue:

Message from Pauline	2
Centrelink: Grandparent Advisor	3
Supported Playgroup	4
Child Development	5
Family Ties & LARF program	6
FCAV	7
Useful websites	8

Message from Pauline Sullivan Team Leader-Kinship Care

Letter from Pauline

Hello everyone and welcome to this edition of The Village News. I hope you are all keeping warm and loading your families up with beautiful warm soups, stews and casseroles isn't that the beauty of winter.

We have had a change of staffing in our Kinship Care Program. Unfortunately we have lost Anne Torriero our extremely competent Family Services Worker. Thankyou Anne for all your hard work and dedication to Family Services clients over the past year. Our new Family Services worker is Gail Nichols, Gail has many years of experience and will be a fantastic team member to the Kinship Care Program. Welcome Gail.

Cherie has put in a lot of hard work in organising morning tea events for both Ballarat and Bacchus Marsh, it would be great to see more of you come along as well as conversing with like minded people you can see what we have in relation to clothes for your children that have been donated to us by the Ballarat Quilters Group. They have been wonderful to us and understand the difficulty in making ends meet in this current economic environment.

I would just like to add that we appreciate all Kinship Carers for the care and warmth you provide to the children of this next generation!!

"HAS ANYONE CONGRATULATED YOU LATELY ON THE HARD WORK THAT YOU DO?"CONGRATUALATIONS from all the Kinship Care Workers.

Kind Regards

Pauline.



Weekly spelling activities you can do at home.

- A) Write the words & circle all of the vowels
- B) Write the words & cross out the silent letters
- C) Write the words in reverse ABC order or from Z to A
- D) Write words in alphabetical order—A to Z
- E) Write the words end to end, using different colours for each word. (This should be one long word, no spaces).
- F) Mix up the letters in each word. Write the answer next to the scrambled word.
- G) Type each word on the computer, then print it out, cut it & stick into a special book.
- H) Make & complete a crisscross puzzle using www.puzzlemaker.com

Support for Kinship Carers caring for children.



Faced with caring for a young family when her husband passed away, and experiencing a kinship relationship with her niece and nephew, Meredith Oglethorpe understands the value of having a good support network.

That's why with her own personal experience, plus the many years she's spent working in various specialist roles within Centrelink, Meredith was the ideal candidate for one of the newly created Grandparent Advisor positions.

Based at Oakleigh and servicing Victoria & Tasmania, Meredith said she was pleased to accept her new role, providing a single point of support and assistance to grandparent carers and allowing them to better access information about payments and support services.

"With my own personal experience and my work background I have an understanding of the support and payments grandparents require - I've specialised in Family and Child Care," Meredith said.

"It's a huge part of what interested me in this role, as well as maintaining my knowledge to assess customer entitlements and researching to ensure their entitlements are correct."

Meredith hasn't wasted any time in helping grandparents in her area.

"I've visited several local community and support groups and from that I've received lots of enquiries and referrals through our 1800 number, which is great," she said.

"In connecting with these groups, I've also discovered many grandparent carers are apprehensive when it comes to dealing with Centrelink or coming into a Centrelink office.

"As a Grandparent Advisor it's been great to be able to visit these groups to provide an outreach service. It's really helped me to break down those barriers and stereotypes and provide a friendly, human face to Centrelink to ensure all grandparent carers, whether they're customers or not, are linked in with us and receiving their correct entitlements."

Meredith said her presence has also been welcomed by other local, state and federal government organisations that have a related interest in assisting and supporting grandparent carers.

"I found many organisations have been so happy and somewhat relieved to know they can now call me directly to gain a better understanding of some of the Centrelink payments that grandparent carers are entitled to, because they always get asked so many questions," Meredith said.

"This means we can both provide grandparent carers with better information and support."

And as for her role so far Meredith says she couldn't be happier.

"I am really enjoying my role as a Grandparent Advisor," she said.

"I think it's mainly because of my own personal experience, and because I feel there's a real need for it as family demographics are changing.

"This role has really opened my eyes to how many grandparent carers we really do have out there, and I love the fact I can help to educate and empower them with specialised knowledge."

People wishing to contact Meredith can call 1800 245 965 toll free.

Article taken from the Centrelink Website

http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/media/10vic_meredith_oglethorpe.htm

Date: 9th December, 2010

Supported Playgroup: Moorabool & Ballarat

Kinship Care is working with the Playgroup Co-ordinators at Moorabool Shire and City of Ballarat to assist in establishing a Playgroup for grandparents and carers. We hope to see this running for the start of term three.

Playgroup is for babies, toddlers and preschoolers and their parents or caregivers. Around 50,000 children from 40,000 families go to playgroup in all corners of Victoria at community venues such as maternal and child health centres, kindergartens, halls, community centres, primary schools and aged care facilities.

Playgroups are informal, low cost and run by the parents and caregivers in them.

Adults stay with their children at playgroup. This gives them the chance to meet other people going through similar experiences and ease the isolation that can come with caring for young children. Families can be gently introduced to community, health and support services while they are at playgroup.

Why children go?

Playgroup aged children are going through a stage of rapid brain and skill development.

Babies are offered play experiences to stimulate their senses. Toddlers practise using their hands, problem solve and use their emerging language skills. Preschool children practise social skills - an important preparation for kindergarten and

At playgroup children can:

- make new friends
- have new experiences
- gain self confidence
- develop physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually
- develop their skills of cooperation through music, group singing, free play and snack time
- develop verbal and non verbal communication skills through their contact with other children and adults
- develop fine and gross motor skills
- gain better body control, hand to eye coordination, spatial awareness and balance when they play with balls, sand, blocks, puzzles, play dough, paint and paste
- discover shape, size, texture, quantity and consistency when they play with dough and clay
- learn to recognise colours, develop fine motor skills and express emotions by experimenting with paint, collage, chalk, crayons and stamps.



How parents/caregivers benefit

- Playgroup can be a lifeline to parents with babies, toddlers and preschoolers who might not have any other opportunity to get to know local caregivers going through similar experiences.

For more information please contact:

Moorabool Shire Council on 5366-7100

City of Ballarat on 5320-5682

Child Development 3-5 years

(As taken from the Child Development & Trauma guide 2008)

The following information needs to be understood in the context of the overview statement on child development:

Between 3-4 years

- communicates freely with family members & familiar others
- seeks comfort, & reassurance from familiar family & carers, & is able to be soothed by them
- has developing capacity to self soothe with distressed
- understands the cause of feelings & can label them
- extends the circle of special adults
- needs adult help to negotiate conflict
- is starting to manage emotions
- is starting to play with other children & share
- has real friendships with other children
- is becoming more coordinated at running, climbing, and other large-muscle play
- can walk up steps, throw & catch a large ball using two hands & body
- use play tools & may be able to ride a tricycle
- holds crayons with fingers, not fists
- dresses & undresses without much help
- communicates well in simple sentences & may understand about 1000 words
- pronunciation has improved, likes to talk about own interests

- fine motor skill increases, can mark with crayons, turn pages in book
- day time toilet training often attained.

Between 4-5 years

- know own name & age
- is becoming more independent from family
- needs structure, routine & limits to manage intense emotions
- is asking lots of questions
- is learning about differences between people
- takes time making up his mind
- is developing confidence in physical feats but can misjudge abilities
- likes active play and exercise and needs at least 60 minutes of this per day
- eye-hand coordination is becoming more practised & refined
- cuts along the line with scissors/can draw people with at least four 'parts'.
- shows a preference for being right-handed or left-handed
- converses about topics & understands 2500 to 3000 words
- loves silly jokes
- is curious about body & sexuality & role-plays at being grown-up
- may show pride in accomplishing tasks

- conscience is starting to develop, child weighs risks and actions. "I would take it but my parents would find out".

Seek information and advise about the child's developmental progress and how to respond to a child's cues from service providers such as Maternal Health Nurse, Doctor, Paediatrician, Kindergarten, schools, Kinship or Family Service worker.

The impact of trauma can be:

- behavioural change
- increased tension, irritability, reactivity & inability to relax
- regression to behaviour of younger child
- uncharacteristic aggression
- reduced eye contact
- loss of focus, lack of concentration & inattentiveness
- complains of bodily aches, pains or illness with no explanation
- loss of recently acquired skills (toileting, eating, self-care)
- sleep disturbances, nightmares, night terrors, sleepwalking
- fearfulness of going to sleep & being alone at night
- inability to seek comfort or to be comforted
- mood & personality changes
- obvious anxiety & fearfulness withdrawal & quieting
- specific, trauma-related fears; general fearfulness

Family Ties is run by Uniting Care Ballarat and is a family sponsorship project which link families who are experiencing difficulty and places them with anonymous sponsor. Sponsors are encouraged to support their family for a minimum of a year. Sponsors can range from Ballarat families, community groups, businesses, groups of friends, church groups and school groups. The sponsors are given basic information about the family such as how many family members, date of birth. **The reason for selecting a family for the sponsorship project and all other matters will**

be kept private and confidential. Sponsors will assist their chosen family by working towards providing families with particular needs. The identified needs can be education costs, whitegoods, medical costs or by helping with food packages. Sponsors on top of assisting the family with certain costs will also support them by remembering birth dates and special occasions of their sponsored family and understand the importance of emotional support when supporting people to get control over their life again, and with the anonymous

nature of family ties it will protect the dignity of the families.

For more information please contact: 5332-1286



LARF (Life skills, Activities, Recreation, Friendship and Fun) - Mentoring Program.

LARF mentoring program is run by the Salvation Army in Ballarat and stands for Life skills, Activities, Recreation, Friendship and Fun. This program aims to offer opportunities to develop positive life skills, leisure and mainstream recreational activities to young people through mentoring.

The LARF program involves the matching of children ages from grade one through to year eight with a trained volunteer mentor aged from 16-25 years.

The children are paired with a one on one mentor and together attend social activities with the LARF group every fortnight on a Friday evening, 7-9pm.

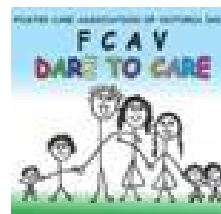
The mentor and the child will take

part in activities such as bowling, art nights, dance nights, drama, movies, music, sports activities and hanging out with other young people.

For more information please contact: 5332-0085

Thank you to Hannah the student who has been with the Kinship Care Team for 2 months who researched and wrote these two articles.





Our Purpose

The Association is established for the public charitable purposes of advancing and promoting the care of children and young people who are fostered or are in other forms of home based care including encouraging contact and exchange of ideas and information between those persons involved in foster care.



The FCAV/PPSS Carer Information and Support Service is a joint venture operated by the Foster Care Association of Victoria Inc. and the [Post Placement Support Service \(Vic\) Inc.](#) The service operates in addition to the supports and advocacy offered to statutory foster, kinship and permanent carers through their funded care agencies, thus providing carers with an independent referral and assistance point should they need one.

Our Vision

For all children in care to be cherished, connected and treated with compassion.

Our Mission

To strengthen foster families and enhance the wellbeing of the children in their care.

The Foster Care Association of Victoria (FCAV) have a number of carer training sessions coming.

Please refer to attached flyers for more details.

Kinship Carers are welcome to join FCAV as associate members, and best of all, it's free to join! In doing so, you will receive FCAV bi-monthly newsletters and e-news publications, detailing relevant information for carers while offering great competitions & opportunities to attend training & conference events in Victoria and nationally.

To join go to www.fcav.org.au or phone 9489-9770

The FCAV/PPSS Carer Information and Support Service has four main aims:

1. Provision of accurate and clear information via phone calls, both organisations' websites, newsletters and information sheets;
2. Referrals to appropriate agencies for specialised and targeted support and assistance;
3. Phone conversations, one on one meetings and (occasional) attendance at meetings for support;
4. Advocacy with CSOs and Government on themes and serious issues impacting carers, children and young people in home based care.

If you need assistance or advocacy on an issue impacting you as a carer, please call the:

**FCAV/PPSS Carer Information and Support Service
(03) 9489 9770**

Monday - Thursday: 9:00am - 5:00pm,
Friday: 9:00am - 4:00pm

This service is not open on public holidays.
After-hours enquiries can be made via [email on our contacts page](#)

Emails will be responded to as soon as we can.

Information taken for the FCAV website: www.fcav.org.au
29/6/2011

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 parents, 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 grandparents, 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, parenting 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

CAFS—Kinship Care

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 parents and new babies as well as caring for toddlers

www.mothersite.com.au

Forum to discuss any parenting topics

www.kidspot.com.au

Kidspot Australia is all about simplifying the journey that is parenting. Covering topic such as parenting, 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

Parenting 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.

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

