

NOTICES

**CAREY PARK CAMP
HENDERSON**

Friday 29 April - Sunday 1 May
Contact Jean Griffiths at the Christian
Ministries with Disabled Trust: 525 5415



**TURNER SYNDROME
SEMINAR**

1 DAY, HAMILTON, 22 MAY

Age Concern Centre

Nine speakers with a holistic focus including
an audiologist, endocrinologist, cardiologist
and paediatrician, Paul Hoffman.
Contact Marina on (07) 855 6290
or PFRC on (09) 636 0351

**WORKSHOP
SPOUSE / PARTNER
OF AN ASD PERSON**

9th and 10 April, 9.30 am - 3.30 pm
30 Panama Rd, Mt Wellington
\$35

Interactive and exploring the unique
relationships that you are in
Petrisha Govender 276-1396 ext#5
petrisha@autismaki.org.nz



NEXT MEETING

8 March, 9.30-11.30 am
Greenlane Presbyterian Church
A fortnightly playgroup for families with a
pre-school child with a medical condition
or special needs.
www.specialkidsplaygroup.org.nz



**JANET McVEAGH
RECREATION LTD CAMPS
CITY SLICKER WEEKENDS**

8 - 10 April, 8 - 10 July
16 - 18 September
Parents Weekend, 29 April - 1 May, Long Bay
Mothers in the City, 29 - 31 July, Youthtown
Contact (09) 625 9534



CONTACTING THE CENTRE

Weekdays from 9 am until 4 pm
Phone: (09) 636 0351
Fax: (09) 636 0354
Courier/visitors: Corner of Spring and Princes Streets,
Onehunga, Auckland
Post: P O Box 13 385, Onehunga,
Auckland
Email: welcome@parentandfamily.org.nz
Website: www.parentandfamily.org.nz

Disclaimer

The views and suggestions in this newsletter are those of
individual contributors and are not necessarily supported by
the Parent and Family Resource Centre Inc. If you find errors
in this publication - great, it means you are reading it!

Share your news

Send us your news and views, conference / meeting dates
and reports, successes and suggestions, your child's or
your own artwork or poetry. Celebrate your world by sharing
it with others in the PFRC Networker. Just contact us at
the Centre.

RECREATE AUCKLAND TRUST | TERM 1 2005

**Creative Dance & Movement
Workshop**

For all ages & stages at Rosehill Special School
*We are hoping to offer creative dance classes on a regular basis from Term 2. This is
an opportunity to 'try before you buy'!*

Wed, 23 March, 4 pm

Mums on the move!

Relaxing weekend with optional horse riding & kayaking. Awhitu Peninsula

1 - 3 April

Volunteer Training Evenings

Learn how to assist people with a disability to participate fully in recreation at PFRC

14 - 15 April, 6 - 8.30 pm

Discovery Camp!

For mature teens

26 - 29 April

Father & Son Weekend

Fishing & kayaking at Huia, Waitakere ranges

14 - 15 May

Mother's Retreat Weekend

A relaxing weekend at Vaughn Park Retreat Centre

5 - 7 August

Sonic Youth Club

Social club for mature teens. Various locations and activities

Last Friday of every month

Activ8 Classes

Ongoing. Remuera & West Auckland locations

Sat, 11 am - 12 pm

We are hoping to offer swimming lessons in South Auckland in term 2.

Wed, 3.30 - 4.30 pm

Please register your interest by contacting

Wed, 4.30 - 5.30 pm

Christina at Recreate 636-0561 or recreate.auckland@xtra.co.nz

Tues, 3.45 - 4.45 pm

PFRC AGM

PFRC, Princes Street, Onehunga.

Tues, 4.45 - 5.45 pm

All nominations for the Management Committee need to be received by April 6th
- no nominations will be taken from the floor. All nominations must be in writing
and signed by two members of the PFRC as well as being approved in writing by the
nominated candidate.

13 April, 7.30 pm

Please contact us with your events for the next Networker



NETWORKER



**Inside
this
issue**

EDUCATION

- We ask parents why they choose different educational models – mainstreaming, special school and home schooling
- Special Units and political correctness: Where is society's commitment to inclusion at now?



Introducing
the new team at the
Parent & Family
Resource Centre

Barbara Glenie, Tammy Ewing, Denise Gledhill

**Tammy Ewing
Community Advocate**

The Parent and Family Resource Centre (PFRC) is committed to supporting parents of dependents with disabilities in the Auckland region. We are able to do this in several ways. We have advocates who liaise with support groups in the community in order to determine which issues are causing parents problems across the sectors. From that point we are able to either bring parents together to explore those issues further or we can go directly to government agencies and advocate for changes in the particular sector causing concern. PFRC has a Centre Manager whose responsibility it is to drive change in the disability sector and work with key people in government and associated agencies. Underpinning all the operational side of the organisation is the Management Committee, which is the governing body that set and review the vision, the business plan and direction for the centre.

"My new position here builds on many enjoyable years of involvement in the community, including volunteer work with the Refugee and Migrant Service, Age Concern, Meals on Wheels and issues around fertility. I have a lovely four year-old daughter named Summer which, together with my experience of becoming a widow, gives me an understanding of the many complex issues parents face. Recently I completed a degree in International Communication and have just spent a wonderful summer gardening, playing Yahtzee and holidaying with friends at the beach."

**Barbara Glenie
Centre Manager**

"With over 25 years of involvement in the National Council of Women of New Zealand, including a four-year term as its National President, I have had extensive experience advocating for women, children and families. As a member of NCWNZ, I have represented the community on a number of national and local government committees many of which have been in the health sector. I have written many submissions to government putting forward the consumers' viewpoint, and have facilitated and contributed to the 2002 NZ Non-Maori NGO Report on the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. At the same time I have worked in the print media as a magazine editor and project manager. I have a husband and three adult children and two adorable kittens."

**Denise Gledhill
Community Advocate**

"I am married with three children. Our youngest son has an Autism Spectrum Disorder, Dyspraxia and other health issues. My background includes professional and voluntary community work in the health and disability sector. Most recently I worked with older and/or disabled individuals as a support coordinator. I currently coordinate a support group for parents with a child on the Autistic Spectrum or related conditions. My qualifications include a BSocSc majoring in Psychology, and Education Studies (around special needs). Just recently I completed a PGDipArts in Disability Studies and Autism. I am passionate about advocating for "real" change for individuals and families who experience the disabling aspects of our society. I look forward to working collaboratively with parents, families and organizations to achieve this goal."



Special Needs: Our Educational Playground

by Tammy Ewing

We kiss our back-packed child goodbye on a school morning and need to believe that we are making the right educational choice for our child. After all, who knows and cares about our child as we do? Panning out into the wider context, it is worth contemplating whether this choice supports or weakens the cause for inclusive education.

Special Education 2000 set out to disestablish all special units in the cause for "a world-class inclusive education system that provides learning opportunities of equal quality to all students". A NZ Herald editorial described this as an example of "misplaced idealism," arguing "classroom practice rarely meets this lofty ideal [of mainstreaming]". The Daniels Case successfully challenged the closure of special units on the grounds that the government had breached its legal obligation to provide for children with special needs in keeping with the 1964 Education Act. Now the government has backed away from having an "inclusion" policy, with GSE instead stating support for "inclusive practice". But the effect on political correctness lingers.

"It's so PC not to have a unit," admits Delanee Dale, Associate Principal and Special Needs Coordinator at Kowhai Intermediate. Yet Kowhai's Learning Support Class prevails with the support of parents and the school. But could satellite classes for children with special needs be undermining the objective of "inclusive"

education and ultimately an inclusive society?

What is inclusion really?

One of the difficulties of inclusion as a philosophy is the variety of meanings it can generate. At the purist end of the spectrum is the pro-mainstreaming camp. Roger Moltzen of the University of Waikato's Department of Human Development and Counselling was recently quoted in the NZ Herald as saying:

"Our commitment as a country philosophically to the notion of inclusion means the emphasis is on supporting teachers to be able to include in schools and regular class-rooms those with special needs."

If inclusion is about equitable educational outcomes, then a special unit may well fit the criteria. Delanee Dale believes children with special needs can benefit from learning in a class with good ratios - "they've got an IEP, goals set, teacher aides one-to-one, and access to professionals, such as a speech therapist." Such packaged-attractiveness of special units does much to expose the comparative inadequacies of the scantily-resourced mainstreaming option.

"Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality"

It is important to remember that education is far more than reading and writing. According to the United Nations Declaration

Valley Special School. David receives ORRS funding and is in a classroom with just seven children, supported by two teacher aides. "I like it because it's fun and they like me," says David. David's mum Denise is hoping that the new school will relieve stress for the whole family. "David doesn't cope in the mainstream environment," she explains. David has ASD, dyspraxia and health issues that make his emotional and physical safety a key concern. The family's decision for a special school comes from a belief in choice for the individual, as opposed to pushing David into a mainstream environment because of principles of rights and "inclusion".

While a proponent of the philosophy of inclusion, which she defines as, "supporting an individual's needs towards positive outcomes," David's experiences have left Denise largely disillusioned with current mainstreaming as genuine inclusion: "I'm not prepared to have my child used as a guinea pig while they sort out the system."

Home Schooling

When asked if his mum is a good teacher 11 year-old Isaac Fletcher smiles and looks cheekily up at his mum Mary. Isaac has been home-schooled since he was seven, which Mary says, "fits in with the way the family runs." With seven kids, four of whom are home-schooled, the family needs to work in together.

Mary also finds it helpful to be able to adapt the curriculum around Isaac's daily exercises and specialist appointments. Isaac's impairments, including fatigue, low muscle tone, a speech impediment and spasticity in one arm, are the result of a controversial chest-tapping procedure at National Women's Hospital when Isaac was born.

As a result Isaac gets ACC funding and has received specialist health equipment such as a chair, table and tricycle (see picture). However when Mary applied for an Alphasmart, a word processor, through the Ministry of Education, the fact that Isaac was taught at home

became a huge obstacle. Essentially she was told that home schooling excluded Isaac from resource funding. It wasn't until an MP took up Isaac's cause that the Alphasmart two years later.

Since then Mary has encountered no adverse effects of home schooling. Instead she notes with pride that Isaac doesn't perceive any barriers and wants to travel to England and see castles one day. "Home-schooling has allowed Isaac to be himself without labels."



of Human Rights (UNDHR), "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality." In this purpose the benefits of mainstreaming can be changeable. Delanee Dale believes that options change as a child moves through schooling stages and that children "can blend at primary school", mainly because of the age range and less judgemental socialisation. However, at intermediate level, she says the "gaps are more apparent" making this a difficult transition time for both the child and parents.

The ideal situation would fit the criteria of the Human Rights Commission's criteria of "adaptive" education: "Ensure education is responsive to the best interests and benefit of the learner, in their current and future contexts". This would imply that parents are the best suited to choose an educational model for their child. This is further supported by an international law - "Parents have the prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be give to their children" (1948 UNDHR).

Will the choice be a "life-sentence"?

However there are many emotional issues that parents wrangle with that could cloud a parent's judgement. Although the Learning Support Class at Kowhai Intermediate has a low profile in the school - "not all parents are aware of its existence" - Delanee Dale says she often has to counsel parents who, she says, perceive their child entering a "life-sentence". Believing that sometimes mainstreaming cannot work and "some specific children with very definite personal challenges may be better served by being in a unit", she suggests parents view it as a

year of learning and socialising, which may prove "the right place for the right individual at the right time".

Similarly, parents can be equally daunted by the prospect of mainstreaming their special needs child. Rod Wills, who lectures in special education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Auckland, says for many parents, "going into mainstreaming is the most difficult option. It has the most fear attached. It also has the most potential attached." It is common for parents of children with special needs to raise their hand in support of mainstreamed inclusion, while simultaneously taking a step backwards, saying "Not for my child".

Funding remains the highest predictor of choice. A child who doesn't squeeze into the ORRS criteria for the 1% who have High or Very High Needs will inevitably be mainstreamed; a child with ORRS funding will likely be taught in a special unit or a special school. Importantly, a school needs to have a systemic inclusion policy in order for the mainstreaming of children with high special needs to be successful. This includes teachers with knowledge, skills and support, professional development and school leadership.

A choice for who?

As parents constantly evaluate whether they're making the right educational decisions for their child, their focus is rightly on their child, not wider society.

Typically, a parent will be scrutinising their child's face for happiness, esteem and positivity about the future, not examining how societal attitudes, structures and the politics of inclusion may be affected by how

their one child was educated.

We at PFRC would like to know how you have made educational choices for your child. Your issues become our issues. We welcome your feedback.

* Networker content is not necessarily reflective of the views of the PFRC Management Committee

NEXT ISSUE

Respite - Contact us with your experiences and opinions

GSE Update

Will parents be satisfied by the outcomes?

by Rod Wills

The Ministry of Education has recently completed the Court ordered Daniels 'exercise'. The last Networker reported on this process in Auckland. The concerns reflect two areas. One set would be described as being 'dispositional' - arising from the personal or school attitudes and values that in turn impacted on what was done. The other set of concerns could be identified as emerging from 'central decisions' - many of these related to the resources and allocation systems set in place by the policies of Special Education 2000. As the participants at 37 meetings represented a range of backgrounds it might be expected that a diversity of opinions about their concerns would be voiced. Mostly that was not the case with high levels of agreement being found between principals, teachers, early childhood educators, special educational professionals and the parents who participated.

The question arises how will the Ministry of Education use the data that it gains from the four questions that it has asked to satisfy the Court?

A key to this can be found on the Ministry website - <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=955>

In this Barbara Disley, Group Manager of Special Education states:

"Our responsibility will be to look closely at the issues identified that are under our control, and discuss at a local and national level how we might respond to these...and " inform district

Mainstreaming

Skye and Rachel Easterbrook are 11 year-old twins who share their lives, share a classroom at The Gardens School, Manurewa, and share the walk home together. But Skye alone has Down Syndrome. Rachel has taken on a mothering role, says their mum Linda, which includes insisting on sharing a classroom with Skye in order to protect her from taunts. Rachel's swift response to a boy who called Skye "handicapped" was to retort, well can you ride a skateboard "like Skye can?" "No? Well who's got the handicap?"

Linda believes that inclusion is important but is clear that one system won't suit everybody. In the search for the "best" for Skye Linda has considered the option of a 'special unit'. But her main concern was that Skye would mimic the often challenging behaviour of special needs children, as had been the pre-school experience. Children with Downs Syndrome love to imitate which is one way that the influences of a mainstream setting can be beneficial. "To be accepted in society she has to be as normal as possible", says Linda.

Although Linda believes she's "doing the right thing at the moment" she is resigned to things changing once Skye moves into high school. Skye has a couple of close friends but Linda worries that as they grow older, children will be more judging and socially unaccepting of Skye. This, together with Skye's academic lag, means that Linda will soon be revisiting the options of a special unit or special school.



planning for 2005-06."

"Some of the issues identified as requiring change so far are not directly under our control . . ."

Will parents be satisfied by the outcomes?

Special School



In his first week at school, David won the trophy for respect

After a bumpy ride through different educational models, including mainstreaming, home schooling and a special unit, 13 year-old David Gledhill has recently started his "High School" at Wairau