July 2016

New Website launched by our founder

Moyia O’Brien launches new website from her iPad

In 92 years the tools may have changed yet the underlying truth has remained constant. The wisdom of our elders provides a rich legacy shaping the future of SWARA. Here Moyia O’Brien speaks to all clients, staff and community at July 9th’s official launch of the new website shaped to meet client needs for the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act. Executive Manager Bronwyn Gowing, family members Wendy Robb and Tim Hanley with our web designer Sherie Chong from SY Consulting support Moyia’s speech that opened the new web-site for public viewing.

Our Board Chair Ranji Goundar, guided by the wisdom of our IT leader Ashok Lingutla, is leading the Board’s development of the new Business Plan for SWARA. Their focus is to flow from and preserve the loving culture that has enriched SWARA to thrive for 41 years in central Brisbane, while transforming governance, systems and management operations to suit the new and exciting changes being introduced by governments across Australia.

Our clients are the primary beneficiaries. Their laughter, self-confidence and skills continue to grow, as does their sense of independence and connection to their communities. Please join us on Thursday August 11 as we experience and celebrate these achievements. Also we need your input, ideas and feedback on Thurs August 25 to further meet your NDIS needs.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Client Plan Meeting
Matt Bates our resident graduate counsellor, will be available for appointments to discuss NDIS planning with Clients and their advocates. Matt is in the office every Tuesday and Thursday. Please make a request to see Matt about NDIS with your financial advocate, on the email address: matt.bates@swara.com.au

Public Holiday
Ekka Show day Wednesday August 10th

Live Love Concert
Bring along your family and friends to our ‘Live Love’ concert on Thursday 11th August 9am – 2pm. Morning tea $4 and Lunch $6. Please RSVP by Monday 8th August

St John’s Cathedral
The SWARA Choir will be performing a thank you concert at St Johns Cathedral On Thursday 18th August 11am – 12 noon

NDIS Focus Groups
An NDIS information day and focus groups will be held on Thursday 25th August 2016 9.30 – 2pm.

Staff Training Days
SWARA will be closed for client programs on the 4th & 5th August due to staff training

SWARA Holidays
19th – 23rd September 2016

Community Access: weekly trips to Southbank, Galleries, wetlands walks, train travel, Brisbane Council activities that tie in with Client Needs for their plans, are happening each week.

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https://www.facebook.com/swara.brisbane
FROM THE MANAGER

Hello Everyone. My name is Kerrie Grice and I am SWARA’s new Manager. You will find me in the office Monday – Friday 8am – 4pm.

I have worked in the disability sector for the past twenty years in a number of different roles and programs. I have worked as a Support worker and CEO (and a number of roles in between) in areas such as Education, Employment, Supported Accommodation, Day programs, respite and sport & recreation. My first contact with SWARA was over twenty years ago when I enrolled in a disability course at Bundamba TAFE. As part of that course we visited a number of organisations who supported people with a disability and SWARA (then at Spring Hill) was one of them. That visit over twenty years ago inspired me to pursue a career in the disability sector. Over the years I have come into contact with many organisations and I can honestly say that SWARA upholds its mission of Connecting creativity, Human Dignity and Leadership by ensuring that the values of Love, Truth, Right Action, Peace and non-violence are embedded in all that we do. I look forward to being of service to you and your loved ones.

KEY LEARNING AREAS

SUNSHINE CAFÉ Hospitality Team

Our Hospitality Team lead by Maureen catered for CRC at the University of Queensland on Friday the 8th July UQ, this was their second catering experience and the feedback was very positive (especially about the chocolate brownies, well done Sally from the Sunshine Bakery!). It was a combined effort between the Maureen’s team and bakery, with everyone putting in a huge effort to make sure the food was fresh and looked delicious! Our next catering function will be here at SWARA on Thursday 11th August for our Live Love Play, there will be morning tea and a selection of sandwiches for sale on the day. We hope you can make it.

SUNSHINE BAKERY
The Sunshine Bakery team have been trialling some new recipes and conducting market research and feedback, which has been invaluable in ensuring we provide the tastiest treats! We’re currently working on new presentation ideas, new flavours for our loaf cakes, new vanilla choc chip biscuits, as well as trialling vegan and gluten free products. Our Bakery members are starting to set new personal goals, some of which are requiring them to develop new skills with learning how to use a computer, research the internet, and view Youtube instructional videos! Stay tuned for some new and exciting developments.

**COMMUNITY ACCESS**

Community Inclusion had an exciting destination this past month with a visit to the “ANZAC Experience.”

The exhibit took us on a journey from the breakout of war, traveling to the frontline, battles in the trenches, coming home and a memorial for our fallen troops.

The experience was enjoyed by all of our members who participated. We were also provided with personal iPhone type devices for a constant narration.

The blue tooth component of the device detected where we were in the exhibit and would provide the appropriate narration for the part of the exhibit. We were also able to collect electronic items via the devices too.

Once we had been through, the team were lifted with a sense of pride, appreciation and honour for Australian service men and women. The Army band was playing outside the exhibit and some of our members even had a boogie! This month we also visited the new art exhibit at G.O.M.A and interactive art centre. Community Inclusion continues to grow in popularity. If anyone has suggestions for our Community Inclusion visits, please drop us a line.

**CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS**

**SWARA Songbirds Choir** opens the hearts of all who are privileged to listen, learn and love with them. Guided by Jacky, Jan, Dorota, Katie and Baz, our choir is the heart of our performing arts.
River Poropat leads a support band developing musical, performance and communication skills recently. This has been part of a series of performances that clients have put on for the SWARA community, culminating in our August 11 skills-based performances of Learning Skills, Choir, Creative and Performing Arts.

Please come and taste test our platter of choices!

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Our Communication Skills Curriculum is developing nicely. Picture above is Adrian presenting the footy tips after a group therapy session. Behind him is our mood meter! The mood meter allows members to place how they are feeling that day on the meter. The vertical axis is energy, where the horizontal is happiness. Everyone experiences variations of these continuums each day. The colours allow creativity and expression to evolve. Red is anger, yellow is happy, blue is sadness and green is peaceful. We highlight that being sad is not necessarily bad however, acknowledging these types of emotions and understanding ourselves is pivotal in understanding others.

LEARNING SKILLS FOR INDEPENDENCE

Our clients, with the help of our wonderful volunteers, have been working very hard to improve their Learning Skills. Some clients are working through their lessons in Reading Eggs while others are using Book Creator and sign-language to read. Other clients are using Starfall to learn their letters and sounds and enjoy having books read to them.

We are now making a more concentrated effort with our writing and clients are improving their writing skills by tracing over written sentences, or writing their own sentences.

Lucy wrote the letters of the alphabet in order to develop her awareness of letter/sound relationships. David wrote about his childhood memories in Boondall.

We are very fortunate to have students from TAFE working with the clients to improve their Learning Skills. Maria is working with Di and Taya is helping Jenny learn her letters by matching pictures with initial sounds. Taya chose to volunteer at SWARA after finishing her TAFE placement.

Andrew is another TAFE student who enjoys working with the clients at SWARA and is now giving of his own time to help. Judy is zooming ahead with her Reading Eggs lessons and is very happy to have the opportunity to use the computers at SWARA for learning.
Doretta has been a volunteer at SWARA for many years and she is working with an enthusiastic Mathew, who often tells us how much he loves developing his abilities and learning skills.

There are many other volunteers working with clients in the Learning Centre, these include:
Tom Sudull, David Green, Kimberley Jacobs, Shree Lingutla, Susan Gunn, Deb Scholes, Dawn Punter, Maria Reyes.

A big thank-you to all the volunteers for the fantastic work they do engaging the clients in developing their learning skills.

Maureen models service excellence for Karen.

**Volunteers news**

Our humble and loving gratitude was expressed to our wonderful volunteers who have modelled loving service for our whole SWARA culture since 1986! Hospitality clients served a scrumptious meal, sang beautiful songs and expressed gratitude to our volunteers who are the heart of SWARA.

**Pink Love**

Every visit fills us all with pink love and our gratitude was vibrant as the love poured from Moyia’s heart through her words, thoughts and actions. She is a model in human values in action.

**Yoga with Thi-Thi** is an excellent physical, mental skill that brings concentration, mindfulness and alertness.