



Directions

Disability Support Services
— for individuals & families —

MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2016

Welcome to the final newsletter of 2016! We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for supporting Directions throughout the year. We have grown and we have changed (the whole world of disability services changes from one minute to the next at the moment) but we have steadfastly continued to provide relationship based services personally tailored to each individual that we support and their family. It's been lovely to get to know everyone better over the year and we are looking forward to a challenging and exciting 2017!

Merry Christmas and a peaceful new year to everyone!

ART EXHIBITION AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Some of the people we support have dreamed of becoming artists with work exhibited publically and recently, after months and years of hard work, these dreams have been realised. We held our inaugural Art Exhibition at Genesis in the Hills, Roleystone in October and November. The exhibition showcased a wide variety of art by the people we support and staff, including paintings, mosaics, photographs, textiles, collage and sculpture.

The Exhibition Opening Ceremony took place immediately after our Annual General Meeting on 27 October with special guests Donna Faragher, Minister for Disability Services, Stephen Dawson, Shadow Minister for Disability Services, and our Patron Dr Tony Buti, Member for Armadale. It was a spectacular event with over 100 people attending from across the community including families and friends of the artists, representatives from the Disability Services Commission and other disability service organisations, and members of the public. People supported by Directions provided musical entertainment as the guests arrived and were rewarded with enthusiastic cheers and applause. Others took on the roles of ushers and wait staff with outstanding professionalism, and were so proud of their key role in the event.

Donna Faragher said: "Directions is very well respected across the community and I congratulate you for the fantastic work that you do. The variety of art mediums that are on display here is absolutely amazing and I would like to congratulate everyone involved. It's all about the self-esteem, the sense of community, and the skills that are learned by the participants in this exhibition, and now today they can show off what they have done."



TEENSPIRIT

Teenspirit Inc is a small not for profit organisation based in Maddington whose primary goal is to facilitate a safe and caring environment where teenagers and young adults with intellectual or developmental disability can have social interaction with their peers and the wider community.

The Disability Services Commission will be funding services in a different way from June 2017 under the WANDIS with each individual having their own funding. As a small organisation Teenspirit do not have the administrative capacity to manage this new funding process and they were threatened with closure. Teenspirit have therefore approached Directions and, as we are well set up to manage individualised funding, we have agreed to take on the funding and run the program from February next year. Directions is proud to be able to play a part in sustaining such a great service that is an important part of the lives of many families in the southern suburbs.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THAT MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

CHRISTMAS PARTY AND TALENT SHOW

Having seen the fabulous talent and enthusiasm at the Art Exhibition Opening Ceremony we decided to enhance the Christmas party and put on a Talent Show. We held the party at the beautiful Avocados in Kelmscott on Friday 16 December. The evening was a terrific success with over 90 people attending and a fantastic atmosphere. It was another inclusive evening, with the people that we support taking on some of the preparation and tasks on the night. Our wait staff were diligent and professional, thoroughly enjoying serving the food. The games were well managed and very popular with the crowds of people who were enthusiastically competing.

The talent show was amazing, with people we support, coordinators, support workers and the CEO all getting up on stage. A particular stand-out was how supportive our audience was. The individuals that we support had the opportunity to be supportive themselves, encouraging their friends to be brave and get up on stage, and they did this with love, affection and enthusiasm. Every act received storming applause, standing ovations, whoops and stomping. If someone started to flake on stage, friends came up to join them to boost their confidence. Some acts made us laugh until our faces ached and some brought tears to our eyes. It was a brilliant evening!



JOY MARTIN STORIES

Joy Martin was a long standing board member with Directions who was person-centred, creative, and always approached problems with a positive attitude and innovative ideas. Joy passed away in 2009 and we commemorate her connection with Directions by sharing stories about staff who demonstrate these qualities.

Barry Double and his son Matt, who is supported by Directions, came in specially to talk to the CEO about some of the staff. Matt has had an excellent year and it was so good to see him sitting proud and tall in his wheelchair, enthusiastically joining in conversation, a changed man from 6 months previously.

Barry praised our Team Leader, Claire McGuinness, who has worked long and hard to make sure that the right supports happen at the right time with the right support workers. He noted that she was unfailingly respectful, understanding and insightful. Barry was very grateful to EJ Leong our Occupational Therapist who had carried out a full assessment at their home and organised for a new wheelchair which was now enabling Matt to sit comfortably and confidently. EJ's advice had also facilitated Matt's much improved mobility which had made a huge difference to their lives. Barry made special mention of our Office Coordinator, Tania Crosetta, who manages reception with grace and charm, always remembering who he is and who he might like to talk to.

Finally, Barry was full of admiration and gratitude to one of his support workers, Leigh Turland. Leigh epitomises what it is to provide relationship-based support: getting to know the whole family, being innovative and creative, and learning everything he can in order to ensure that every single support is the very best it can be.

The Doubles are not the only ones to applaud Leigh recently. This year Directions funded Leigh to undertake his Certificate III in Disability Services at North Metro TAFE, and his tutor Cindy Evans sent us this feedback:

"I have recently observed Leigh conducting a series of health and wellbeing sessions with a young man that he supports. In just two months I see changes in that young man that are really quite phenomenal. Changes to confidence, engagement, inclusive actions, posture, and most definitely changes to how he is perceived in a busy public place. Leigh sets his professional boundaries well, plans his sessions, and has the ability to observe and capture early warning signs from responses in behaviour. He has built more than a rapport, there is a great deal of respect going both ways in the relationship that I have observed. Leigh is committed, empowering and clearly demonstrates his ability to withdraw support and plan using a strength based approach. He has been a pleasure to work with."

Leigh has now been nominated for the North Metro TAFE Vocational Student of the Year. A fine accolade for an excellent support worker!