



Directions

Disability Support Services
— for individuals & families —

MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER MARCH 2018

Welcome to all our new members! Directions has 165 members across the state from South Hedland to Albany. Thank you for all your support as we continue to provide the very best in relationship-based services while navigating the ever-changing landscape of disability services!

THE DIRECTIONS / CITY OF GOSNELLS BUSINESS NETWORKING EVENT



On a very warm and balmy evening in March, Directions hosted the City of Gosnells “BiG Event”, a networking evening for local businesses. It was a very successful evening with about 50 business people from our local community attending. All the food and drink was catered and served by diligent and enormously enthusiastic young people who are supported by Directions. Our Patron, local MLA Tony Buti, spoke eloquently about the work of Directions and how businesses could enhance our impact. We were delighted that many people responded with generous offers of support including: offering work experience in IT to people that we support; creating a video about Directions; creating 3D virtual tours of interesting places inaccessible to wheelchairs; teaching a motivation program to people we support to inspire them to aim high; and some free IT consultancy to help us out with our website. It was wonderful to be offered so much support from our community.

QUALITY EVALUATION

Every three years the Department of Communities contracts independent auditors to evaluate our services. Directions' three-month audit concluded in February and we received an excellent report. There was not one single recommendation on how we could improve services, and two examples of outstanding practice noted: our safeguarding process around host families, and the way we build relationships and carefully match support workers to the people that they are supporting. The Lead Evaluator said that his only regret was that there was no opportunity in the report to write about all the brilliant things that they had observed while auditing!

MEDICAL GENETICS LECTURE AT EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY

Directions was invited for a third year to run a lecture for medical genetics students at ECU. Three people that we support, two parents and three support workers presented on Lebers Congenital Amourosis, Downs Syndrome, Autism and Prada Willi Syndrome. The young people experiencing these conditions were insightful, informative and witty, speaking with clarity and confidence. The parents' presentations were very powerful and inspired many interesting and discerning questions. The students were clearly very moved and appreciated the opportunity to see beyond the diagnosis, gaining a very different perspective to take into their working lives.



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THAT MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

CATERING FOR INDUCTIONS AND TRAINING DAYS



Every month we welcome new staff to Directions with a day's induction. In the morning they meet everyone at head office and get to know all the important processes and documentation, and in the afternoon they join our existing support workers for manual handling and medications training. In the middle of the day everyone has lunch together. It's always a fantastic lunch, catered by Hayley who we support to develop her delicious catering skills!

THE NEW NDIA FUNDING

Directions is supporting more and more people who have the new NDIA federal funding and we are keeping on top of all the changes that are beginning to affect our families. The next big step will be for everyone who lives in Armadale, Serpentine, Jarradale, Murray, Rockingham and Mandurah who will transfer to the new NDIA system between July and November this year. You will be contacted by your local coordinator who will arrange to meet you with your NDIA planner to change your plan to NDIA. You are able to invite your Directions coordinator or support workers or both to this meeting if you would like to. Sometimes it helps as we know the system and can ensure that you get all the funding that you need.

For example if you have 2 hours of support in the afternoon, on your new plan up to 20 minutes of this may be used to fund the support worker travelling from someone else to you. If this is going to happen, the planner should give you 2 hours and 20 minutes of funding, otherwise you will not be getting the support you need. While the new system is similar to the current WA system in many ways, there are differences that could have a significant impact on your support. Please do not hesitate to contact us to help you to navigate the pitfalls.

JOY MARTIN STORIES

Joy Martin was a long standing Directions board member 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 by sharing stories about staff and volunteers who demonstrate these qualities.

Bridget is a confident young woman who has recently left school. Part of Bridget's journey to independence has been to find a host family who will welcome Bridget into their home once a month. Bridget and her mother Jane Matthews are delighted to have formed a relationship with our host family Tess Hutchings, her two sons Matthew and Corey and their lovely dog (pictured with Bridget).

Jane says: "My daughter has had many challenges over the last few years but once a month I get to see her full of joy. She's packing for her weekend with her host family! Her host family have welcomed her with open arms, giving her, her own lovely bedroom, taking her on family outings and even changing their diet to accommodate my daughter's special dietary needs. She gets a break from her boring mum and I get the reassurance she is happy, safe and developing a wider social network."

Bridget agrees: "I love host family because I get to go different places and see exciting new things. My host mum and brothers are fun. My host mum helps me by giving me a healthy diet. She spoils me. I love them!"



Our young Teenspirit support workers bring youth, vitality and innovation to our groups both north and south of the river.

Linda McQueen has told us: "My son loves Teenspirit. There is no other respite for teenagers in Perth like it. It is run professionally and the support workers are awesome, close to the teens in age and so understanding."

John and Nicole Allen say: "Teenspirit has built our daughter's confidence and given her a sense of belonging. Before Teenspirit she was lost in a mainstream society, struggling to fit in and loathing her disability. The young support workers of Teenspirit have literally taken her from a sad and lonely place to a fun and safe club of acceptance and friendships."

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