

working together to make a difference

## Newsletter

October 2016

Issue #9



## Our Mission

To provide a strong voice and support for people and families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder, and to make the community aware of Autism Spectrum Disorder by sharing information.

Contents: From the Secretary \* Monthly Roundup \* Coffee Morning Notes \* Online Picks \* Explaining Death \* Upcoming Workshops/Activities \* What's On (NQASG Groups) \* Contacts & Resources

## From the Secretary

Hello Everyone

Last month members of the Support Group attended the "Thinking Outside the Box" Learning Expo and staff from the Dept of Education and Training attended our Coffee Morning to explain the Autism Hub. Notes from the coffee morning are on pages 4 and 5 of this newsletter. Details of our AGM can be found on page 2 and information about the Christmas party and our other Groups are on page 7 of the newsletter. If you are attending the fun of the airshow on the Strand this weekend, perhaps consider packing noise reducing head phones for those on the spectrum. Have a great weekend!

Gwenyth Cutler



"When a flower doesn't bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower". Alexander Den Heijer, motivational speaker.

## **Monthly Roundup**

What our community has been up to

#### **Learning Expo**

Members of the Support Group attended a learning expo "Thinking Outside the Box – Learning Challenges Expo" at the Townsville RSL organized by Directions Psychology.



### **Coffee Morning**

On 30 September at the Coffee Morning Jay Sharma and Lesley Theodore from DET came and spoke about the new Autism Hub. For further information please see pp. 4-5 of this newsletter.

## **Annual General Meeting**

Don't forget our AGM on Saturday, 5 November starting at 10am at Vincent Community Hall. All are welcome to attend. Anyone who feels he or she can contribute in an active role with the organisation of this group would be most welcome. For further details please contact Gwenyth Cutler, (07) 4774 0637.

## **Explaining Death to a Child with ASD**

A list of resources to help explain the concept of death to children on the autism spectrum.

A list of recommended resources from Autism Speaks (US)

https://www.autismspeaks.org/familyservices/resource-library/bereavement-and-griefresources

Tips for talking to your child with autism about death (US)

http://www.foxnews.com/health/2012/02/10/how-to-talk-to-children-with-autism-about-death.html

Resources and advice from the National Autistic Society (UK)

http://www.autism.org.uk/bereavement

Carol Gray's Guide to Loss, Learning and Children with ASD

http://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Spring-2003-ISSUE.pdf

Explaining Bereavement Autism Spectrum Australia

https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/sites/default/files/Aspect%20Practice%20PBS%20Explaining%20Bereavement\_1.pdf



## Online Picks

https://www.facebook.com/ Upworthy/videos/11856601 88141504/?pnref=story

This video of Bill Davis and his son Chris who has severe autism has garnered over 26 million views.

https://www.ted.com/talks/andrew\_solomon\_love\_no\_matter\_what?language=en

Andrew Solomon's Ted Talk "Love No Matter What" about raising a child who is fundamentally different from you in some way.

# Coffee Morning Notes 30 September Autism Hub – Department of Education and Training

#### Speakers:

Rajesh (Jay) Sharma and Lesley Theodore from DET (Dept of Education and Training). Jay is the Autism Coach – North Queensland Region

Jay has received his undergraduate and graduate degrees in Applied Psychology with emphasis on Clinical Psychology and Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA). He also has a second bachelor degree in Special Education. He has worked with mental health clinics, schools, department of disability, behavioural consulting firms etc. in India, USA and now in Australia. While Jay was in the USA, he received his second masters degree in Applied Psychology with a concentration in Applied Behaviour Analysis from McNeese State University, Louisiana and acquired the credential of Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA). He continues to be a Licensed Behaviour Analyst (LBA) in the State of Louisiana, USA. Jay specialises in the behavioural treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and challenging behavioural issues across disabilities. In addition to his current role, he also provides clinical supervision and professional learning opportunities for those interested in pursuing certification in ABA or upgrading their clinical skills. Jay also has an interest in contributing to the existing body of knowledge about autism and challenging behaviours

Jay is passionate about helping young people impacted by Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and capacity building of those professionals and carers who work closely with these individuals with ASD. Jay has a firm faith in public education system and its ability to transform lives of young people with ASD.

Jay brings a wealth of experience to this role.

The role of the DET Autism Coach is to upskill staff at state schools to better enable teachers and school staff to support children with ASD. Children do not necessarily need to have a diagnosis or be verified. The focus is to assist with school capacity building to advise on strategies and their implementation.

Jay works in the North Qld Region which stretches from Ingham to Proserpine and out to Mt Isa and up to the Gulf. This covers 110 schools. So far Jay has worked with 20 schools.

The DET Autism Hub (where Jay works) provides assistance to schools via school initiation and requesting of the service. Parents can also contact the Autism Hub for general advice around autism.

# Coffee Morning Notes 30 September Autism Hub – Department of Education and Training

Jay works as part of a team. This includes an inclusion coach, mental health coach, positive behavior for learning coach and a student protection advisor. This team sometimes go to schools together. Their focus is to build schools' capacity by providing professional development and access to evidence based practices, and to coach staff to provide services for children and families that meet their needs and lead to improved student outcomes.

Parent workshops around autism are being devised and are being delivered. Some of the topics that are considered when developing the workshops include:

- Transitions
- · Early childhood
- Social skills
- Emotional regulation
- · Behavior modification
- Siblings
- Apps
- Language (as part of behavior)
- Self management and self regulation.

If parents have ideas about other topics they would like covered please send through suggestions to Gwenyth Cutler (NQASG) Gwenyth.Cutler@bigpond.com or to Lindy Creighton (NQASG) LindyCreighton@bigpond.com, or to the Autism Hub directly.

Here is some information about DET's Autism Hub: <a href="http://education.gld.gov.au/autismhub/">http://education.gld.gov.au/autismhub/</a>

The Autism Hub's Facebook page is here:

https://www.facebook.com/AutismHubQueensland/

## What's On Community Workshops & Events



### Survey

You may be interested in participating in this survey about Queensland state schools and provision for students with a disability. Be quick as the survey closes this Friday.

http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/disability/qld-disability-review.html

## Apps for Autism Hackathon 14-16 November, Melbourne

A hackathon supported by the Autism CRC. Individuals on the spectrum and their carers are invited to participate along with researchers, service providers and those with IT skills.

http://www.apps4autism.com

https://www.facebook.com/autismcrc/

## What's On NQASG Groups



#### Coffee and a Chat

Join us to share information, ideas and experiences with others who know and understand.

Date: Friday, 28 OctoberVenue: McDonalds, Aitkenvale

Time: 10am-12noon

Guest Speaker: Shelley Webb, Save the

Children Organisation.

## **Adults Group**

A social group for adults on the ASD spectrum and their friends to meet socially. Meetings are held the first Saturday of the month. Next meeting:

**Date:** Saturday, 5 November **Venue:** Kirwan, Tenpin Bowling

Centre

**Time:** 6.30pm

Contact: Joyce-Lyn Smith,

M: 0404 207 948

## Siblings Group

Open to all school age children who have a brother or sister who is on the spectrum. These social outings are often conducted during school vacations. For more information contact Kirsty Magarry at <a href="mailto:kirstyanne-magarry@hotmail.com">kirstyanne-magarry@hotmail.com</a>.

## **Adolescents Group**

A social group for young people on the autism spectrum. Meets the last Sunday of the month.

Date: Sunday, 30 October

Venue: Community Hall, Hodges

Cres, Vincent.

**Time:** 2-4pm

Contact: Linda Eggert M:0414 224 654

or E: s00120751@myacu.edu.au

## **Christmas Party**

All are welcome at our Christmas party to be held on Saturday, 12 November, from 10.00am - 2.30pm. We will again be taking out Rosie – the Leisure Accessible Vessel. See Facebook for more details: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/leisureaccessible/">https://www.facebook.com/leisureaccessible/</a>

The venue this year will be Fifth Avenue, South Townsville. All members of the Adults' Group, Adolescents' Group, Siblings' Group and their families are most welcome. To help offset costs for the use of the boat and catering there will be a small fee of \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. Those attending need to RSVP to Gwenyth Cutler, by 5 November Gwenyth.Cutler@bigpond.com



working together to make a difference

## Contacts & Resources

### Your NQASG Team

Gwenyth Cutler **Secretary** 

E: Gwenyth.Cutler@bigpond.com

T: (07) 4774 0637

## Autism Queensland

https://autismqld.com.au

https://www.facebook.com/autismqueensland/

Lead agency in Queensland addressing the needs of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

## **Wrong Planet**

## http://wrongplanet.net

An online forum (US based) established in 2004 for those with autism.

How to Transition to Tertiary Education

http://www.adcet.edu.au/students-with-disability/autism-transition/

Published by the National Disability Coordination Officer Program.

#### **Andrew Solomon**

http://andrewsolomon.com

https://www.facebook.com/AndrewSolomon.author

Award-winning US writer. Publishes regular articles about autism and provides links to interesting articles about autism. He is the author of "Far From the Tree: Parents, Children and the Search for Identity" which includes attention to the issue of raising children on the spectrum.

#### **Autism Hub**

http://education.qld.gov.au/autismhub/

https://www.facebook.com/AutismHubQueensland/

Aims to improve educational outcomes for children on the spectrum.

This newsletter is for general information purposes only, and readers should take appropriate advice from medical and other practitioners or professional advisors regarding their or their family's particular circumstances.