



August, 2011

Welcome the Stronger Families Alliance e-newsletter,

The Stronger Families Alliance is a unique network of that fosters collaboration between organizations and networks with a stake in the development of children living in the Blue Mountains. The Alliance works to promote child well-being and resilience through a range of collaborative initiatives linked to the implementation of the Alliance's Child and Family Plan (attached to this email).

The 28 Alliance members include all levels of government, business networks, NSW child and family organizations and the community and university sectors. This newsletter enables you to link your own staff, volunteers, clients and programs to other professionals, initiatives and services across the Alliance network. The newsletter is divided into news and meeting dates sections.

News from Sub Groups and Programs Participating in the Alliance Network

Winmalee Hub

The new principal, Mark Myles, is now settled into the school and has become an active contributor to the steering committee and the Hub activities. The Hub welcomes Lyn the coordinator of Pinaroo OOSH to the Steering Committee. Lyn's participation in the groups gives the Hub options to link with middle childhood programs to complement early childhood programs.

Events coming up:

- Community Breakfast, Thursday 8 am 15th September. All people in the community welcome.
- Supported Play-group every Wednesday AM.
- Transition to School starts orientation Tuesday 25th Oct 9:30-10:30.

To explore ways for your service to participate in these events / programs or to make a referral, contact Kerry Thomas, Gateway Family Services, 4754-1574

Blaxland, East Blaxland & Warrimoo Steering Committee development

This is a new program involving 3 schools and neighbourhood. This term the first meeting involving the three school principals was held to form the Hub steering committee.

Events coming up:

- Warrimoo Transition to School Program, from 11th November, contact Warrimoo Public School, 4753 6182

To discuss how you can be involved this new service network for children and families contact Kerry Thomas, Gateway Family Services, 4754-1574

Blackheath / Mt Victoria Hub

We are still short of funding for the Blackheath School Playgroup. If your organization has some slippage funds available, this would be a worthwhile investment for the Upper Mountains Community.

Recent highlights include the Bush Dance at Mount Vic School which was attended by over 120 people. Thanks to Sunrise Rotary for a great dinner and Spin FX for great music!

The parenting programmes have commenced again. This time we ran 1,2 3, Magic with Anne Howes from Gateway Family Services, with childminding provided by MMM.

Events coming up:

- Barry Palm will run a parenting seminar (Kids and the Feelings) and a short course (Kids and Confidence) in the upcoming weeks.

For more information contact Jo Davies, Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre, 47877770

Katoomba Hub

With support from the principal, Alan Hooper, the newly set up Katoomba Hub has concentrated on setting up the Steering Committee and organising courses for parents and the community. Parents have responded very positively and intend to meet regularly to identify ways to build the hub.

Nth Katoomba Hub

The collaboration with principal Mandy Hollis and North Katoomba Public School continues to result in a number of events within the Hub and with the School community including: Sing and Grown, Discovery Kids Club, Koori Kids Club, Winter Magic workshops, Fathers' Day BBQ, and the Warm and Fuzzy Festival. Hub facilitator, Jeanette, recently accompanied the Koori Kids Club on an excursion to Dubbo. The parents "Hub Ideas Project" has proven to be an excellent source of ideas and energy.

Events coming up:

- Together with TAFE Outreach, the Katoomba hub is offering a certificate course in First Aid. It will run over 6 weeks in Term 4. Childcare by MMM.
- Gateway and Connect are hosting an evening with Barry Palm and his course "Kids and their Feelings." This will be held at Katoomba School from 7-9pm on Wednesday 16th November. Supper provided.

- "The importance of play" on Thursday 22nd September, 10am – 12pm at Katoomba School.
- Creating a community garden with playgroup families at North Katoomba.
Family Fun Day at North Katoomba in partnership with Eco Fair Footlight Festival 22 October, 1-6pm
- School holiday activities at Nth Katoomba

For more information contact Sue Fick, Connect Child and Family Services, 4758 9966

SFA Vulnerable Children Sub Group

The Vulnerable Children Sub Group has decided to concentrate its focus on implementation strategies for Child and Family Plan: Outcome 8: "Targeted child and adult services coordinate with each other and universal service system". The group is currently identifying and prioritising adult services (who have children behind the client) who would be interested in learning about the Alliance's approach to including children in their thinking and case planning. The group has also made an initial contact with the Department of Education about strategies that would make this part of the plan useful to primary school teachers.

Blue Mountains Consortium

The Brighter Futures program in the mountains is at full capacity with a waiting list. 80% of families come through our community referral pathways and we continue to have close and productive working relationships with FACS, Health and across the broader service system.

SFA Creating Child Friendly Communities Sub Group

A lot of news from this group including:

- Springwood Neighbourhood Centre and Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre have been working together to develop a child consultation process. It is hoped that the results of these endeavours will be able to be fed into the Springwood Redevelopment. Other members of the CFC sub-group have also indicated their interest in participating in this process.
- Springwood Neighbourhood Centre has been opening its doors once a month on a Saturday morning. Child focused activities have been run and this has proved to be very successful in encouraging more people to access the Centre.
- Blue Mountains City Council and the GP Network have put in a joint funding application to the Federal Government's Healthy Communities Program. The application used the Child and Family Plan to frame up the application's program elements for parents.
- Child friendly park designer, Ric McConaghy, has volunteered to join the Stronger Families Alliance in a volunteer capacity. He is now linked to Council's Recreation Team representing the Alliance in the process of developing designs for skate park facilities in Katoomba including (i) A new Junior Skate Facility at Melrose Park, Katoomba and (ii) Upgrade of the current Goldsmith Place facility at Katoomba (more on these projects below)

- Work in underway within BMCC to (i) map all capital works projects coming up in the next two years and (ii) design a process that enables the Alliance to input into projects at the earliest possible stage. Tanya is currently meeting with each capital works stakeholder group to determine how to best coordinate the diversity of Council services that impact on children with the Alliance's growing child consultation capacity.

Paint the Blue Read:

Highlights include:

- We now have two Booksies – Billy and Billie thanks to donations from Bendigo Bank, Councillors Dave Clark, Alison McLaren, Janet Mays and Federal MP, Louise Markus
- Winter Tales at Wentworth Falls School of Arts on Sunday 7th August was fully booked with 21 children aged 9 and above attending the Tohy Riddle workshop and 47 children aged under 9 attending storytelling workshops with Lee Castledine, Louise Pfanner and Emily Rodda plus lots of parents. There was a huge amount of interest and we could have booked in twice as many families. This was a partnership with WestWords, MOCS and BMCC and Judith Ridge from WestWords was extremely pleased with the response so we are intending to hold more workshops in the future.
- Gazette feature for Reading Week appeared on 24th August with reading sessions being held all across the BM in Reading Week from 29th August to 2nd September – there are lots of new venues for the reading sessions this year so it definitely helps having 2 Booksies for people to borrow.
- Some members of PTBR were involved at the large meeting of Paint the Town Read groups from across NSW held at Penrith Panthers on 2nd September
- Booksies are regularly being borrowed for community events which means more organisations are building in an early literacy focus. Ring 4758-6811 to borrow.

Bike week for Little Kids

Kelly Watson has demonstrated how even RTA funding can be re-focused to support the implementation of the Child and Family Plan with her clever design of ***Bike Week for Little Kids***. The event is for children under 6 and their carers, Glenmore Park, Thursday 22nd Sept, 10:30 – 1:30. A range of child and family services are involved so that many activities will be offered in addition to riding your bike, tricycle or scooter. Contact Kelly on 47805503 for more info.

Bushwalking Guide for Kids who want to explore the Blue Mountains

Jacqueline Reid has pulled together a group of services and a very talented volunteer to put together a proposal for a bushwalking guide for kids in the BM. The goal of the project is to research, create, test and distribute a kids' *Lonely Planet* type guide for going walking and exploring in the Blue Mountains with all the tips and knowledge of other kids who've been there and know where the fun bits are. Project partners at this stage are Blue Mountains Tourism Ltd, Blue Mountains Conservation Society, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Council's environmental education team and the Stronger Families Alliance. Contact Jacqueline to discuss your potential involvement on 4784 7326

Early intervention funding available to families with children up to aged 6

Connect Child & Family is the lead agency of a consortium of approved therapy providers in the Blue Mountains, providing: speech therapy, occupational therapy and behavioral intervention with psychologists. Eligible children can be registered to access these early intervention funding of up to \$12,000 (up to a maximum of \$6,000 in any one financial year). Eligibility includes children diagnosed with: autism, cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, hearing impairment, sight impairment or Fragile X syndrome. Eligible children must be registered before their 6th birthday and families will have until their child turns seven to use the early intervention funding. For further details: <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/betterstart>
Or ring Ruby Wright at Connect Child & Family Services 47 58 9966

Opportunities for you to participate in parks development in the Blue Mountains

Katoomba Skate Parks. Council is in the process of developing designs for skate park facilities in Katoomba. These include:

- (i) A new Junior Skate Facility at Melrose Park, Katoomba
- (ii) Upgrade of the current Goldsmith Place facility at Katoomba.

An investigation was undertaken for the Katoomba skate parks in 2010, and it was determined the current facility at Goldsmith Place would be retained for experienced and senior skaters, subject to some modifications, and a design for a proposed Junior Skate Facility would be developed for Melrose Park. Capital works funding has been allocated for both the design and development of these facilities over the next 2 financial years.

The design process is being guided by Steering Committees made from community representatives, including the SFA's representative Rick McConaghy. It is anticipated that these designs will be on public exhibition for comment by November 2011. If you would like to be informed of the public exhibition, or would like to be involved in the design phase through the steering committees, please contact Nathan Summers, Recreation Development Officer, BMCC on 4780 5573 or nsummers@bmcc.nsw.gov.au .

More information, and opportunities to comment are available on <http://bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au/melrosejuniorskate>

Outrim Park. Council will be redeveloping Outrim Park, located behind the Blaxland shops. Council is forming a steering committee of community members to guide the design for the redevelopment. If you would like to be part of the Steering Committee, or would like more information, please contact Elizabeth Dudley-Bestow, Recreation Team Leader, BMCC on 4780 5573 or edudleybestow@bmcc.nsw.gov.au .

Council has established a web page for Outrim Park providing information. This can be accessed at <http://bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au>

Stronger Families Alliance network meetings coming up:

SFA Large Group Meetings:

Closed group, contact Tanya James, BMCC (47805542 about joining)

- Last meeting for year: **24th Oct**, 10am – 1pm, BMCC
- Leadership Workshop: **17th Oct**, 9am – 12pm, Mountains Heritage, Katoomba.
- SFA Xmas Lunch: **15th Dec**, Time and Venue to be announced.

The large group welcomes Virginia Field, Social Planner, Blue Mountains City Council, to the large group.

Child and Family Plan Part A: Strengthening Families Through Neighbourhood Service Networks

The Hub Steering Committees include schools, services, recreational providers, voluntary groups and community members who wish to work together to promote child, family and community well-being and resilience at a neighbourhood level. These groups are all open to new members.

- Blackheath / Mt Victoria Hub Steering Committee: **31st Oct**, 3:15pm, Blackheath Public School. Contact Jo, Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre, 4787 7770
- Katoomba Steering Committee: **15 Sept**, 2-3pm, Katoomba Public School staff room
- Nth Katoomba Steering Committee: Contact Sue Fick, Connect, 4758 9966
- Winmalee Hub Steering Committee: **20th October**, Winmalee Public School. Contact Kerry Thomas, Gateway Family Services, 4739 5963
- SFA School Hub Executive: **26th Oct**, 10am -12pm, BMCC
(Closed group – Contact Tanya James, BMCC 47805542 for more info)

Child and Family Plan Part B: Moving Children Beyond Vulnerability

This open group works to promote whole of service system, collaborative responses to moving children and families beyond vulnerability.

- SFA Vulnerable Children Sub Group: **8th Nov**, 9:30am – 11:30am, Springwood Community Health Centre. Contact Kerry Thomas, Gateway Family Services, 4739 5963
- Blue Mountains Consortium
(Closed group - Contact Di Jackson, Connect Child and Family Services, 47589966, for more info)

Child and Family Plan Part C: Creating Child Friendly Communities

- SFA Creating Child Friendly Communities Sub Group: **Term 4 meeting TBA**, contact Toni Quigley, Springwood Neighbourhood Centre, Tel: 4751 3033
- Paint the Blue Read: **11th October**, 3.30pm – 5pm at Bungarrabee, 48-50 Oaklands Rd Hazelbrook Contact Lyn Bevington, Tel: 47586811