

Health information for women visiting the BreastScreen Bus

Volunteers Sought!

WHGNE have been working with BreastScreen Victoria to provide women who visit the van with an information pack containing quality health information.

Included in the pack is a Health Passport; literature on exercise, checking your own breasts, pap tests, pelvic floor care, depression, stress reduction; and contact details for further information.

Localised information packs were available to women attending the bus in Yarrawonga, Myrtleford, Mt Beauty and Tallagatta.

The van is now in Wangaratta and is expected to be here for a while. 42 women attend the van each day. This is a LOT of information packs..
...so volunteers are needed to put these packs together.

If you would like to meet with other women over tea or coffee and a delicious morning tea and spend two hours helping to collate the packs while the van is in Wangaratta please contact Sally or Julie at the office.



Joy and Di, radiographers, examining the health information packs they are handing to women who attend the bus.

Invitation to those who have an interest, or work with, the sexual health of teenagers and teen pregnancy

Currently we are conducting research on rural teenage pregnancy. While engaging with various services we have noticed a range of strategies and examples of good practice throughout the region.

We would like to invite you to an information sharing and networking day, where you can share how your organisation is engaging with young people around sexual health, teenage pregnancy, prevention of teenage pregnancy or early parenting. You can also hear about what else is happening in the Hume region.

Often the most valuable part of the day is networking with other workers and agencies.

The Hume region is geographically huge. So deciding where to hold an event like this is an ongoing dilemma, as almost everyone has to travel and those on the outskirts have to travel further.

We have decided to hold it at our offices as we can make it the most comfortable for you.

We will provide a delicious lunch and scrumptious morning and afternoon teas. Also we can put you in contact with someone else from your area so you can travel together, saving fuel and networking some more.

This is a whole-day commitment but the potential benefits are enormous.

So please join us on

Tuesday 19th September 2006

At 57 Rowan Street Wangaratta

Morning tea at 10.00 to give people time to travel and we'll get started by 10.30.

For more information or to RSVP please contact Julie at WHGNE on 5722 3009 or j.tyler@whealth.com.au

Women Gathering

The following is the preface from *Women Gathering: A literature review*, written for WHGNE by Sally Nansen and launched at our office on Thursday 10th August 2006.

If you would like a copy please contact us on 5722 3009.

As a society we have become very clever at building fences. A vacant block next to my home recently had a sign erected on its ragged barbed wire perimeter. "Trespassers will be prosecuted" was sprawled with ugly black spray paint. I watched from my window as late winter made the lonely block bloom with jonquils and daffodils and realized with regret that the flowers were out of bounds. What a pity when they could have graced many a home with perfume and beauty.

Often the way we do things in society is simply a reflection of our inner lives. At different times, most of us have armed ourselves with brick and mortar, palings and nails, and spent industrious days slapping together fences on the inside of ourselves. We erect "Keep Out" signs on a fence surrounding our heart, and those around us *do* keep out, walking by us with their eyes to the ground, until we have forgotten how to look at each other properly any more.

We cheer ourselves with the thought that the fences are doing what they are meant to do. They keep us safe from attack and pain. The world is a dangerous place and all of us have been hurt by it. In the most cases fellow humans have been the ones to deliver the painful blows. With distressing realness, we have all experienced living in a sort of Little Red Riding Hood nightmare. We were the little girl going to visit our soft comfortable Grandma, but Grandma was really a hungry wolf. Better to realize this now than when it's too late! So we comfort ourselves, glancing fearfully over our shoulders, saying, 'We'd be crazy *not* to be build fences, when a wolf lurks outside'.

But there is a problem. As human beings we need each other. Some people even believe we are created for relationships. And the evidence is packed against us: Social isolation is a moist breeding ground for mental and other health struggles. What a tragedy when we realize that isolation isn't really a matter of geography, but is mostly an emotional and spiritual separation from each other.

Through this review, Women's Health Goulburn North East is proposing that rural women can be leaders in creating a new and healthier society of deep sharing and connectedness. Our project 'Women Gathering' aims to equip women with the skills to go beyond each other's fences through mutual invitation and into each other's lives. In some contexts, this may take the form of structured support groups around a shared theme, in others it may be celebrating the natural networks between women and learning how to go deeper within these networks. In all contexts it is developing an organic approach of sharing, listening and participating in each other's lives.



However, this project is not without risk. We need to unlearn past patterns of fence building in place of learning the skills necessary to become safe and kind

companions to each other. This means that, in the beginning at least, we will make mistakes. In our new vulnerability, we may hurt others and they may hurt us and we will rush to the wood shed to drag out the old fence palings, only to feel the pangs of loneliness even more strongly as we hammer in the nails.

The challenge will be to remember this wise saying: *If a thing is worth doing, it's worth doing badly- for a start, and while you're improving* (GROW 1957). The model proposed by Women's Health Goulburn North East is actually very simple. It will simply take practice and commitment. And consider what could be achieved: Instead of erecting fences, women have the opportunity to flex their muscles on a different building project - that of building a healthier society through the spirit of friendship. Perhaps then, as the gates creak open, women can invite one another to gather the flowers growing there.

Sally Nansen

Fly a White Balloon



Tuesday 5th September is Fly a White Balloon day., A day that happens across the region and is about demonstrating our desire for children to be safe in our community.

The message is:

- Children have a right to feel safe at all times in our community
- It is never OK to sexually abuse children
- Children who are victims of sexual abuse need our protection

If you would like to fly a white balloon outside your work place, on your letterbox or at your desk, contact Ilena Young on 02 6022 8803 or iyoung@uhchs.vic.gov.au

Pandora's Box

The purpose of the Pandora's Box Project has been to grapple with the complexity of family violence and disability and draw together service provision that truly reflects the diverse needs of the community.

A resource guide was developed for:

- disability services requiring access to family violence services
- family violence services requiring assistance from disability services
- women with disabilities in seeking assistance from the family violence and disability support systems.

The Pandora's Box working party has worked hard to raise awareness of family violence and disability and it is with great hope that this resource will be of help to service users and providers.

Services have seen an increase in the need for referrals and information between the two sectors. The resource contains information on a variety of services situated in the Hume region which specialise in dealing with either family violence or disability.

To obtain a copy of this guide contact WHGNE or download from the website.
http://www.whealth.com.au/ourwork/pandoras_box.html



Breanna Wilson compiled the directory while on placement with DHS and completed and published it with WHGNE

Family Violence System Change

The Family Violence Networker position has been replaced by the Family Violence Regional Leadership position. Emma Fahey has moved to this new role, which retains its independence and facilitates examination of system requirements from a range of perspectives through a sound and transparent ethical and consultative process.

This new approach to family violence builds upon the 2002 Women's Safety Strategy: which sets out the principles and policy directions for addressing violence against women in Victoria over a five-year period.

The same year, the Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Family Violence was established to investigate ways to improve the

effectiveness of responses to family violence through more integrated approaches to family violence across Victoria. Its members include representatives from government, police, courts, family violence services, men's violence prevention services, peak bodies and legal services. The Statewide Steering Committee released its report, *Reforming the Family Violence System in Victoria, 2005*.

The new approach will ensure greater consistency between different services throughout the State and improve capacity to meet service demand. It seeks to reduce levels of re-victimisation and re-offending by providing women and children who experience violence with the support they need and combining justice responses with human service approaches to change the behaviour of men who use violence.

With DHS support, Hume region organisations formed a partnership in 2005 to deliver quality integrated services, and work towards reforming the family violence system in Victoria. The reform joins the key government departments of Human Services, Justice, Police and Department of Victorian Communities.

Regional Training

See the WHGNE website for more information, this website is updated regularly for current information.

<http://www.whealth.com.au/training/regtraining.html>

"The Role of Leaders in Faith Groups in Responding to Mental Health Issues"

5th September 2006

10am - 3.30pm, light lunch provided

Purbrick Hall, The Cathedral Wangaratta.

\$5.00 per head payable at the door.

Bookings essential

Further information:

Suzie Don Leonard (03) 5721 9088

Michael Nuck (03) 5722 0430

Cross-Cultural Skills Development Training Workshop for Family violence within a Rural Context

Thursday August 24th & Friday August 25th

2006, 9:30am – 4:30pm, Benalla

IT IS ESSENTIAL TO ATTEND BOTH DAYS

Training on how to engage women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background affected by domestic violence, and for engaging CALD communities in prevention activities.

For further information phone: 03 8413 6899

Website: www.iwdvs.org.au or

wdvs@infoxchange.net.au

Supported by WHGNE

Introduction to Child Sexual Assault Issues

Tuesday 5th September

9.00am - 4.30pm, Albury.

For further information contact:

Sylvia on 02 6058 1817 or Di on 02 6058 1843

Child Sexual Assault Offenders Workshop

Thursday 7th September

9.00am - 4.30pm, Albury.

For further information contact:

Sylvia on 02 6058 1817 or Di on 02 6058 1843

Book Reviews

The Law Handbook 2006 Your practical guide to the law in Victoria

Published by the Fitzroy Legal Service, this book contains 978 pages.

The Handbook is a summary of the areas of law that most often affect people in everyday life, and is designed for the consumer who wants to be better informed about the law and more self-reliant in using it.

The Handbook is also a useful source book for people with many different interest – lawyers, teachers, students, community workers.

The Handbook is updated each year and WHGNE have obtained the latest copy. Please feel free view it at our library.

We have recently acquired three very useful titles:

Parenting Someone Else's Child: The Foster Parents 'How-to' Manual

By Anne Stressman. With humor and grace, this book offers insights of great value for everyone involved in the foster care and adoption world.

The Stepparent's Survival guide: A Workbook for Creating a Happy Blended Family.

By Suzen Ziegahn, Aiegahn offers stepparents a viable new alternative to take control of their new position in the step family and build a solid family plan for the future.

Stepcoupling: Creating and Sustaining a Strong Marriage in Today's Blended Family

By Susan Wisdom and Jennifer Green. This book offers advice for stepcouples on strengthening their blended family with a healthy marriage.