

MAQ

Montrose Access Quarterly

Autumn 2009



Siblings Camp 2008

On 31st October, 2008, 5 siblings of Montrose Access clients with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) attended a weekend camp on the Gold Coast.

Run jointly by the Social Work and Recreation departments, these camps provide an opportunity for siblings to enjoy a weekend that is 'all about them'. Siblings camps are run each year and have proven very successful.

Ellie Collins attended the siblings camp and shares with us a poem about her experience.

Montrose Siblings Camp

A poem by Elli Collins

When I went to Montrose Siblings Camp
I had lots of fun
My shoulders got burnt at the beach
Cause we were in the sun

We also went to Time Zone
Where you play lots of games
We played heaps & heaps of them
That were nearly the same

My favourite thing that we did
Was go to Wet & Wild
The scariness that I suffered
Was really only mild

There were five kids at the camp
The boys were all quite silly
There was me and Alyssa
And Jacob, Jordan and Billy

I wish the camp wasn't over
I wish it wasn't done
I want it to keep going
So we could have more fun

Siblings enjoy a weekend camp on the Gold Coast



Message from the President

It is with great pleasure that I begin 2009 as President of MontroseAccess. I look forward to the challenges that lie ahead and am passionate about ensuring that MontroseAccess continues its dedication to helping children and young adults with physical disabilities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank outgoing President John Kennedy for his dedication to MontroseAccess, and for the passion and commitment he has shown towards the organisation since he became a Director in 1998. Fortunately MontroseAccess will still benefit from John's expertise, as he remains on the Board of Directors.

I will begin by welcoming everyone to the New Year – I hope you all enjoyed a safe and happy festive season! I was pleased to see Christmas being celebrated throughout the organisation, with numerous client and family Christmas parties being held last year.

The end of 2008 was a busy time for MontroseAccess. The Shark Bait Boys wrapped up a very successful program, culminating with a shark dive at Sea World. It was great to see MontroseAccess involved in this world first Hydrotherapy program. What a fantastic experience for everyone involved. The Lifestyle and Leisure program also ran a holiday weekend at Caloundra, planned and organised by the young adults who attended, and the Recreation department began their busiest time of the year, with school holiday activities running until the end of January.

In 2009 we look forward to more exciting events. Highlights will include our Doomben Race Day on the 25th July, the second annual Staff Recognition evening, along with many other events of which we hope to be the beneficiaries. We will also be launching our Ambassador and Volunteer program later in the year.

Kind Regards,

Mark Greenup
President



The Allen family lights up Kalinga

Christmas Lights

The Allen family in Kalinga spent three months preparing Christmas lights for their wonderful display last year. Visitors enjoying the light show display were encouraged to donate to MontroseAccess, where over \$1000 was raised. Thank you Mr Allen for supporting MontroseAccess.



Celebrating Christmas at MontroseAccess

Party Time!

In December the Christmas decorations went up and the parties began. The Christmas cheer was abundant at the numerous MontroseAccess client Christmas parties held at the end of 2008. Christmas parties were held at Corinda, many of the regional offices, and in Respite, with all participants having a wonderful time.

MontroseAccess Occupational Therapists learn to keep safe



Westfield Wonderland

Several families were lucky enough to attend the Westfield Charity Day events held at Chermerside, Helensvale and Garden City recently. All of the clients and their families were treated like VIP's, participating in special activities and events. At the Helensvale store guests decorated Christmas donuts and made gift boxes, before enjoying dinner at Toscani's. A wonderful magician impressed everyone with his magic tricks and balloon artistry. Santa also took time out from his busy schedule to make a special appearance. One guest was even lucky enough to walk hand in hand with Santa through the shopping centre and was overheard saying, "I'll never forget that Mum!"

A special thank you goes to Westfield for their continued support of MontroseAccess.



Clients and their families enjoy a night in Wonderland.

Kidsafe

Recently several MontroseAccess Occupational Therapists visited Kidsafe House. Kidsafe House focuses on child safety and is a great resource for parents. For a minimal fee, they are able to fit child car seats properly and also hire out car seats which adhere to Australian standards. Parents are welcome to drop in or visit with their therapist.

Their website www.kidsafeqld.com.au is a great resource.



Therapy Services Questionnaire

In October, 2008, Therapy Services distributed questionnaires to families and educational staff working with our children from the Marchant and Early Childhood Programs. We received a great response to the questionnaires and are happy to report on the results.

Both families and educational staff are generally satisfied with the MontroseAccess service. The most valued aspects of service, from both families and educational staff, were experienced and consistent staff and assistance in the child's educational setting. Increased home visits, therapy and assistance at school were requested.

Families valued their therapy services, particularly the fact that the sessions are provided in a fun, family environment. They also valued that the whole family is supported through the recreation and family support programs. The community outreach aspect of our service to schools and homes is still important. Everyone listed our equipment loan service as a priority and orthotics support was also on the list. Educational staff were interested in our informative, written reporting and made several suggestions about this service. They valued our knowledge about low incidence conditions and our practical advice regarding children's educational settings.

Families in northern Brisbane were very positive about the new Strathpine office and coped well with our expectation that they attend more centre based visits. All families have been asked to attend centre based clinics which we have instituted to cope with staff shortages and demand for services. These include the assessment and review clinics, the on site service, and the wheelchair review clinics. Client visits to our centres cut down our travelling time and allow us more therapy hours for the children.

Highlighted was what we know to be our significant and ongoing weakness. Like all other service providers in the community sector, we have been unable to attract and retain enough staff. This shortage is most evident in Physiotherapy – a core service for children with physical disabilities. The staff shortage has affected our frequency of service, our timeliness, and our level of communication with families and other stakeholders. Unfortunately, this situation is ongoing. It seems apparent that our families understand that we are experiencing budgetary and staffing challenges and that, under the circumstances, we are achieving to the best of our ability.

Early in the new year, Therapy Services staff will be setting goals to improve our communication with you and to further streamline our services so that we are making the most of our allocated therapy hours.

Feedback is welcome at any time.

Please direct your enquiries to the Manager of Therapy Services.
hfrayne@montroseaccess.org.au

Helene Frayne

Gala Dinner Wrap Up

Bling! Glitz! Glamour! The end of 2008 saw the final celebration of MontroseAccess' 75th Anniversary year with the spectacular *Diamonds & Ice* themed Charity Gala Dinner held at the beautiful Royal on the Park in Brisbane's CBD. Lamborghini Brisbane, Hardy Brothers Jewellers and Palazzo Versace all contributed luxury items and sparkle to this luxury event amongst countless other fantastic auction items and raffle prizes. Over 200 guests were in for a treat with hilarious entertainment from the Swingin' Martinis, thanks to Zest Factor and a delicious three course meal from Royal on the Park with beverages from Constellation Wines Australia. MontroseAccess star performer, Ryan Bayley, made his Gala Dinner debut with an impressive beat boxing display. The lovely Sharyn Ghidella of Channel Seven MC'd the evening which was not only a fabulous night out, but also served as a reminder of how much MontroseAccess has achieved since the incorporation of the organisation in 1933.

Thanks also to Staging Dimensions and Fairchild Multimedia for their help in making the ballroom shine.



Ryan keeps guests entertained at the MontroseAccess Gala Dinner

Notes From the Workplace Health & Safety Officer's Desk.

Now that we are well into summer, regular maintenance and hygiene checks of wheelchairs are advisable:

- Regular maintenance checks as per the manufacturer's instruction booklet should be carried out.
- Maintain hygiene of wheelchairs by cleaning away food or grime, especially areas where sweat, urine or body fluids build up.
- Wash with mild soapy water or disinfectant. Wipe down upholstery, vinyl armrests and headrests where oil from the skin can corrode the vinyl.
- Clear hair or other matter from castor and wheel axles.
- For protection against cockroaches and crawling insects, lightly spray with a surface spray in and around the cover of enclosed battery box.



Elaine Kent
– Workplace Health & Safety

Regular maintenance & cleaning of Wheelchairs is recommended



Shark Bait Boys get up close and personal with Sea World sharks.

Shark Bait Program a Splashing Success!

The face off between the sharks and the Shark Bait Boys.

After eight weeks of preparation, the adventures of the 'Shark Bait Boys', the underwater experience which is a world first hydrotherapy program, wrapped up their adventure with a visit to Sea World and a swim with sharks.

The pilot program, developed by MontroseAccess physiotherapist, Sue Nicklin, provides boys with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) with the opportunity to experience scuba diving before their mobility becomes too impaired. The program concluded with the boys spending the weekend at Sea World Nara Resort and having the opportunity to swim in Sea World's artificial reef alongside tropical fish and sharks!

On Saturday the boys paired up with Brisbane Dive Academy staff and took the plunge – literally. The transition from the pool to the sea, with real live creatures, took a little getting used to. After a few initial jitters everyone went underwater. Feeling more confident, the boys enjoyed their second dive on Sunday – this time they knew what to expect. Highlights of the day included touching a leopard shark, sting ray sightings and finding dory fish, just like in Finding Nemo. The boys also enjoyed taking underwater photos which can be viewed on our website.

We hope that next year's dive will be just as successful and that we will be able to involve more boys with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) in this unique, life changing experience. Thank you to David Long and Associates, Sea World and the Brisbane Dive Academy.

For more information and photos of the Shark Bait Boys please visit our website www.montroseaccess.org.au

Marchant Program Holiday Activities



Enjoying a morning of fishing on the Gold Coast Broadwater

The Christmas break brings around the busiest and most exciting time of the year in the Recreation department, with the "Marchant Program Holiday Activities" held at Corinda, the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast.

Christmas craft and cooking were on the agenda in the lead up to Christmas, with everyone making fantastic decorations and cooking up a storm in the kitchen. Some of the treats included star cookie trees, stained glass cookies, apricot balls and the most interesting of them all – reindeer poop!

To start off the new year, the Corinda and regional teams joined forces for a visit to Southbank and the Science Centre. It was a great day out, experimenting with all the weird and wonderful things at the Science Centre, and enjoying a picnic lunch in the park.

For Corinda clients, the highlight of the next week was the H2O Disco and massive inflatable slides and obstacle courses at the Chandler Aquatic Centre. Other activities included Mosaics, a movie and shopping day and boys only fishing adventure (we caught a fish!).

Holiday activities are run every school holidays for Marchant program clients. For more information please contact your local Recreation department.



Warehouse Shopping Tour

They shopped till they dropped!

MontroseAccess families and friends helped to raise money to support the Corinda Boys Group by enjoying a day of bargain shopping prior to Christmas. Participants shopped, lunched and enjoyed an opportunity to catch up, with a great time being had by all. The annual Warehouse Shopping Tour, organised by parent Annette Forrest, raised over \$300. The Boys Group is a monthly group organised by the Recreation department and is an opportunity for the boys aged between 6-14 to socialise and participate in some great activities.

Thank you Annette Forrest for organising this tour, and for your continued support of the Corinda Boys Group.

Quality Audit

In November 2008 a Quality Audit was undertaken, with the Corinda, Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast offices visited by auditors. The audit focused on meeting the needs of individual clients, our complaints management systems and the recruitment, selection and development of staff. Clients were also invited to participate in the audit process and we were pleased that a significant number of client families volunteered their time to provide feedback to the auditors.

The outcome of the audit was very positive, with the auditors acknowledging significant improvements and changes to our present systems. Our Continuous Improvement Program will address some of the issues raised, with a focus on improving our complaints procedure, primarily increasing the amount of information provided and making the procedure more accessible for clients and their families.

Our next audit will be in November 2009 and we will again be asking families to participate in the process.

If you would like any further information about the Quality System please contact Sue Tonks, Respite Manager **07 37171124**.

Nathan Triumphs at Triathlon!

Sunshine Coast client Nathan Tessman recently completed his first triathlon.

With his step brother Tim as his buddy, Nathan didn't let anything get in his way. He performed all of the activities with such determination and courage and was an inspiration to everyone.

He kept photographers busy, with them running to keep up with him during his wheelchair run. In the swim component he faced a strong tide, but after a little assistance from a board,

he went right back into the water, never giving up. Supporters and onlookers chanted his name and cheered him on. Nathan's mum Roz could not have been more proud! Nathan, you are a star! Congratulations from all of us at MontroseAccess. Well done!

Nathan is an inspiration to us all!



Friends of MontroseAccess – Can You Help?

Do you have some time and expertise to spare and would like to help MontroseAccess to support our clients and families?

We are looking for some movers and shakers to help us form committees to assist with the planning of fundraising events and to help expand our connections and networks in the community. We are hoping to set up Friends of MontroseAccess committees in Brisbane, as well as on the Sunshine and Gold Coasts. Friends of MontroseAccess will be supported by the MontroseAccess Marketing department to achieve goals which will help raise funds and awareness for our clients. Local business people, friends, parents and carers are more than welcome to join.

Initial briefing meetings will be held in March for interested supporters. Please contact Marketing Team Leader, Jen Livingstone ph. 07 3717 1194 for more information.

The Importance of Orthotics

With the new year upon us, Orthotics Officer Darren Hughes reminds us that now is a great time to ensure the correct use and care of orthotic equipment.

Night Splints

For Children with Muscular Dystrophy, particularly DMD, splints reduce ankle contracture and help to maintain the best possible foot & anatomical position. This is for more than cosmetic reasons.

For all other neuromuscular conditions, the wearing of padded night splints provides stretching of the calf muscles. This is in addition to, and does not replace, regular stretching programs as advised by your physiotherapist.

Cleanliness & Hygiene of Orthotics

It is recommended that orthotics be cleaned on a regular basis with an antibacterial cleaning agent. This could be as simple as antibacterial dishwashing liquid.

Moreton Team Parent & Carer Morning Teas

Parents and carers of clients on the Moreton Team will have the opportunity to attend monthly morning teas in 2009. Fathers are most welcome. They will be held on the last Thursday of each month except during school holidays.

The dates for first term are

Thursday 26th February

Thursday 26th March.

The morning teas will be held at MontroseAccess, Corinda, starting at 10am.

There is no need to RSVP, but we would like to know if you have young children needing childminding.

For more information please contact

Annette Forrest on
0421 364 928 / 3818 9390 or

Scherrie Hilliard on
0401 355 380 / 3279 9860.



Hanen Program Update

The participants of the Hanen It Takes Two Talk program completed their eight group session program on December 9th 2008. Group coordinator, Nicole Seath, reported amazing feedback from the four participating parents. "The parents that attended all reported improvements in their child's communication skills," Nicole said. "In addition to that they all feel more confident in interacting with their children in a way that helps their child learn language."

The Speech Pathologist department is planning further Hanen It Takes Two To Talk Programs for 2009.





Emails Please!

With the increasing use of email, MontroseAccess is currently updating their database, and would love to have an email contact for all of our clients, donors and supporters.

Please send an email to ccrompton@montroseaccess.org.au with "subscribe" in the subject line.

If you are a client, or a client family, this is also a great opportunity to check that all of your details are up to date. If possible, can you please also include:

- Name of client
- Address of client
- Name and Address of parents/guardians
- email address
- All phone & mobile numbers
- MA office your child attends
- Any additional information you would like included on our database (eg parents separated or please send reports to separate addresses).

Any information collected will be treated confidentially and will adhere to our privacy policy.

Ladies Who Lunch

Gold Coast mothers and carers enjoyed a lovely lunch to celebrate Christmas. The Christmas lunch provided parents and carers with a well deserved 'time out' and a chance to catch up in a relaxed atmosphere. It was a great change from the usual rushed encounters between appointments and therapy sessions. A great time was had by all.

Thank you to CUA for funding this event.



Parents and carers enjoy a well deserved break.



The Lifestyle & Leisure holiday weekend was a great success!

Young Adults Holiday Weekend

Late 2008, as part of the Lifestyle & Leisure Program, ten 18-25 year olds enthusiastically planned and participated in their own holiday weekend at Windward Passage, Caloundra.

Participating in two holiday planning sessions prior to the weekend, the young adults planned each aspect of their weekend away, including brain storming activity options, researching prices and booking activities. Each of the participants contributed towards the completion of a budget for the weekend, decided on meals and planned what to pack! During the sessions the participants discussed their ideas, the pros and cons of various options and made decisions as a group.

During the weekend the young adults were responsible for many aspects of the holiday including meal preparation, cleaning up and deciding when to do activities.

Friday night was a relaxing night in enjoying pizza and watching TV. On Saturday the young adults braved the extreme humidity to go check out the Nutworks Factory and the Ginger Factory at Yandina, where they shopped for sweets and enjoyed lunch! After a rest in the afternoon everyone headed up to Alexandra Headlands for a night of ten pin bowling. Sunday was spent visiting the amazing animals at Australia Zoo.

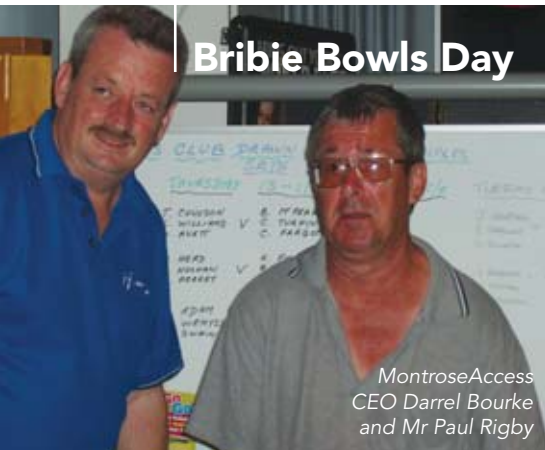
We are now looking forward to the next weekend away in May 2009!

Queensland Carer Business Discount Card

The Queensland Carer Business Discount Card is now available to Queenslanders who receive the Centrelink Carer Payment or the Carer Allowance. The card provides discounts of between 5-10% at over 2,500 Qld businesses.

Carers can apply for a card online at www.qld.gov.au/carecard or by calling 131304.

Bribie Bowls Day



MontroseAccess CEO Darrel Bourke and Mr Paul Rigby

The annual Bribie Island Bowls Day was held on a sunny Sunday in early November last year. There was a great turn out with plenty of support from the Bribie Island community. Thanks again to Mr Paul Rigby, a true champion of our cause who again worked tirelessly to make the day a great success. Thank you also to Mr Martin Taylor and the entire team at Bribie Island Bowls Club for your continued support as well as all the prize donators for the Monster Raffle.

This fabulous event raised a total of \$8,245 for MontroseAccess.

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Our Mission

To provide support services to clients with physical disabilities and their families to assist these clients to achieve their maximum individual potential for participation in the community.