


# MAQ

MontroseAccess Quarterly

Winter 2010

## Thérèse Rein meets Sophie!



**On Tuesday 16 March, my four-year-old daughter Sophie and I had the privilege of representing the families of MontroseAccess at an Ability First Australia reception at Kirribilli House, Sydney. The purpose of the reception was to formally introduce Ms Thérèse Rein – businesswoman and wife of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd – as the Patron of Ability First Australia (AFA).**

AFA was formed in 2002 when leading state-based organisations agreed to join forces to better meet the needs of children and families living with disability. There are six disability organisations across Australia – including MontroseAccess – who are members of AFA. Staff members, Board members, carers and clients from all of these organisations were invited to attend.

Ms Rein welcomed MontroseAccess' Chief Executive Officer Darrel Bourke, Director Jack Bryce, myself and Sophie to Kirribilli House, which is very impressive. This was followed by formal speeches. In her speech, Ms Rein was very supportive and understanding of children and families living with disability and the issues they face. A 17-year-old client of Northcott Disability Services in Sydney spoke of the importance of therapy and respite services. Her excellent speech was very representative of the great work that MontroseAccess also does.

The speeches were followed by formal photos with Ms Rein, and a delicious morning tea admiring the house's breathtaking views of Sydney Harbour. We talked to Ms Rein, and met representatives and families from across Australia, who were all lovely and interesting people to talk to. Sophie and I also met Ian McNamara (Macca), host of Australia All Over on ABC Radio, who is an Ambassador for AFA.

It is great that Ability First Australia is working to improve the lives of Australians living with a disability. It was wonderful to meet Thérèse Rein, as well as the CEOs, Directors and families from across Australia. The reception, as well as our brief stay in Sydney, went very quickly – but it was very enjoyable. Sophie and I thank MontroseAccess and AFA for giving us this opportunity.

Mandy Nance

*Main image: Ms Rein and Sophie Nance at Kirribilli House*

*Inset image left to right: MontroseAccess CEO Darrel Bourke, AFA Patron Thérèse Rein, Sophie and Mandy Nance, MontroseAccess Director Jack Bryce*



## Message from the President

Hello everyone, and welcome to the winter edition of MAQ.

With the colder weather finally upon us, a fantastic season of winter horse racing at Brisbane Racing Club is just around the corner. MontroseAccess has recently been announced as the charity partner of the 2010 Brisbane Winter Racing Carnival, which is very exciting news in terms of fundraising and lifting our profile.

Representatives of MontroseAccess will be hitting the course every weekend between 15 May and 12 June selling Brisbane Racing Carnival pins. As well as raising money for our services, every pin purchased will serve as an entry form to win a trip to America – so they are well worth the purchase price!

Our annual Charity Race Day at Doomben is also approaching on Saturday 31 July. This is always an excellent day of fine food, games and racing, so if you are interested in purchasing tickets for your friends or colleagues, please get in touch with the marketing team.

Speaking of racing, I am also pleased to announce the appointment of MontroseAccess' newest ambassador, jockey Shane Scriven. Shane is highly respected in his role as one of Australia's leading jockeys and has ridden with distinction both here and overseas with stints in Singapore and Dubai. He has also been of great assistance to MontroseAccess in helping with arrangements for our Charity Race Day. Shane joins an exceptional group of individuals from various fields who support and advocate for our services, and we are proud to have him on board.

In other news, MontroseAccess was sad to farewell physiotherapist Helen Posselt, who retired in February after many years of service. Helen's reputation in the treatment of neuromuscular conditions is first class, and we have been privileged to be able to share in her knowledge and experience over the years. On behalf of the MontroseAccess Board, I would like to wish Helen a relaxing and fulfilling retirement.

You will also read in this issue about the upcoming Productivity Commission inquiry into a proposed national scheme to support Australians with disabilities. I urge everyone to take an interest in this study, whether it by making a formal submission of your views to the Commission, or by following its progress in this newsletter. MontroseAccess will be taking a keen interest in the inquiry as it advances, as its outcome will impact all our families.

Take care,

**Mark Greenup**  
President



Presenter Scott Hanson with event organiser Rebecca Jones

## Lifestyle & Leisure update

# An inspiring conference

**On Saturday 6 March, 34 young adults and parents attended an interactive half-day conference hosted by the Lifestyle & Leisure team at Corinda – entitled 'Living an Inspired Life'.**

The conference program consisted of presentations from young people with a disability who are or have been clients of MontroseAccess, and interactive sessions on motivations and goals.

Recreation Officer and event organiser Rebecca Jones said the three presenters spoke from the heart about their personal experiences and ambitions. "Jodie Toombs spoke of her determination to persevere and achieve her short-term and long-term goals," she said. "Jodie told of obtaining independence in catching public transport and handling money, and her future plans to study and become a qualified teacher's aide.

"Artist Scott Hanson provided conference delegates with a multi-media presentation about his motivations and achievements. Scott spoke of how his beliefs give him the motivation to face challenges with joy and hope. He also addressed the power of encouragement, concluding with the inspiring message 'Everyone is able'.

"The final presenter, Erica Hahn, spoke about her drive to live an independent life, including her doubts and fears about moving out of home, and attending university. Erica shared her marriage plans for later in the year and advised the audience to 'Get out into life and experience all that's on offer'."

Lifestyle & Leisure client Melissa Finn found the day educational as well as entertaining. "The speakers were funny and really informative," she said. "Putting myself in more situations where I'm counting money and talking to people I don't know are two of my goals. Working on the registration table at the conference helped me get better at both these skills."

Based on the positive response to the conference, the Lifestyle & Leisure team would like to expand the format later in the year. "We would love to see even more clients involved, both in sharing their stories and participating in the activities," Rebecca said. "Everyone can get something out of it."

# Fruit and veggie shop open for business

On Tuesdays, the living skills room at Corinda becomes the setting for a thriving cottage industry, as members of the Pre-work Skills Group prepare and sell boxes of fresh fruit and vegetables to MontroseAccess staff.

The clients are responsible for marketing and advertising, weighing and calculating the produce, sorting and packaging, and handling money.

Occupational therapist Jenessa Brown said the group was thoroughly enjoying the opportunities and learning experiences the Pre-work Skills program offered.

"As part of the group, the clients involved are learning and developing pre-vocational skills required for securing employment," she explained. "One of these skill areas relates to customer service – including greeting customers, making conversation, providing information about costs and packaging, answering questions and farewelling."

As well as being a useful learning experience for participants, Corinda staff are enjoying the convenience of collecting their fresh produce from work.

For more information on the Pre-work Skills Group, phone Jenessa on 07 3717 1199 or Jenny MacPherson on 07 3717 1192.

*Pre-work Skills Group members Melissa and Phil show off their handy work*



# 'Towards a Brighter Future' Neuromuscular Conference

A strong contingency of MontroseAccess staff and client families attended the Neuromuscular Conference in Sydney in late February 2010. The conference was a great success, and organisers are to be congratulated.

Parents from across Australia were in attendance, as well as allied health professionals, researchers, medical practitioners and international and local speakers. A number of MontroseAccess staff contributed to the conference agenda by presenting posters and chairing breakout sessions.

The topics covered at the conference included information on the latest advances in clinical trials; research and genetics; how neuromuscular conditions are managed in Denmark and the latest trends in care and treatment of neuromuscular conditions. Speakers included leading international and Australian academics; researchers and clinicians; allied health professionals and young men and women with neuromuscular conditions. Kate Busby, Professor of Neuromuscular Genetics in Newcastle upon Tyne and Jeff Chamberlain, Director of the Muscular Dystrophy Research Centre in Seattle, were the keynote speakers.

Most parents reported that the opportunity to meet, speak with and gain support from other parents and families in similar situations was an invaluable aspect of attending the conference, as was hearing about the latest advances in research and treatment.

Some of the key themes emerging from the conference were:

- The importance of establishing a Register of clients with DMD. This will assist with identifying and enrolling clients in clinical research, which is critically important in taking laboratory based breakthroughs and animal models into clinics for early phase testing and eventually evidence based treatments.
- The need for services to support clients' transition from adolescence to adulthood (services for post-18-year-olds), particularly day activities, accommodation, employment, and developing social networks and supports.
- The need for improved medical handover of clients from paediatric medical services to adult medical services.
- The importance of information for families about neuromuscular conditions, and treatment options.
- The importance of collaboration to raise awareness, lobby government and develop services.

For further information about the conference and to download transcripts, go to [www.parentproject.org.au](http://www.parentproject.org.au).

# Mitchel reaches for the stars

**Sixteen-year-old MontroseAccess client Mitchel Adams-Houston is well on his way to realising his dream of achieving an engineering degree, following his attendance at a prestigious six-day summer school in Sydney in January.**

Mitchel was one of only 20 students to receive a coveted Engineering Aid Australia scholarship to attend the annual program run by the University of New South Wales.

"It's the first time I've been to Sydney and seen the Harbour Bridge – it was awesome," he said.

At a reception at Government House, Mitchel met former Prime Minister Bob Hawke and New South Wales Governor Marie Bashir. "I shook Bob Hawke's hand and he knew me by name," he said.

Currently studying for a diploma in information technology at TAFE, and completing a four-month internship with IBM Computers, Mitchel hopes he will be accepted into university to study engineering once he finishes school at Forest Lake High. With these qualifications, he aims to realise his dream of joining the air force. "I'm really interested in engineering, building and design," he said. "I love everything to do with planes.

"I also love to build computers – basically what I do is sit in my room and build computers, robots and models."

Angela, Mitchel's mum, said her son works hard to achieve his goals, using his mental strength to overcome his physical limitations.

In recognition of his achievements, Mitchel was announced as the winner of

the January-February *South-West News* and *Springfield News YoungStar* award in the arts and education category.

Congratulations Mitchel, from everyone at MontroseAccess!

*Mitchel Adams-Houston*



## An inspirational woman

**Early this year MontroseAccess clients and staff bid farewell to long-serving physiotherapist and neuromuscular advisor, Helen Posselt, who retired in February.**

Regarded as a leader in her field, Helen has for many years been an advocate for the treatment of neuromuscular conditions and the importance of physical activity, attending conferences and workshops in all corners of the globe.

In 2005 Helen began the neuromuscular clinic, which has aided in the therapy and

support of scores of MontroseAccess clients with inherited neuromuscular conditions.

As recently as February this year, Helen was US organisation Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy's (PPMD) Person of the Month. PPMD described her as "one of those people who has changed the face of Duchenne because of her passion and commitment to physical therapy."

We would like to thank Helen for the enormous contribution she has made to MontroseAccess, her profession and her clients, and we wish her the best of luck in her retirement.



*A staff afternoon tea was held to farewell physiotherapist, Helen Posselt*

## UQ research

**Throughout April, The University of Queensland has been conducting research into early intervention for children with a physical disability.**

The aim of the research is to ascertain how the services MontroseAccess provides support clients and families, and to gain an understanding of how children with disabilities can be better supported.

*Thank you to all the families who have participated in this study. For more information, phone Project Officer Rachel Feeney at UQ on 07 3346 7487.*

## New disability access requirements

**In March, the Government launched the Disability Standards for Access to Premises, which for the first time sets the minimum access requirements for people with a disability to access public buildings.**

The Standards address features such as accessible lifts, stairs, ramps, toilets and corridors, and include buildings like office blocks, shops, hotels, and common areas of new apartment buildings. The Standards will ensure that people with a disability can access employment, services and the community on an equal basis with other Australians.

The Disability Standards for Access to Premises will commence on 1 May 2011.

# Our Australia Day heroes

Two members of the MontroseAccess community were recognised for their outstanding service to the community in this year's Australia Day Awards.

Recreation officer Anthony Clifford was acknowledged for his work with the Clifton Hill scout group at Moorooka. Sharon Rigby, who nominated Anthony, called him a 'role model' for the young scouts in their group.

In recognition of her tireless fundraising efforts over the years, MontroseAccess mum Annette Forrest was also the recipient of an award, which was presented by the federal member for Moreton, Graham Perrett. Annette's annual warehouse shopping tour and garage sale bring in vital funds for Boys Group, of which her son, Chris, is a member.

Congratulations Anthony and Annette!



Anthony and Annette, with Annette's son, Chris

## Tell the Government what you think

In the previous issue of MAQ, we addressed the proposed National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and its potential impact on Australians living with disabilities and their families.

The Australian Government has asked the Productivity Commission to undertake a public inquiry into such a scheme – investigating how it would be designed and funded; who it would be available to; how it would be governed and its impact on the workforce.

The Commission will advise on a scheme that will cover those in most need, who have a disability present at birth, or acquired through an accident or health condition.

In order to do this, it welcomes submissions – short and long – from individuals and organisations on how a scheme can be designed. Submissions can be made by email, mail, fax, audio cassette or over the phone.

For more information about how to make a submission, or to receive updates on the progress of the inquiry, visit [www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/disability-support](http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/disability-support).

## Birds with Bags wrap up

Over 80 guests enjoyed the hospitality atop Limes Hotel's rooftop bar at the inaugural Birds with Bags event on 24 March.

Even with some magnificent handbags and shoes on display, Client Services Manager Clare Besly got the crowd's attention with a stirring account of the work MontroseAccess does in the community.

A big thank you must go to Channel 7's Ben Davis and Jillian Whiting, who excelled in their roles of MC and competition judge respectively; and to volunteer Maata O'Flaherty, who donated her time to sell raffle tickets at the event.

We would also like to thank the generous sponsors of Birds with Bags: Limes Hotel, Contours Corinda, Stefan, Ella Bache, Michael W Salon, Freestyle Tout, Libertine Parfumerie and Intensity Personal Training.



## Calling all swimmers

Following the great success of the inaugural MontroseAccess Swimming Gala in 2009, there have been great personal efforts achieved during the term one swimming club meets at the Corinda hydrotherapy pool.

All MontroseAccess clients and their families are invited to participate in the swimming club meets on 2 July and 8 October in the school holidays. These meets are in preparation for the end of year Swimming Gala on the 15 December.

Talk to your physiotherapist for more information.



MontroseAccess' Clare Besly and Sarah Peterson with Jillian Whiting and Ben Davis from Channel 7



# Bugzie graduates with honours

MontroseAccess assistance dog Bugzie, and his owner Chris Porta, have successfully completed the next level of Canine Helper training, which will allow Bugzie public access for a further two years.

The interest and attention Bugzie receives from families when attending the arthritis, neuromuscular and wheelchair clinics and on-site appointments has been extremely positive.

Several families have investigated the use of a companion dog in their family unit, with a number of applications instigated for interested MontroseAccess families.

For more information, contact Canine Helpers for the Disabled on 07 3350 2090.



Chris and Bugzie with the Savery family

## Save big with the Entertainment Book

MontroseAccess is selling the 2010-11 Entertainment Book.

The books are outstanding value, packed with generous discount offers on dining, theme parks, shopping and activities throughout south east Queensland.

The books are \$65 each, with \$13 from each sold going directly to MontroseAccess.

Pop into the Corinda or Gold Coast offices, or phone Rachel on 07 3717 1184 to order your copy.

## Become a member

MontroseAccess' Board is made up of eight individuals from various fields who are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the organisation.

To be considered for the Board, first one must become a member of the Society, at a cost of \$10 per annum. Interested individuals can then seek nomination to become a Director.

For more information, please contact Irene Quine on 07 3717 1116.

## Feedback and complaints

Do you have something you'd like to get off your chest? Please contact us if you have any concerns or would like to provide feedback about MontroseAccess' service. You can phone us on 07 3379 9200, email [information@montroseaccess.org.au](mailto:information@montroseaccess.org.au) or speak to a therapist in person.

## Get active!

The Sporting Wheelies Association is running Power Wheelchair Sports at Inala PCYC until November. Sports include hockey, balloon soccer and rugby league – and the program is a great way to have fun and meet new people. For more information, email Tristram Peters at [tristram\\_26@hotmail.com](mailto:tristram_26@hotmail.com).

Expressions of interest are also being sought from clients and families interested in joining MontroseAccess staff in participating in this year's Bridge to Brisbane fun run on 1 August.

Contact the physiotherapy department for more information.

## Publication Information

Published by MontroseAccess  
ABN 59 009 661 705

Published 1 May 2010  
Print Post PP424022/2159

PO Box 50 CORINDA QLD 4075, Australia  
Telephone 07 3379 9200

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please phone 07 3379 9200.

## Thank you to our sponsors and supporters



Stefan



## 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.