

# MAQ

## MontroseAccess Quarterly

Autumn 2011

### Himalayan Adventure, Who's Coming?

Imagine trekking through picturesque mountain villages among the foothills of the Himalayas. Meandering through forests of bright rhododendron and marveling at the spectacle of the most majestic mountain range on earth. Well imagine no longer. MontroseAccess has teamed up with Inspired Adventures to create a 14 day journey to Nepal, all in the name of fundraising, and you can join us.

We will be hiking the Annapurna trail in November and are looking for people to register their interest to take part. And the best part is that the cost doesn't have to come from your own pocket. The trip is for people who raise enough money to cover the costs and a minimum amount on top, which goes to MontroseAccess. The total each participant needs to raise is \$6,990. It's the first time we have hosted such a trip, and for those who are worried about being able to raise enough money ahead of the trek, our friends at Inspired Adventures will work with all participants to develop a fundraising strategy and even coach you through the entire process.

While in Nepal, as well as hiking we will be spending a few days volunteering with Muscular Dystrophy Nepal, based in Kathmandu. In fact, half of all the money raised for MontroseAccess will be donated to this charity as it is far harder to raise funds in this part of the world. So whether a physical challenge is your scene, seeing some of the greatest natural wonders on earth, or even helping a local and international charity – then this is your chance.

The Himalayan Adventure will take place from November 12 – 25. If you are interested or have any fundraising questions, please contact Nadia Killeen at Inspired Adventures to ensure you don't miss your chance, or go to: [www.montroseaccess.org.au/nepal2011](http://www.montroseaccess.org.au/nepal2011)

**Nadia Killeen**  
**Inspired Adventures**  
**1300 905 188**  
**[nadia@inspiredadventures.com.au](mailto:nadia@inspiredadventures.com.au)**





## Message from the President

### Hello and welcome to the Autumn edition of MontroseAccess Quarterly.

It is my honour to write this welcome message, as it is my first as the new President of the Board. While I am looking forward to the role, I already know it is going to be a very busy time for MontroseAccess. You just have to read the editorial inside this newsletter and look at the events calendar on the insert to see how busy we have been and how much is coming up in the next quarter alone. From international trekking adventures in Nepal through to dinner and trivia nights, we certainly have a lot on our plate.

You might also notice our newsletter has a changed format. It has grown in size to allow for extra content, a clear sign of the increased activity and presence MontroseAccess has in Queensland today. I hope you enjoy the new look newsletter. You can now see MontroseAccess on Twitter and Facebook and our website carries more regular updates on [www.montroseaccess.org.au](http://www.montroseaccess.org.au)

Well, the closing chapter of 2010 and opening for 2011 has not been an easy one with the worst flooding on record and Category five cyclone, Yasi, making a huge impact across the state. Our thoughts and well wishes goes to all who have been affected. MontroseAccess head office and regional offices were lucky to escape any flooding damage and have been able to lend a hand to clients, families and the general public.

And perhaps most importantly for this issue, I wish to say thank you to Mark Greenup who has steered the Board as President over the last two years. His leadership has been inspirational and he has been instrumental in growing the profile of MontroseAccess throughout Queensland. He is a third generation Board member and the organisation is better off now for having had his input. I wish him all the best and once again say thank you.

**Jack Bryce**  
President

## Gold Coast Star Inspires New Competition

Inspired by the remarkable efforts of client, Joshua Merkas, MontroseAccess is now looking to start a new wheelchair hockey competition on the Gold Coast.

Joshua recently returned from a trip to Italy in November to compete in the second annual Electric Wheelchair World Championships. Eight teams took part in the tough competition, and while Australia finished in last place for the tournament, Joshua still managed to bag four goals. All of the other nations have commented on the extreme skill levels of the Australian team. Perhaps Josh's own skills were aided by the fact he was using a chair specifically designed for playing hockey, boasting twice the speed of his regular powerchair!

Josh said, "Playing at that level of competition was amazing, I had never played sport at such a competitive level before and playing there was one of the best moments of my life, it was incredible how intense and serious each game was."

Not only was it his first appearance in the green and gold, but it was also the first time Joshua had ever been overseas. So how do you top that experience?

"I am now helping the Gold Coast office of MontroseAccess to start up a local competition, and I will be helping with the rules and coaching as well as trying to get people interested.," he went on to say.

**MontroseAccess is calling for expressions of interest from clients and the general community if they wish to take part. Funding from the Department of Sport and Recreation is also being sought.**

**If you want to find out more on how to get involved, please contact Naomi Stevenson on (07) 5509 9307**

*Josh Merkas (second from right) and the Australian team at the Electric Wheelchair World Championships in Italy*



## Worst Flooding On Record Reveals Human Spirit

**Following what many have called the worst flooding in Brisbane's history, MontroseAccess management staff wasted no time in contacting all clients and their families across the state to enquire about their wellbeing and offer support where possible.**

According to Brisbane's Lord Mayor, Campbell Newman, almost 12,000 residences and 2,500 commercial properties in the Brisbane area were flood affected in the recent disaster that impacted 75% of the state. Tragically the death toll also reached 22 for the region. A quarter of a million properties lost power and so far more than 126,000 tons of rubbish has gone to landfill sites. With such alarming figures, there is little doubt most people can say they have either been impacted directly by the flooding, or know of someone who has. MontroseAccess, it's staff and clients have been extraordinarily lucky in this regard with very few people experiencing significant property loss, and no loss of life.

In the North region, one Strathpine family felt the full force of the floods with their house completely submerged. The floods engulfed their family home, forcing them to move to a caravan park on higher ground where they still remain. MontroseAccess has since loaned the family a scooter and manual wheel chair to assist where possible. Now, Strathpine's Occupational Therapist, Mim Rodda, is in regular contact with the family and has helped to arrange wheelchair access to the caravan. This was all that was reported for this region.

To the West and around the Darling Downs, a large number of families suffered power outages with a total of four families finding alternate accommodation as rising waters either cut off access to or entered their homes. So far there have been no reports of specialised disability equipment being lost in this region.

Sad news for one Chelmer client family, however, as they watched in horror while the waters continued to rise and swallow their home. The relentless surge of water also claimed their two cars, and all of this only a few minutes from MontroseAccess' Corinda head office.

The Corinda site can thank it's elevated position for staying high and dry. It also gave refuge to a number of people during the worst of the crisis. Staff members, Michelle Pender, Caryn Hogar, Melanie Glass, Lexi McMahon and Joel Guest bunked down from Tuesday 11th January, keeping four of our clients company. By Friday 14th, those client numbers had risen to six as another two were collected from Ipswich to escape rising floodwater.

It wasn't only familiar faces to grace the halls of our Respite centre. Corinda resident Brett Poulsen was forced to evacuate his house on Teesdale Street when the flood waters filled the granny flat of his and his partner's two-storey home. While 47 year old Brett may not be a familiar face at MontroseAccess, he is certainly a well known figure locally for his three wheeler scooter sidecar he uses as transport. You see Brett is a quadriplegic, and having been evacuated, needed wheelchair friendly accommodation for himself,

his partner Rosemary, and their three and a half year old daughter. The family flat was offered and became home for several days to the three locals and two of their friends who had also been cut off from their home.

Flood waters weren't all that people had to contend with. Lifestyle & Leisure's Jenny Macpherson was evacuated from her Strong Avenue home in Graceville because of rising floodwaters. Not long after she was allowed to return to her home, she was evacuated a second time, and this time for a bomb scare! It's believed that someone had deposited a hand grenade in the pile of rubbish across from her home, leading to authorities cutting off the street once again. Not only was there an explosive device, but it is reported there was also what was believed to be an AK47 assault rifle left in the debris. When police were finally notified of this firearm and arrived on the scene, it was nowhere to be found.



*As the waters recede, the tell tale signs of how high up the waters rose still remain on this house at Oxley*

It wasn't all doom and gloom during the floods. In fact there was even love in the air when renowned art collector and pastoralist Don Holt flew in from Alice Springs to see his sweetheart, only to discover there was no road access from Brisbane airport to her house at Sherwood. The big hearted Northern Territorian wasn't to be stopped, and so chartered a helicopter to complete his journey. Loaded up with champagne, chocolates and supplies he finally touched down on the nearest dry ground to her home, which happened to be MontroseAccess. While the chocolates were meant as a romantic gesture for his partner, Don cemented his place in our respite guest's hearts when he shared the sweets out amongst the stranded clients who had gathered for an impromptu picnic with the visitors.

MontroseAccess would like to wish all those affected by the floods its deepest sympathies and will continue to offer its support and services to whomever, wherever possible. If you know of someone who has suffered property or equipment damage, please put them in touch as our team is on hand to offer assistance.



## A Changing of the Guard

In November last year, MontroseAccess saw a changing of the guard in its board as President, Mark Greenup, stood down. Mark has served on the board since 2003, and was President from 2008. As the owner of his own business, Mark has decided to focus more on his company PR Graphics, with Jack Bryce stepping in to become President.

Mark said, "MontroseAccess has been an absolute labour of love that has become a family tradition. My grandfather was on the Board, my father was on the Board and a President also. It means a lot to be able to contribute to a charity providing services for children with physical disabilities across Queensland. While I'm stepping down from the Board, my wife Judy and I are still members and will maintain our support and a keen interest."

Mark considers the greatest achievement in his term on the Board and as President, to be the growth in profile of the organisation, particularly through the development of the marketing team. Although he humbly says this is simply carrying on the work others had commenced.

"When the organisation became MontroseAccess and dropped the title of Queensland Society for Crippled Children, there needed to be a long education process if we were to avoid falling into anonymity. I am thrilled to see we have done this over the years. You just need to look at the quantity and calibre of some of our events such as the racing carnival and Walk With Me to realise how far we have come."

His successor is no stranger to developing the MontroseAccess brand. Jack Bryce was responsible for designing our current logo and corporate identity, and plans to pick up where Mark left off.

Jack said, "These are very big shoes to fill and I want to thank Mark for his outstanding efforts over the last two years, they have been nothing short of inspirational."

Jack's heart lies in the same place as Mark's when it comes to growing the MontroseAccess brand. Jack's plan is to expand corporate partnerships, clearly define a 3-5 year strategic plan and make better use of the existing Board's skills, contacts and knowledge.

"As service delivery is constantly evolving, so too must we if we are to ensure we continually offer the best service possible for our clients and their families. One of the greatest challenges in the coming years is to ensure our facilities and infrastructure will be able to evolve to cater for this improved service delivery. This is one of the most pressing issues the Board is presently looking to address," Jack went on to say.



New President Jack Bryce is keen to further raise MontroseAccess' profile. Inset, Mark Greenup leaves large shoes to fill

## Art For Therapy

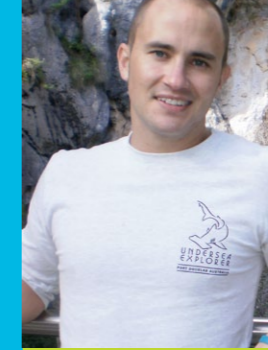
You may have heard of art for art's sake, but have you heard of art therapy? MontroseAccess' Family Support Service team has been running a program called 'Getting On Top Of Challenging Emotions' for three years now, targeted largely at mothers of children with physical disabilities. One of the key elements of this program is art therapy.



It's an eight week program with a psychologist as well as social worker and the course is open to around 12 people at a time. As well as providing a great networking opportunity, the program offers a relaxing atmosphere where people can learn relaxation techniques, psychological strategies for healthy minds and how to face their emotions.

One of the key elements is the use of drawing and painting, such as drawing something about themselves, or drawing an emotion. This is globally recognised as a method of expression and processing of emotion without words. Sometimes these emotions are difficult to put into words, hence art therapy.

The next art therapy program will run at Corinda from February 17th until April 7th. To find out more, please contact Janet Pipe-Jones on (07) 3717 1167.



Adam Harper

## Meet Adam

Adam Harper started work with MontroseAccess in September last year as the Communications Manager. Having worked as an Account Director at PR firms in Sydney and Brisbane and as a television journalist for many years, story telling comes second nature to him. The not-for-profit arena is also familiar as he has worked for environmental charities both in Australia and in Scotland. Not to mention as a guide in South Africa and Botswana earning the nickname "The Barefoot Bushman". Adam's role is to generate greater brand awareness and recognition for MontroseAccess through media, the website, newsletters, social media and advertising. So if you see him charging around with a camera or journalist in tow, please say hello and perhaps he might try and get a story out of you...

## Townsville Plays Host To Shark Bait Kids

The success of MontroseAccess' therapy program, Shark Bait Kids, for children with duchenne muscular dystrophy, has continued. Twelve children from Townsville, Mackay and Cairns came face to face with sharks late in January at Townsville's Reef HQ. It's the first time the program has been hosted outside of the Brisbane region.

MontroseAccess physiotherapist, Sue Nicklin, said, "Hydrotherapy is a massively important part of the program for kids with duchenne muscular dystrophy. But instead of regular drills in a pool, we decided to make it more exciting for our clients and two years ago we started teaching them diving. At the end of their training program, they get to dive in a special location with marine life. The experience is life changing."

The Townsville children range in age from five years old to 16, and most use a wheelchair. But that couldn't stop them diving in the world's largest coral reef aquarium, complete with two leopard sharks! Congratulations to all those who took part and a very big thank you to Reef HQ who were fantastic from start to finish.

A special thanks also has to go to Westfield Chermside. At their annual Christmas charity event, they gave a further \$5,000 to the Shark Bait Kids program.



Byron Holman gives the 'okay' symbol in preparation for his dive with sharks at REEF HQ in Townsville

## Shopping Giant Support Grows For MontroseAccess

MontroseAccess would like to acknowledge and thank Westfield Chermside for its ongoing and generous support. And now we are pleased to report that from late 2010, Westfield Helensvale has also become a supporter of MontroseAccess.

The super centre hosted a Community Day last year for MontroseAccess clients and families, complete with magician, balloon tying and even face painting. Now the retailing giant has distributed collection tins around their centre to help raise money for children across Queensland with physical disabilities.

Thank you Westfield Helensvale!



## Mini Chef

You've heard of Master Chef, even Master Chef Junior; well now there's Mini Chef. A program designed on the Sunshine Coast by MontroseAccess Occupational Therapist, Tegan King, to assist children with physical disabilities.

The cooking skills program is about more than just a flair for the creative in the kitchen, it's a practical skills program designed to equip these young chefs with basic skills they will need in life. The eight week program culminated in December at the Holy Trinity Anglican Church on the Sunshine Coast, with the children catering a celebration event.

"There are more common therapy exercises that can be used to assist children, but the difficulty with these exercises is that they feel like therapy. This course is great fun and an incredibly social way to get these young children to perform tasks to improve skills such as leadership, teamwork and enhancing hand skills," said Tegan King.

A complete recipe guide is provided for the participants so their new found skills can be practised at home. Amongst their culinary repertoire is pizza, hamburgers, pastas, snacks foods, camp cooking, cupcakes and party food.

Marie Medcalfe, mother of eight year old Breanna who is one of the Mini Chef's and uses a wheelchair, said: "For me, it's lovely to see the smile on her face when she tells me what they've cooked that day and that she's received a gold star for 'cutting with a knife' or 'kneading dough' or that she was 'head chef' She is always enthusiastic about trying the recipes at home, which we've done on several occasions and Breanna has been able to help."

It's hoped the Mini Chef program will continue this year.

Emma Camiller and  
Breanna Medcalf cooking up a storm.  
Photo: Che Chapman / Sunshine Coast Daily



## Wheelchair Maintenance Workshop

**Whether your mode of transport is an antique or a high performance street machine, if it has moving parts, then it needs to be maintained to ensure it stays in top condition as well as to keep the driver safe. The same can be said for manual wheelchairs and powerchairs. Regular upkeep and care will ensure a longer life from the chair, and in the end it comes down to helping keep unnecessary repair costs down as well.**

But maintenance can be a big task, and unfamiliar to many. So, to help clients and families with this task, MontroseAccess recently hosted a Wheelchair Maintenance Workshop at the Gold Coast, which is set to become a regular feature on the events calendar.

The workshop was held in mid January and allowed clients to get their chairs serviced professionally, including mechanical checks, lubricating parts, tightening nuts and bolts, tyre checking and replacing, as well as inspection of batteries and chargers. Our own expert Les Elcome was on hand to offer his support, and he was also supported by external expert, Neil Schuler from GS Electronics, who specialises in maintenance, repair and modifications of Powerdrive chairs.

Major wheelchair services are required every 12 months or so. To help with this, MontroseAccess plans to make this workshop an annual event with the next one to be held during the last week of school holidays in January 2012.

In case you weren't able to attend the workshop, here are some top tips from Les and Neil on how to care for your wheelchair and how to avoid potential hazards:

### Top Tips

- Do not push a wheelchair with flat tyres, it moves the inner tube out of place causing damage. Ensure your tyres are constantly around 35 - 40 PSI
- Regularly check seatbelts, because they can get tied in knots rendering them unusable at a time of need
- Front casters and front wheels can get out of line leaving the chair difficult to control. Check them for any play on a regular basis
- Ensure there is no wear or splitting in the sling back where the rest attaches to the chair
- Make sure you have sufficient brake tension, especially when your tyres are at the correct pressure
- Avoid getting powerdrive chairs wet
- Listen for unusual noises or vibrations, it is often the first indicator of a problem

The program has been supported by Queensland Health's Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS). For their full checklist on how to care for your powerchair, go to:

<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/mass/docs/resources/equipment/youyourpwc0310.pdf>

## Brave New World

When it comes to technology, it's a case of keep up, or keep out of the way. And MontroseAccess has not been resting on its laurels, having recently launched its new website allowing greater knowledge sharing and a fresh contemporary look it has now delved into Social Media. Yes, MontroseAccess invites you to keep up to date with all of the news, events, photos and videos via our new Facebook, Twitter or even YouTube pages.

By becoming a part of the social media revolution, clients, families and staff are able to be kept up to date with the latest MontroseAccess information. Our new look website is fantastic for bringing news to you, but these social media platforms allow you to interact back with us, or even better – with each other.

Our Twitter site is ideal for 'up to the second' news and information, but updates are limited to 140 characters only. All Twitter updates appear instantly on our website on the bottom left hand side of each page as Latest News.

Facebook is brilliant for sharing photos, event updates and website links as well as some chat. It also allows for longer messages to be shared. We currently have more than 250 fans of this site and communicate with them almost daily. Finally, our YouTube page is for staff and client videos of a serious or light hearted nature. It is perhaps the best way to share with the world what it is we do, and the impact we can have. By showcasing our work visually, people can really get a feel for what we do. Down the track, we will be producing a few of our own short clips as well, such as character profiles and news stories on programs and events, so please tune in.

If you haven't already seen our social media pages, here's how to find them:

Facebook – [www.facebook.com/MontroseA](http://www.facebook.com/MontroseA)  
Twitter – [www.twitter.com/MontroseAccess](http://www.twitter.com/MontroseAccess)  
YouTube – [www.youtube.com/MontroseAccess](http://www.youtube.com/MontroseAccess)

Come join us, we're looking forward to catching up in cyber space.

## Nathan Beatboxer



A Sunshine Coast teenager, and MontroseAccess client, has had his dream of becoming a songwriter realised after being invited to pen a rap for an environmental website. 17 year old Nathan Tessman from Moffat Beach took part in a six month music program for school, and following that was invited to write a track for website SupergreenMe.

Teaming up with school mates Chanel Turner and Dean Karamanos, the new song is now live on YouTube. The self professed 'man in a chair' may have axonal neuropathy causing muscular contractions, but the rapper/beatboxer has shown remarkable talent with nearly 2,000 clip views on YouTube since it was uploaded little over two months ago.

As for 2011, Nathan is busy songwriting again, not to mention taking on his HSC, which he hopes could lead to a career in the music industry.

To see Nathan's clip, go to:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=he2WpIDE4Ek>

## History Book

It's been more than 75 years in the making, but now the colorful, rich and even international history of MontroseAccess has finally been captured in a gorgeous coffee table book. The history book is set to be launched at an event on March 16th in Brisbane at Government House. Local historian Helen Gregory took the project on board and has left no stone unturned in her search to uncover how we came to be the charity we are today. Interviewing local residents, former corporate partners and of course long standing staff and board members has made her an expert on all things MontroseAccess.

Her search has revealed significant ties to many dignitaries, including Eleanor Roosevelt, the former US Presidents' wife. It has also revealed a strong connection to the US navy, which was stationed on the Brisbane River in the Second World War. American sailors would take MontroseAccess clients down to the river and on to the ships for day outings.

The hard cover book will be available for sale through our website for a price of \$35 each. If you want to find out more about the history book, please call Communications Manager, Adam Harper, on (07) 3717 1184.

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# A Taste Of Tuscanny

If dining on exquisite Italian food, enjoying great company whilst watching amazing music and supporting charity sounds like your cup of tea, then you really should be joining us for our first ever Tuscan Long Tables night.

We'll be converting Caffè Primavera at Corinda into an Italian al fresco dining experience not to be missed on March 30, and we have only 120 places available. Entertainment is courtesy of the very talented Ms Chelsea Gibb who is Australia's sweetheart of the stage. She's been playing lead roles in major Australian productions such as Chicago and Anything Goes for years and has graced our screens on Foxtel and Channel 10's Beauty & The Beast, amongst other programs.

To book your ticket, please call Leanne Liesegang on (07) 3717 1109 or email: [lliesegang@montroseaccess.org.au](mailto:lliesegang@montroseaccess.org.au)



*Caffè Primavera can be found at 667 Oxley Road, Corinda.*

*Buon Appetito... it means happy eating.*

*Chelsea Gibb will be headlining the Tuscan Long Tables fundraiser*

# Local Heroes

Having spent many hours researching our own past for the history book project, MontroseAccess has also decided it is time to recognise other members of the community for their own contributions to the Southwest Brisbane/Ipswich region; not only to MontroseAccess, but to the community in general. We are seeking the region's Local Heroes, and when found, it could be worth \$2,000!

To take part in this search, all you need to do is email [info@montroseaccess.org.au](mailto:info@montroseaccess.org.au) with the name of who you think should be considered a local hero, and a photo of them along with your contact details, and why you are nominating this individual. This campaign is a partnership with The Satellite newspaper, which will publish a profile on one weekly winner for ten weeks, followed by the overall winner.

Entries will be judged by one staff member from each of the organisations involved, and you can nominate as many people as you like. Perhaps you know someone who volunteers their time to charity. Maybe they were someone who gave their time to help flood victims or perhaps they help the homeless. Whatever your reasons for nominating, send them in and help us to find the region's Local Heroes and give them the credit they deserve.

# Test Your Knowledge

Do you have what it takes to win at trivia night? There's no 'ask the audience' or 'phone a friend', just your team mates and your recollection of random yet strangely useful knowledge. Well if you think you can do it, or the pool of great prizes on offer is a draw card for you, then register to take part in the MontroseAccess Trivia Night.

The trivia night will be held on March 11 at the Sherwood Services Club from 6.30pm.

All funds raised will go to MontroseAccess. Did you know that each year, we have to fundraise more than \$1.4-million dollars just to maintain our services? That's why your help is so greatly appreciated.

So pit your wits against ours, or join one of our teams. Come along and have some good food, good drinks and enjoy a laugh knowing you are helping children with physical disabilities across Queensland. To sign up, call Sarah Peterson on (07) 3717 1194 or email: [speterson@montroseaccess.org.au](mailto:speterson@montroseaccess.org.au)



MontroseAccess  
**Trivia Night**

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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.

[www.montroseaccess.org.au](http://www.montroseaccess.org.au)

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