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MontroseAccess Quarterly

Spring 2011

Time To Lace Up The Shoes And 'Walk With Me'



2010 saw MontroseAccess host its first ever Walk With Me event, which was a chance for all members of the community to get together and help break down barriers regarding perceptions of people with a disability. The event was a huge success and attended by more than 300 people. It also helped to raise more than \$35,000 for children with physical disabilities. 2011 is set to be even bigger.

MontroseAccess is now running two Walk With Me Events, one at the Sunshine Coast on Saturday September 10 and one in Brisbane on Sunday September 11. It's hoped that each event will raise \$40,000 for the charity and bring together various communities to get active.

Fundraising Manager, Leanne Liesegang, said: "People can register themselves online to be a walker, they can join an existing team of walkers or they can sponsor an existing walker. There's so many ways to get involved, and it's a great day out that brings together people from all walks of life to share in a common cause."

The Sunshine Coast event has three client ambassadors including Breanna Medcalfe, Rohan McDonald and MacKinley Brisbane. And there's a celebrity ambassador on board this year as well, Channel 9's Bruce Paige will be lending his support for the day and joining the walk. It all kicks off at 9am from the Mooloolaba Surf Club car park as walkers register before setting off to Alexandra Surf Club. Here, MontroseAccess clients will join the coastal stroll and continue on to Maroochydore Park where there will be a family day featuring face painting, a barbeque and much more.

Then on Sunday it's Brisbane's turn. Starting at MontroseAccess head office at 54 Consort Street in Corinda, walkers can register before taking on the two kilometre round trip through the residential streets. Our ambassadors will lead the way and they include Jack Stuart, Georgia Bishop Cash, Mitchell Adams-Houston, Sarah Richards, Jade Elliott, Neale Tattershall and Elyce Shearer.

And for those who are feeling a little more enthusiastic and have some energy to burn, a challenge has been set. It's called the Crack-A-Lap challenge and encourages walkers to do as many laps of the circuit as they can. There are prizes available for the individuals and the teams who crack the most laps. The Brisbane walk is followed by an Open Day at the grounds.

Both the Brisbane and Sunshine Coast walks have been very generously sponsored by our friends at IGA this year. You'll even find many of their staff joining our clients and families at both events. A big thank you to IGA.



Message from the President

Hello and welcome to the spring issue of MontroseAccess Quarterly.

As we all begin to thaw out after the chilly and dry winter, our thoughts can return once again to enjoying the great outdoors. And there's plenty on the calendar over the next three months to help you to do just that.

Our annual Golf Day takes to the tees at the Indooroopilly Golf Club this month, I hope you have registered a team. Or if you tend to agree with Mark Twain who said "golf is a good walk spoiled", then why don't you join one of our Walk With Me events in September. The Sunshine Coast and Brisbane events take in some beautiful scenery without a golf green in sight and will be family oriented, fun-filled days. We hope to see you there. For more information about our events, how to take part or even how to be a sponsor, try calling Leanne on (07) 3717 1109.

This newsletter is about more than just enticing you to our fundraising events however. It is also to help inform and educate our clients, their families and even our supporters about the issues relevant to those living with disabilities. In this issue you'll find out about how we are lobbying the Australian Government to improve the Better Start For Children With Disability initiative so that MontroseAccess clients would be eligible for early intervention funding. You'll also hear about the latest MontroseAccess publication from a world authority on Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, Helen Posselt.

Behind the scenes, the MontroseAccess Board and management staff are still working towards identifying the most efficient use of the Corinda site. Recent council changes to the zoning of the site have limited our options, but we are working with experts across the fields of urban and facility planning, architectural design and masterplanning, project management and business planning to ensure that our service delivery will continue to be fully enabled by sufficient infrastructure. This is an ongoing project.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the newsletter. Once you've read it, please pass it on to someone who may not have heard about us. Our stories are about incredible children and young adults who overcome great challenges to live amazing lives, but they need support. Your help is greatly appreciated and I hope you find an opportunity to get involved in at least one of our upcoming events.

All the best,

Jack Bryce
President



Pictured: Mick Wheatley

World Record Attempt to Raise Money for MontroseAccess

It takes steely determination and plenty of talent to find your way into the Guinness Book of World Records, and Brisbane Dive Academy's Mick Wheatley has plenty of both. He's doing his best to grace the pages of the record books simply so he can raise money for charity.

The scuba dive instructor who helps MontroseAccess to run the world first Shark Bait Kids program is now planning on submerging himself in a tank of water using only one oxygen tank for more than eight hours without surfacing. Guinness has already approved of the record breaking attempt, which is set to take place at Brisbane's premier event, the Ekka!

The current record is held by a South African called Jacobus Jacobs and saw him submerged for 8 hours 20 minutes and 38 seconds in January 2007. When Jacobus took the title, he claimed the record by beating a dive shop at the Sunshine Coast who previously held it. If Mick is successful, he'll not only raise money for charity, but also reclaim the title for Australia.

Mick said: "There really isn't any training you can do for this event. It's not about lung capacity or strength. In fact it's about relaxing, minimising your movements and breathing slowly and calmly."

Mick will be submerged in a tank only three metres by two metres in about 15,000 litres of heated fresh water. The glass tank will be on display at the Ekka on Wednesday August 17th.

"When I first learned to scuba dive, I was getting 15 minutes from a tank of oxygen. On the day of the world record attempt, the tank will be the same size, but it has to last me about eight and a half hours. That means that I should only be using about 7.2 litres of oxygen a minute. It's do-able, but it will be a challenge," Mick went on to say.

Mick is raising money for MontroseAccess as well as Project Aware, which is the not for profit arm of PADI and is all about keeping the oceans clean. To raise money, he is seeking sponsors to make a dollar per minute commitment to his world record attempt.

If you want to support Mick, help children with disabilities and get behind this incredible challenge, please contact Leanne on (07) 3717 1109 or email lliesegang@montroseaccess.org.au

Respite Fashion Show

Move aside the catwalks of Paris and New York. MontroseAccess respite clients recently decided it was their turn to showcase a flair for fashion by hosting an impromptu fashion parade for respite staff. The team of five young fashionistas took turns in playing master of ceremony, singing and of course gracing the catwalk. 10 year old Sharna Williams (pictured) was a star performer and it goes to show that wheelchairs are no barrier to having fun... or great fashion sense. Thank you to all for a great show.



Latest Publication Demonstrates MontroseAccess World Leading Knowledge

The long-awaited second edition of the informative work on the nature and treatment of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy is finally available. The project has been authored by well-known physiotherapist and neuromuscular advisor, Helen Posselt, with assistance of present and past members of MontroseAccess staff. It is published with the support of grants from the Non Schools Organisation (NSO), the Heritage Building Society and the Ian Potter Foundation.

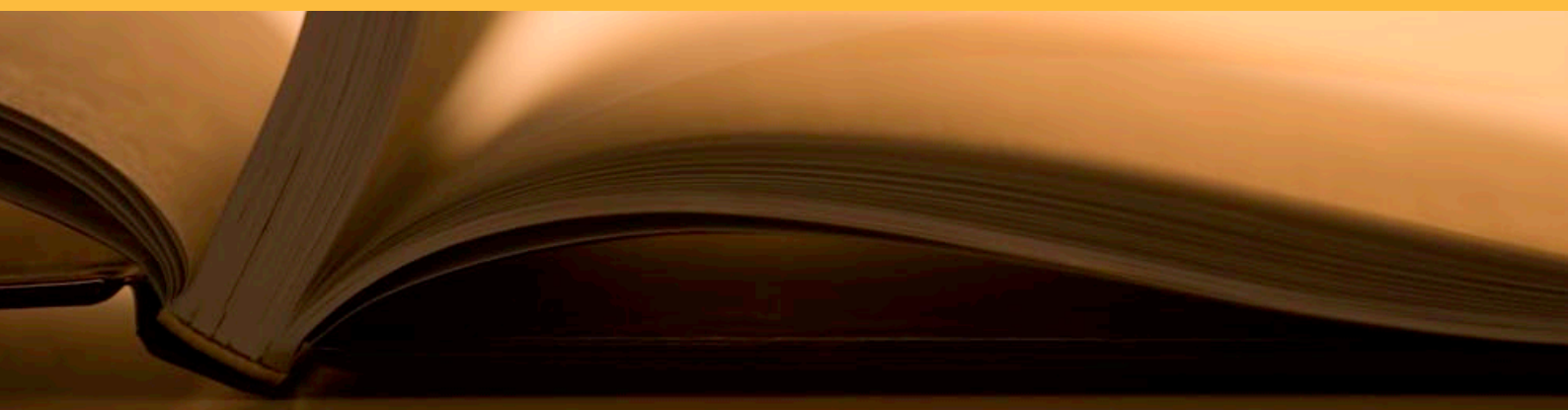
Incorporating a book and a DVD, the material has been written to assist doctors and therapists, health professionals, teachers and the families of people with

DMD. The content covers a full spectrum of topics from diagnosis and features of the condition through management of both the physical effects and associated learning, social and emotional issues, and demonstrates a wealth of professional expertise. Useful appendices include a list of organisations and contacts for support and websites. Therapists have permission to copy the stretch programs in the appendices, which are also well demonstrated on the DVD.

Each chapter is clearly set out with accessible text, colour illustrations and references. The book is conveniently spiral bound for ease of everyday use.

This excellent reference will be available for \$80 plus \$12 postage which can be paid with a credit card on the MontroseAccess website by going to <http://www.montroseaccess.org.au/product.aspx>. Families with a child with this condition living in Queensland can ring or email the MontroseAccess Resource Centre to apply for a free copy on (07) 3717 1173 or resourcecentre@montroseaccess.org.au. An 'in text' referenced edition can be made available for those who wish to examine the original research material.

There will be an official book launch on August 25th at MontroseAccess.





Gold Coast Adventures For 15-18 Year Olds

Recreation Staff of MontroseAccess recently took the 15-18 years group away on a 5-day Gold Coast trip. What follows is a wrap up of the adventure from Recreation Officer Amanda Ravenswood.

"On Monday June 27 we found ourselves with a very excited bunch of campers in Brisbane, all ready to have a good week away.

As soon as we packed up the cars, we headed to the Gold Coast office to meet the rest of the campers and have some lunch. We all headed to the cinemas, where we watched either Kung Fu Panda, Mr Poppers Penguins or the Hangover. By the time the movies finished it was time to settle into the units at Labrador, have dinner (which was homemade Mexican, yummo!) and get to know each other.

On Tuesday we headed to Seaworld for the day. We checked out the polar bears, sharks, enjoyed the pirate show while eating lunch, saw the sting rays and penguins and finished with the dolphin show heading home before the rain started. We chilled at the units Tuesday night with a BBQ dinner and a different DVD showing in each unit, everyone was very content.

We woke Wednesday morning to wet weather, so decided to head over to the massive Robina Town Centre Shopping

Complex. There was time for a quick spot of shopping and lunch, and then it was time to head back to the units so everyone (mainly the girls) could get 'pretty' for their dinner and show at Dracula's Theatre Restaurant. We all had a great night out, everyone was killing themselves laughing at the humour and enjoying the food, especially the chocolate mousse coffins for dessert!

Thursday morning found everyone pretty happy to sleep in. We took our time getting out of bed, enjoyed pancakes for breakfast before we headed to the ten pin bowling alley for one game. The end of the game left everyone hungry, so we headed to McDonalds at Harbour Town where we stuffed our faces ready for a shopping expedition all afternoon, where we managed to hone our bargain hunting skills. We celebrated our last night together at the Southport Sharks Club for dinner.

Our last day saw us bribing all the tired campers to get out of bed as we had an early start to get everything packed up and cleaned before we got to relax at the cinemas watching Transformers: Dark of the Moon. By the time the movie finished, the Gold Coast clients left us, we had some lunch and headed back to Corinda just in time for the parents to meet us and take the very tired campers home. A great week was had by all."

Better Start for Children with Disability



The Australian Government recently announced the **Better Start for Children with Disability** initiative that provides early intervention funding to parents and carers of children up to the age of seven, with a diagnosis of either Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, Fragile X syndrome, deaf-blindness or eligible hearing or vision impairments.

The funding is up to \$12,000 to pay for allied health services. Unfortunately most of our client families and carers will not get this service as they will not have a child with an eligible disability. MontroseAccess is very concerned about this and has written to Senator Jan McLucas, Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers seeking an immediate extension of the initiative to include other disabilities. We have been advised

that expert advice about evidence for early intervention in relation to other types of childhood disability and developmental delay, including an analysis of current research is being undertaken. This will help inform consideration of extending the program to other types of childhood disabilities.

If you think you may be eligible for the Better Start initiative please contact Carers Queensland on freecall 1800 242 636 as they are managing the registration process. If you are parents or carers of an ineligible child and you want to complain please email Better.start@fahcsia.gov.au a dedicated inbox at FaHCSIA, the Australian Government Department responsible for the program.



Swinging in the Face of Disability

When 12-year-old Heiko Jeandupeux strides onto a golf course, he looks every bit the seasoned professional golfer that he already is. His swing, one that would draw the envy of many aspiring golfers, gives no indication of the neurological disease that he is living with.

Heiko has a mild form of Charcot-Marie-Tooth, an incurable but common disease characterised by a loss of muscle tissue and touch sensation predominantly in the legs and feet. Diagnosed at age six after his parents noticed him tip-toeing, Heiko first became interested in golf after watching his father play in South Australia four years ago. His passion for the sport has transformed the formerly weak-limbed boy into a confident young member of the Greg Norman Golf Foundation. He trains three times a week, which includes time under the instruction of Loic Truet at the Royal Pines at the Gold Coast, and

gains experience through tournaments once a month. And it seems practice is paying off, the young talent even shot a hole-in-one in May.

Heiko has applied for a golf program at Robina High School next year, following his ambition to become a professional. While he still requires the use of MontroseAccess custom made fiberglass casts for his feet every night, the sport has done wonders for his wasting muscles.

Heiko's father is extremely proud of his son's achievements, but is content to let him develop at his own pace. "His coach thinks he's got potential, but I'm not pushing him, I support him a lot" he says. "I'm very proud of how he has advanced, that he realises all is not wasted even with this disease."

MontroseAccess would like to wish Heiko the best of luck in his pursuit to become a professional golfer.

Heiko Jeandupeux at the Pine Rivers Resort Golf Course, 2011.

Going Glam For MontroseAccess

We usually place an emphasis on inner beauty, but it certainly can't hurt to doll yourself up as well. Following a great response to a previous collaboration in April, MontroseAccess is once again teaming up with Estée Lauder for an exclusive shopping event. For just \$10, you could be one of a lucky few to enjoy around 40% off retail price for a large array of quality products from brands like Estée Lauder, Clinique, Bobbi Brown, and many more! This fabulous event will be held on Saturday, 22nd October 2011 and all proceeds go to MontroseAccess. So whether it's shopping for Christmas presents, or time to spoil yourself, this is an opportunity not to be missed.

There are only 100 tickets available, so don't miss out; book your spot with Sarah Peterson on (07) 3717 1194.



Artist in Residence

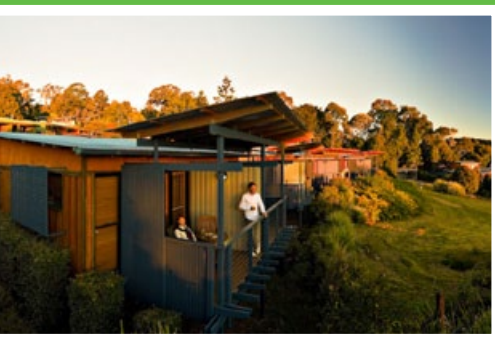
Over the past few months, MontroseAccess has been lucky enough to have internationally renowned artist, Lee Johnson, donate her time and talent and become our very own artist in residence. Aside from creating and donating masterpieces to brighten the walls and halls of MontroseAccess, Lee has also been sharing a few tips and tricks with Respite clients.

"It's been nice being able to put a smile on their faces," said Lee.

One of her latest masterpieces is what's known as a triptych, a single painting over three separate panels. This item has been donated to MontroseAccess and recently went under the auctioneers hammer at the Race Day on July 30th.

An artist for more than 25 years, Lee has also helped to inspire several MontroseAccess clients to pick up the brushes and get creative. Respite client Elly Pleitz artwork is a shining example and one of her own creations also adorns the walls of the Respite centre.

(Pictured Right: Lee at work on a painting)



The Great Escape

Feel like leaving the hustle and bustle behind? If you have ever fancied an escape into the countryside, a chance to get back to nature and surround yourself with some of the most picturesque forests and mountains Queensland has to offer, now may be your chance.

Nestled in the hills of World Heritage Listed Lamington National Park, our friends at O'Reillys have decided to offer our clients, families and supporters a very special deal.

You can enjoy two night's accommodation in a Mountain View Room including breakfast and dinner, all walks, talks and guided activities from just \$372.00 per person. The rainforest retreat is just two hours south of Brisbane. They also have disabled access for day visitors as well as their mountain-view rooms. It really is a touch of paradise. To book, simply call 1800 688 722 and mention MontroseAccess to get this special deal. Thank you O'Reillys for your support.

It has also come to our attention that some of our client families are finding it difficult to locate quality holiday locations in Queensland that cater for disabilities.

If you happen to know of any other accommodation service providers, please email the information through to Communications Manager aharper@montroseaccess.org.au so this information can be made available for all families via our website.

Meet Sue

Sue Tonks started her first job at MontroseAccess as a freshly registered nurse in 1977 – 34 years ago – and never expected it to turn into a lifelong affair.

Currently the General Manager for Corporate Services, she found her true calling in the warm embrace of the kids here at MontroseAccess. Truly at the heart of the organisation, Sue is a firm believer in its philosophy and ethos, and is immensely proud of the close-knit relationship that the staff have with its clients. She was born in England and migrated to Australia at age five, and plans to celebrate her 40th wedding anniversary with husband David in New Zealand. Sue enjoys spending her free time restoring an old Queenslander on a 34-acre plot of land in Boonah, so be sure to ask nicely, and perhaps she'll invite you for tea.



Pictured: Sue Tonks

Stamati Award

Life is full of challenges even at the best of times, but when living with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) it is even more difficult. Aside from the physical aspect, dealing with emotions can be equally challenging, at least that was what 18-year-old MontroseAccess client Stamati Stergakis found to be the case.

Never-the-less, with the help of a music therapist at Red Hill Special School, Stamati decided to pen his feelings in a song called "Live On" and has since been awarded 2nd place for its lyrics in a national competition held by the Australian Children's Music Foundation (ACMF).

Stamati is an inspiration to all children and young adults living with DMD. Congratulations on your award Stamati!

*"I can't walk but I drive my chair
I can't read well but I listen
Sometimes stuff just sux
Sometimes I get angry
but I live on, I live on
I live on, I live on..."*

– Stamati Stergakis





MontroseAccess Art Makers

Pictured: "Wild Thing" A mask made by client Breanna Medcalf

The Sunshine Coast could well have an army of Michelangelo's in the making. An elaborate art program designed by charity MontroseAccess has been teaching young people from the region with physical disabilities various forms of expressing emotion through the use of different media. And the results have to be seen to be believed.

The program has been designed for clients of MontroseAccess and teaches them the art of drawing, painting, collage, clay modelling, mask making and printmaking. Although it sounds like art for art's sake, the program is so much more. Through the various forms of creativity, the participants are all the while improving their hand strength and developing their fine motor skills with assistance from Occupational Therapists.

MontroseAccess Recreation Officer, Ian Jones, said: "Finding a creative outlet for our clients to express their emotions is also extremely rewarding for them, a few have even discovered a passion for the arts. We are really surprised actually at the level of talent these young people have, considering they have never done any of these sort of activities before and many face greater dexterity challenges too."

Nine participants from various parts of the Sunshine Coast took part in the 14 week program and involved various experts from the coast to assist in the training and development of the budding young artists.

"The various techniques required to draw, paint, mould, shape and construct these pieces of artwork are all fantastic exercises in fine motor skills, but of course they don't feel like therapy exercises. The purpose of programs such as this is to offer clients a fun, exciting program that helps to improve the quality of their lives while at the same time delivering valuable therapy."

The artwork went exhibition at the Lake Kawana Community Hall for an entire month. State Member for Kawana, Mr Jarrod Bleijie, attended the opening along with the artists, their families and members of the community.

"It's been very much a community event. White's IGA even donated all of the food and drink for the launch and our clients became waiters and waitresses for the evening, which they thoroughly enjoyed," Ian went on to say.

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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.