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MontroseAccess Quarterly

Summer 2011

MontroseAccess – moving with the times



MontroseAccess has a long and proud history of serving Queensland children and young adults with physical disabilities, and the Corinda site has been an integral part of our success to date. However, to ensure that we can continue to be our best, we need to look seriously to the future. Our Board has recognised that our assets are tied up in bricks, mortar and real estate that we – and our clients – don't need.

To remain on the Corinda site, we will need to fund annual maintenance costs of \$146,000 plus \$4.75million for necessary outstanding maintenance and repairs. Even if we sell part of the land for development, we don't believe enough money will be raised to fund the site improvements needed. This money could be better spent on improving facilities for our current clients and reaching new clients in the southwest Brisbane growth corridor and southeast Queensland where demand for our services is growing.

Consequently, we're currently applying to Brisbane City Council to sell our Corinda MontroseAccess headquarters for residential redevelopment. As part of this plan we will relocate our corporate and therapy functions and open a new independent, purpose-built respite centre.

It is still early days in the project plan and a lot of consultation and work has to happen, but selling the Corinda site will guarantee that MontroseAccess is able to maintain the highest quality of services into the foreseeable future. At this stage, no move is expected until 2014.

WHAT THIS WILL MEAN:

- Services are protected and we can better provide the highest level of support to clients across Queensland
- We can reach new communities where demand is growing
- Jobs are safe and staff changes are not part of our plan
- We will make every effort to honour our historical ties to the past
- Any future development of the site will be in keeping with the local surrounds
- MontroseAccess is committed to providing park and river access to the local community as part of any site development.

For further information contact
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Message from the President

Hello and welcome to the Spring edition of MontroseAccess Quarterly newsletter.

As the flowers begin to bloom, we at MontroseAccess are also preparing to usher in a new phase of life. In recent years, our model of client service delivery has seen a significant shift from on-site care to off-site and community care. To better facilitate this shift, MontroseAccess senior management and the Board have made the decision to relocate the Corinda office in order to better serve our clients.

The hunt for a suitable new location in the South West growth corridor will start soon and will enable us to custom build facilities that maximises benefits to our clients and families. We believe this decision will present incredible new opportunities, and reaffirms our commitment to our clients and their families. We can assure that our current services will not be affected in the meantime. We will call on your support to assist with encouraging funding support from business, the community and government for this exciting initiative.

Winter was a busy time for MontroseAccess with plenty of activity on the grounds, ranging from a visit by the Brisbane Broncos to the launch of a new resource on duchenne muscular dystrophy. September also saw our premiere fundraising event take place, Walk With Me. The Sunshine Coast and Brisbane events raised more than \$66,000; an impressive achievement only made possible with the support of our clients, staff, ambassadors, sponsors, and donors.

I'd like to give special mention to Isabelle Hermann, who has triumphed in the pool at the recent Queensland State Championships to demonstrate that disability most certainly is not inability. Her talent for the sport is only matched by her passion, and let's hope she achieves her dream of representing Australia in the Paralympic games one day.

Looking to the months ahead, the Royal Children's Hospital Brisbane has put out a call for volunteers to take part in respiratory studies, so do read on to find out more on how you can help improve medical care for duchenne muscular dystrophy and spinal muscular atrophy.

We're looking forward to the next quarter, it'll be a busy few months and of course we're all looking forward to the Christmas break. I hope you have a very Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year.

Jack Bryce
President



Walk With Me 2011 raises more than \$66,000

September 10 and 11 were big days for MontroseAccess as we hosted the 2011 Walk With Me events at the Sunshine Coast and our Corinda site to raise money for children and young adults with physical disabilities.

Our inaugural Sunshine Coast event, boosted by the presence of Channel 9's Bruce Paige as a celebrity ambassador, was a huge success. Led by client ambassadors Breanna Medcalfe, Rohan McDonald, and MacKinley Brisbane, the walkers started out from Mooloolaba Surf Club and strolled along the coast to Piers Park at Maroochydore, where a barbeque, face painting, and jumping castles were waiting for them.

Walkers at the Brisbane event the following day were joined by ambassadors including Jack Stuart, Georgia Bishop-Cash, Sarah Richards, Jade Elliott, Neale Tattershall, and Elyce Shearer. After making their way round the two kilometre circuit, they returned to MontroseAccess for an Open Day filled with live music, animal petting zoo, face painting and a barbeque. The more energetic walkers took on the IGA sponsored Crack-A-Lap challenge, attempting to complete as many laps of the circuit as possible.

Both events combined raised more than \$66,000, which will help children and young adults with physical disabilities to receive vital therapy, recreation, and respite care.

Walk With Me 2011 would not have been possible without the help and support of clients, their families, staff, and everyone else who contributed in one way or another. MontroseAccess would also like to say a big thank you to IGA, Sherwood Services Club, Jamboree Ward Councillor Matthew Bourke and Queensland Firebirds for their support and generous sponsorship of the events.

Till next year, everyone!

Lifestyle & Leisure – Living Skills holiday week

Late September four Lifestyle & Leisure clients headed off to spend the week at Golden Beach Caloundra for some intensive living skills training and to simply enjoy relaxing at the coast.

During the week the clients had the opportunity to plan & host a social event. With males in one team and females in the other the men headed up the challenge planning and hosting a great

lunch time BBQ playing the perfect hosts! The ladies followed up with an engaging evening of pizza making followed by the DVD *A Knight's Tale*. With it being one of the girl's birthday on the Tuesday the group went out for dinner at an Italian Restaurant at Mooloolaba. Other activities included walks by the beach, shopping and of course the obligatory games of ten pin bowling!



Postcard from The Red Centre – Disability Friendly Vacation

Thanks Oprah for a wonderful holiday. Yes, you read right, thank you Oprah for if it was not for the Big O coming to Australia to promote our beautiful country to the world, I would probably never have thought of heading off to the vast wilderness and masses of sand dunes of Central Australia with a wheelchair in tow. I remember watching Oprah's segment on Uluru and the thing that caught my attention and amazed me the most was not in fact the huge big rock that all were revering, but the boardwalk around the base she was walking on. *A boardwalk - in the middle of the desert - who would have thought??!!*

A little research and many itinerary changes later saw us leaving a freezing cold and wet Brisbane on the 10th of July this year to head west to the sunshine of the deserts of Central Australia. Did I say sunshine? I'll get to that in a minute.

We looked at campervans, car hire, group tours, flights and accommodation options. What started off as a three to four week driving expedition in a four wheel drive or campervan turned into nine days of a combination of fly/drive which took us to Uluru and Darwin. After factoring in things like petrol, accommodation, vehicle hire and long distance driving with someone with many extra needs, this option gave us the opportunity to visit many wonderful places comfortably, in a shorter time for comparable costs. We saw the red heart of Australia and all its beauty, drove on



roads with massive road trains, enjoyed Litchfield National Park and Mindil Beach Markets (Darwin), floated down Katherine Gorge and swam in the warm Springs of Mataranka. We even survived the Adelaide River Jumping Crocs.

At Uluru and Kata Tjuta, accessible walking paths wound their way around these icons, in and out of caves, past waterholes and gorges through ever-changing vegetation. Boardwalks and platforms weaved over masses of colourful dune vegetation, giving elevated views of sunset and sunrise while our accommodation of three nights at the Desert Sails was one of many highlights of our trip. We found wheelchair accessible accommodation ranging from Cabins and Motels to high end resorts across the Territory that were a pleasure to stay in. We discovered amazing places



to visit that were accessible or tourist operators who were willing to assist in finding ways to get us there. Not all places were accessible, but with a little research, planning and a few direct phone calls before we left we were able to avoid these,

making the deserts of Northern Territory one of the best places to travel with Chris and giving him the trip of a lifetime that we all thought would only ever be a dream.

Oh and yes, the warm sunshine of the central desert turned into one of the coldest and wettest winter days in some time – of course. But even this did not dampen the joy of our outback sojourn as the Rock gave us the privilege of witnessing amazing waterfalls into magical hidden lagoons. We eventually thawed out in Darwin ... lol as they say.

Debbie, Darren and Christopher Sullivan



Triumphant against the currents

Isabelle Herrmann had her leg amputated as a baby due to a congenital limb deformity, but that didn't stop her as she swam like a fish to win a gold medal in backstroke and silvers in freestyle and breaststroke at the Queensland State Championships earlier this year. Not stopping there, she went on to outdo herself by smashing her personal records in the following National championships in Melbourne.

And if you aren't yet duly impressed, what makes the feat even more amazing is that the nine-year-old MontroseAccess client only started swimming competitively in April.

Proud mum, Lisa, said she just wanted the best for her daughter, like any mother would.

"Swimming allows Isabelle to gain confidence in her abilities and makes her feel like she's on an equal level with her peers instead of feeling inferior."

"I'm very proud of her, she humbles and inspires me. Just doing her best would be reward enough for me."

Isabelle spends most of her time at the Brisbane Aquatics Centre training for the upcoming Paralympic Talent Search, and hopes to represent Australia in the Paralympic Games one day.

MontroseAccess is certain that Isabelle will be making huge waves in the pool, and would like to wish her all the best for her future endeavours.

Protein power!

Nutrition study to commence at MontroseAccess



An exciting new nutrition study will commence towards the end of this year at MontroseAccess. The study is a collaboration between researchers from Monash University, Department of Nutrition and Dietetics and Neurologists at Royal Children's Hospital, Mater Children's Hospital and The Royal Children's Hospital (Victoria).

This study looks at the use of protein based nutritional supplements in boys with DMD. Researchers are looking to see if these nutritional supplements can improve or maintain functional ability, or ability to walk, over the period of the study.

Recruitment for clients to participate will commence towards the end of 2011 through MontroseAccess. Researchers will be recruiting boys aged 5-13 years who can complete 75m in a six minute walk test.

For more information contact Mike McLean at Mike_Mclean@health.qld.gov.au or Zoe Davidson at zoe.davidson@monash.edu.

Annual Waraker Prizes

The Waraker Prize is a bequest that is made annually to a MontroseAccess client for equipment, educational expenses or financial assistance. This year the prize is worth \$3,284.94.

Under the terms of the bequest, the prize is awarded to one client each year so applications must be for the above mentioned value.

For further information or for support with your application, please contact your Team Social Worker. A copy of the Application Form can be found on the MontroseAccess website at www.montroseaccess.org.au

12 – 14yrs Camp September 2011

It was Monday the 19th September and there was a stir in households all around South East Queensland, kids were scuffing down breakfast while parents were zipping up bags calling out "Hurry up and get in the car, you're going to camp.....for a whole week. Yippeeeeeee" That's right it was the first day of the annual MontroseAccess 12 – 14 years Camp, 5 days of fun, excitement and adventure for the kids and 5 days of worry, concern, freedom and peace and quiet for their parents.

Most of the campers made their way to MontroseAccess' Corinda Office and bade their parents farewell before boarding the bus and heading off up the range through Cunningham's Gap and past Warwick to the Leslie Dam Active Recreation Centre, where we met up with the rest of the group and after a bite of lunch we found ourselves a bed and settled in to our new surroundings. The rest of Monday afternoon and evening was spent getting to know each other, the staff, the camp facility and going through the program for the week before kicking back and watching a movie.

Tuesday dawned bright and sunny, which was great as after breakfast half of the group headed out onto the dam for a leisurely canoe while the others made a start on decorating their boomerangs, before trekking over to the dam for morning tea where the groups switched activities. The afternoon was spent making volcanoes and throwing boomerangs on the oval while waiting to test our Circus Skill with a session of plate spinning, juggling, and devil stick twirling. Dinner was rather quiet, staff were thinking 'great they've had it, early to bed tonight!!' but how mistaken we were.



Little did we know they were saving their energy for a night of crazy games in the hall.

Wednesday was just as bright and sunny as Tuesday and a perfect day for heading to the Zoo. Once our helpers for the day arrived everyone loaded up the vehicles and made journey to the Darling Downs Zoo (yep, that's right there's a zoo on the Darling Downs!! Check it out at www.darlingdownszoo.com.au) We spent the day being shown around the zoo by our personal tour guide, who told as all about each of the animals, their native habitat and happily answered all of our questions, yep even the silly ones!!! After a day wondering around the zoo in the sun everyone was keen to sit back that night and watch a movie before heading to bed.

Thursday came about and the realisation that this was our last full day of camp was met with differing emotion, a sadness and disappointment as we would be soon

be saying good bye to our new friends, mixed with some joy and excitement that tomorrow we be heading home to see our families. We spent the morning decorating and flying kites and firing tennis balls across the oval with the catapult / slingshot that Dave (the camp's activities man) had set up for us, and in the afternoon tea we let our artistic sides shine creating some weird and wonderful Junk Art pieces followed by some fun and games with the parachute and earthball and after dinner we slipped on our dancing shoes and hit the dance floor for a bush dance and disco.

The weather on Friday was perfect, it was a shame to have to pack up and prepare to head home, but that is what had to be done. Once the bags were sorted and the gear loaded into the cars we met up with Dave on the oval and tested our skills on the archery range with some very impressive results!!! But sadly all too soon it was time to load up the bus and head home again.

Thanks to all of our support staff that gave up their own holidays, took time off their 'real' jobs and uni to come along and help support the kids for the week we certainly wouldn't be able to run our camps with their ongoing support and dedication. Finally a great big thank you to all of the kids that camp along for the week you were all a fabulous bunch and always keen to be involved in whatever we were doing!! Your enthusiasm and attitude made the week fly by for us and we look forward to having all come back on another camp in the future.

Anthony, Amanda and Kylie

A Huge Splash Of Generosity

It's the most exciting time of the year for our clients with duchenne's muscular dystrophy, and we're not talking about Christmas. Come January, clients from Townsville will join up with Brisbane's to form a very enthusiastic group of scuba dive loving children who will once again be making a splash in Sea World's shark pool.

This outing is supported by a donation of \$25,000 from the ever-generous David Frangos, managing director of David Long and Associates, ensuring that our clients have something to look forward to. David's continued support is greatly appreciated by MontroseAccess, and we would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to him for championing our cause of improving the quality of life for kids living with a disability.



A fairer system for all

For families that have a child with disabilities, the struggle to find support and services is all too familiar. Often this means the role of sole carer is taken on board by the family and they can struggle with physical, emotional and financial stress.

This could be set to change. Thanks to the efforts of Bill Shorten MP, Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services & Superannuation, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has received a huge amount of public attention.

The NDIS will revolutionise the way people with a disability, their families and carers are supported in this country. It aims to be a new support system for people with a disability, their families and carers. It will transform the way services are funded and delivered, ensuring people are better supported and enabling them to have greater choice and control.

Mr Shorten did not withdraw his interest and support even after stepping down as Parliamentary Secretary for Disability and Children's Services, and it is time for the rest of us to carry on the fight.

November 27 – December 3 is *Spread the Word Week*, a national week of action to make sure the NDIS has at least 100,000 supporters by the end of the year.

To stand up and be counted, visit www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au

Teaming Up to Support Siblings

For more than a decade, MontroseAccess has been offering care for the siblings of our clients. This year, for the first time, MontroseAccess has participated in an annual sibling inter-agency day organised by a network of agencies, which run siblings programs. These include Xavier Children's Support Network, MontroseAccess, Department of Communities, Disability and Community Care Services, Cerebral Palsy League, Kyabra Community Association and Redlands Special School. The day provides an opportunity for siblings (aged 6 – 12) of children living with a disability to connect with each other.

MontroseAccess Professional Advisor in Social Work, Rhonda Mullally, emphasised the importance of sibling support, saying it allows the children to express and validate their feelings.

"The Sibling Interagency Day, and other events, give siblings the chance to establish bonds with others who are going through the same thing, and strengthens family relationships at the same time."

All siblings events aim to give children the opportunity to have fun, to be aware they are not alone and to realise there are lots of siblings out there with brothers or sisters with a disability. The inter-agency day aims to send that message across to families who have children with a disability through a day of fun-filled activities like playing with water rockets and giant board games.

Rhonda went on to say: "Almost every child with a disability has a sibling without a disability and MontroseAccess tries to ensure the needs are met for the entire family."



It's fashionable to be charitable

October 23rd saw guests enjoying a fabulous afternoon of delectable high tea and stunning fashion modelled by special guest Kimberley Busted at Westfield Chermide. The occasion? Westfield's annual High Tea in support of charity, not to mention an excuse to share the latest fashion tips.

Each guest who took part in the High Tea also received two general admission tickets to the Melbourne Cup Party Race Day at Doomben Racecourse, where they will have the chance to put their newly acquired fashion tips to practice. All proceeds from this event were donated to MontroseAccess. We would like to give a huge thank you to Westfield for supporting our cause.



Staff profile: Darren Hughes

You may have seen his face around, but did you realise just how talented our very own Darren Hughes is? He has been an orthotics officer here for almost 17 years, playing a crucial role in helping to save young clients from constant and drawn-out surgery procedures. Darren's journey in orthotics started with veteran affairs in 1982, and he has been putting his clinical and medical knowledge, and technical skills to good use ever since. He takes pride in his success and ability to make a difference in the lives of his clients, and counts seeing his work changing someone's life as one of the most rewarding experiences his job comes with. If you have the time, ask Darren to tell you about some of his more creative orthotics. They've helped clients to play golf, hold a flute and so much more. You could honestly say that Darren is helping dreams come true. Ever handy with his fingers, Darren also enjoys tinkering with cars in his spare time.



Royal Children's Hospital Brisbane needs volunteers for respiratory studies

Dr Leanne Gauld, a paediatric respiratory physician at the Royal Children's Hospital Brisbane, is conducting an exciting new study looking at the changes in breathing tests that occur over time, with particular attention to when boys with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy get a respiratory tract infection.

The breathing tests are already part of routine care for boys with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. This study will analyse those tests to see if there are any early warning signs of a fall in lung function. If we can find these warning signs, we can tailor the therapy they receive so that they can recover quicker.

Another study will also be performed to assess lung function in young children with Spinal Muscular Atrophy for treatment response, anaesthetic risk and improve sleep.

The research has been approved by the Queensland Children's Health Services Human Research Ethics Committee, and will cause no discomfort to the children while providing invaluable data for the improved treatment of DMD and SMA.

Boys with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy aged 10-18 years and children aged 2-8 years with Spinal Muscular atrophy are encouraged to participate in the study.

If you would like to participate or would like further information please contact Dr Leanne Gauld on 3636 5097, or Lucy Keeling at the Royal Children's Hospital Respiratory Centre on (07) 3636 7046 or email Lucy_Keeling@health.qld.gov.au

Mini Masterchefs

It's back! Following a hugely successful first year, the MontroseAccess Mini Chef program has returned to the Sunshine Coast, helping to teach young clients how to master the kitchen in a combined recreation and therapy program. MontroseAccess is currently running an 8-week cooking program for clients aged 12 to 18 years every Wednesday from October 12.

Participants have the chance to increase their independence and confidence in cooking and meal preparation, develop simple leadership and teamwork skills, and so much more. We haven't even mentioned the mouth-watering aromas and delicious food that will be emanating from the kitchen!

If you would like to find out more about the MontroseAccess Mini Chef cooking program please contact our Occupational Therapist Tegan: 54391306 or 0416275877; Recreation Officer Kylie: 54391307 or 0410 689 720 or Therapy Assistant Gillian: 54391301 or 0416 275 866

Venue: Holy Trinity Anglican Church Hall, Cnr Meridian St and Sportsman Pde, Bokarina 4575

Time: 3:30pm to 5:00pm

Cost: \$3.00 per session



Guess who took the Broncos by storm?

If you are a supporter of the Brisbane Broncos, then MontroseAccess at Corinda was definitely the place to be late July. Andrew McCullough, Ben Hunt and Darren Lockyer and made a special guest appearance to pit themselves against our clients at wheelchair soccer in front of a cheering crowd. The Broncos may be champs on the footy field, but on our home turf it was the clients who came home strong beating the Broncos by a huge seven-point margin.

Lockyer was gracious in defeat, despite our clients rolling circles around him. "It was a great cause, everyone enjoyed it," Lockyer said. "And I'm sure they won't soon forget the day they put it over the Broncos."

MontroseAccess Tristram Peters said it was a victory he and his team mates would always remember. "It was great fun to have the Broncos turn up for this event," he said. "We've all grown up following the team and cheering for them. To be able to take them on in this sport is just massive."

Client Survey... the results are in

A big thank you to the 51 clients who responded to our survey about how they rate current MontroseAccess services. It's important for us to have your feedback so we can continue to improve and here is a snapshot of what you said.

Not surprisingly, our most commonly used service is therapy, with 98% of those who responded to the survey accessing some form of therapy. Of those, 85% rated it as being highly or reasonably beneficial. Our next three most commonly used services – recreation, clinics, and Young Adult Lifestyle and Leisure program – also received more than 80% of a highly or reasonably beneficial rating.

We also found that many of our clients utilise more than one service at MontroseAccess, with more than 80% rating recreational as well as Lifestyle and Leisure programs as being highly or reasonably beneficial. Getting an even higher approval was our equipment loan pool, school involvement, social groups, shark bait kids, and respite, with 96% of our clients giving them the thumbs-up.

Almost 100% of respondents were also satisfied with the conduct and reliability of MontroseAccess staff. This is a huge boost of confidence to us, as key factors such as distance, travel time and staff changes have been shown to affect our clients' ability to receive services.

Invaluable feedback has also been received on issues clients would like to see improved, as well as current unmet needs and services you would like us to offer in the future. This includes an indication you would like respite camps offered in various locations and there is a strong move for greater service provision for young adults with 62.5% of you rating this as important.

We appreciate you taking time out of your busy lives to respond. MontroseAccess will strive to achieve these goals in order to provide an even higher standard of disability care for our clients.

For a full report on the client survey, please visit www.montroseaccess.org.au/latest-news.aspx

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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.