

Lifestyle Matters

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Autumn 2011 Edition

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Heart Warming Reflections



Lifestyle Solutions
supporting people

contents

Message from the Managing Director	3
And that's a RAP!	4
Joel's Story	5
Connor's First Camp	6
OzBreathe Partnership	7
Wallsend Nursery and Work Assist Program	8
Camp Connect and Camp Care in Tasmania	9
High Needs Sensory Group in Action	10
New Group Homes in Western Australia	10
Rewarding Experiences	11
Come and join us!	12
Fundraising Trivia Night Madness	12
Helping Children with Autism Program	13
Tammi and the Panthers	14
Meet Bernard (Port Macquarie)	14
Sail Away with Me: Sailability	15

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Welcome to our Autumn edition of Lifestyle Matters.

Four months have passed since our last edition of this newsletter and it has been yet another busy and exciting period for Lifestyle Solutions, supporting and building relationships with some exceptional individuals. I believe it is important in times such as these that we take the time to reflect on our achievements as a community and celebrate the wonderful things happening around us.

The stories shared in this newsletter are just a small collection of the many inspirational and uplifting things that are happening around the Lifestyle Solutions network. People we support, family members, staff and community groups; we are all in this together and we all play an important role in the lives of each other, the value of which should never be underestimated.

In an exciting and important new undertaking for Lifestyle Solutions, in April this year we took our first steps towards the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan. A team of committed staff members from around the organisation came together in Newcastle to kick start the project and to discuss Lifestyle Solutions' role and responsibilities in relation to reconciliation. As representatives of our organisation, this team have dedicated themselves to the development of goals and strategies that will lead Lifestyle Solutions on a path of cultural change that embodies our existing Statement of Reconciliation.

Our commitment to a Reconciliation Action Plan is an important public contribution to the national campaign to close the life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, focusing on relationships, opportunity and respect for all members of the community and we are proud to be involved.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Lifestyle Matters, and I look forward to the continued journey with each and every one of you, in whatever capacity that may be.

David Hogg
Managing Director



And that's a RAP!

Earlier this year, Lifestyle Solutions staff took their first steps towards the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan.

Facilitated by Reconciliation Australia, a Reconciliation Action Plan is an important tool that will help us to build positive relationships between all Australians, and is our public contribution towards the national effort to close the seventeen-year life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

Lifestyle Solutions' Reconciliation Action Plan will be underpinned by a person-centred approach to the inclusion and acknowledgment of Aboriginal people. It will formalise our good intentions, converting them into actions to provide positive working relationships, opportunities and respect for Aboriginal Australians.

As part of the Reconciliation Action Plan journey, Lifestyle Solutions has created a steering committee made up of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff and community members from around the Lifestyle Solutions network in Australia. Participants on the steering committee include representation of the Kamilaroi (NSW), Wiradjuri (NSW), Mununjali (QLD) and Palawa (TAS) nations of Australia.

Members of the committee bring knowledge, experience and commitment to the task of developing a Reconciliation Action Plan and will become representatives of Lifestyle Solutions in promoting reconciliation and cultural diversity in all aspects of Lifestyle Solutions' services.

The committee met for the first time in April, engaging in dynamic discussions that identified strengths and focus areas for the construction of our Reconciliation Action Plan and will continue to meet regularly throughout the planning process.

The launch of the final plan is anticipated for October this year.



Joel's Story

Joel came to Lifestyle Solutions Gold Coast in May 2009, a shy, quiet young person attending a high school he did not enjoy.

Teamed with his support worker Dan, the past two years have seen Joel make some remarkable achievements. He persevered and continued with his schooling to finish Year Ten, then went on to attend the Summer School of Trades where he was taught how to plaster, tile, brick-lay and much more.

Motivated by his success at the School of Trades, Joel decided to pursue a career in the industry and was successful in his application for work with a windows and doors company.

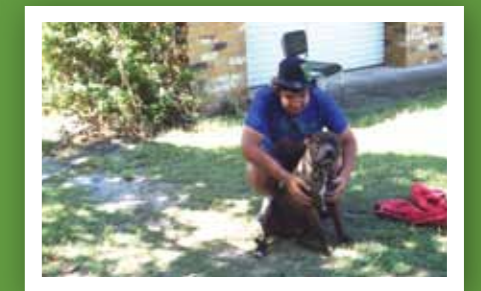
Early starts of 6am meant that Lifestyle Solutions' staff would come in early to see him off. Seeing Joel happy and doing something he enjoyed has really inspired the staff and other young people in the house.

When the company he worked for suddenly folded and the workers lost their jobs, some of Joel's workmates told their new employer about Joel and his excellent work ethic, which led to their new manager asking him to come and work for them. Joel is a hard worker and has been sent on special assignments at work on many occasions, taking him to Coffs Harbour and the Sunshine Coast.

Joel is a fine young man and a wonderful role model to other young people. In late 2010 he proudly earned his learner's permit and has been doing exceptionally well in his driving lessons, while saving money so that when he gets his license he will be able to buy the car that he wants.

At home, Joel cares for his dog Tyson, which is supporting his independent living skills, and Tyson loves him too!

We are proud of Joel and excited by the bright and independent future that lies ahead.



Connor's First Camp

Connor is a typical twelve year old boy. He likes playing his Xbox and riding his quad bike on the vacant land out the back of his family's house. He likes cars, animals and having fun.

What's not typical about Connor is that he has a very rare genetic skin condition called Epidermolysis Bullosa (commonly referred to as E.B or Cotton-Wool Kids). This means his skin is extremely fragile and blisters very easily.

Due to the high level of medical care Connor requires, he has not been able to go on a camp and do the things he would really love to do with other children his age. During the January school holidays this year however, Connor and his mother Bree attended the Lifestyle Solutions Leisure Links camp with a group of other children and young people.

Leisure Links camps are three day, two night camps held at our Dooralong property in NSW and are run in partnership with the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and the NSW Department of Education. The camps provide children and their carers the opportunity for some time away from home to engage with other children and participate in exciting activities such as horse riding, flying fox rides, swimming and lots more.

Before the camp, Connor's Lifestyle Solutions carer Michelle organised a two-and-a-half hour ride in a bright yellow Hummer for Connor, where he excitedly sat up the front asking questions before riding in the back with the disco and karaoke machine.

Connor's mother Bree spoke afterwards of the hard working, caring staff Lifestyle Solutions have on camp. She said that they were very flexible and inclusive of her and Connor and she felt comfortable and welcome from the start.

Bree was impressed by the genuine care and affection shown from the carers to the campers.

As for Connor, he enjoyed the archery most, but thought the flying fox was fun as well as the horses and cows at the Dooralong property.

He said he felt included in everything even though he didn't do all of the activities with the other kids.

Going on the camp was a great experience that has lifted Connor's spirits. This was important as he hasn't been very well since August last year and the camp gave him a chance to do some fun things with other kids in a safe, happy environment.

Connor can't wait for the next Hummer ride and the next camp in the Easter school holidays!



OzBreathe Partnership

There is nothing more precious than the air we breathe. For most people, however, breathing in and out every day is a function easily taken for granted.

Think about how it feels to hold your breath for too long, or the anxiety that comes from an asthma attack; that frantic panic where you realise nothing in the world matters more than getting air. Now imagine living like this all day, every day.

Last month Lifestyle Solutions met with Jacqueline Berger, founder of OzBreathe – a not-for-profit group committed to improving the quality of life for people with a respiratory illness.

Diagnosed with Pulmonary Hypertension two years ago, Jacqueline can now only survive with the assistance of an oxygen machine 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is a very expensive way to live, but there is no alternative. Jacqueline and her family established OzBreathe as part of their journey to raise awareness of respiratory illness and the huge costs associated with the machines that are needed just to breathe.

OzBreathe was established with three goals in mind:

- provide portable oxygen machines on a lease/loan basis to people who are otherwise unable to afford them
- provide a support network to people who suffer from a respiratory illness through community awareness campaigns.
- support research into respiratory illness and work with other service providers and governments to provide medical services at no or low cost to people in need of oxygen supplies.

Lifestyle Solutions and the oncology department of the John Hunter hospital in NSW have partnered with OzBreathe to assist with a fundraising campaign to purchase expensive portable oxygen machines that will be provided to individuals who would otherwise be unable to afford them. This will allow people with a respiratory illness to leave the heavy bedside tanks set up in homes and hospitals and allow them to participate in their communities without fear of being away from their source of oxygen.

Lifestyle Solutions is working with OzBreathe to raise funds required to carry out the very valuable support this project will provide to people.

Jacqueline believes that "everyone wants to change the world, but most people just don't know how". Lifestyle Solutions are pleased to be accompanying Jacqueline and OzBreathe on this very worthwhile journey to support people in need.

For more information on OzBreathe, visit their website: www.ozbreathe.com



"Dooralong House"



Wallsend Community Nursery and Work Assist Program

This year has seen the team at Lifestyle Solutions venture into sustainable business opportunities, commencing with the exciting purchase of the Wallsend Community Nursery in NSW, which incorporates our Work Assist Program and lawn maintenance business.

Our belief at Lifestyle Solutions is that everyone has the right to work in an environment that is inclusive, supportive and accessible. The Work Assist Program has been established to offer work experience, training, mentoring and employment to people in our Transition to Work and community participation programs who wish to enter the workforce. The program currently operates out of the Wallsend Community Nursery, however there are plans to expand this initiative to other Lifestyle Solutions programs.

The Work Assist Program provides supported pathways to long term, sustainable employment.

Wallsend Community Nursery boasts a beautiful setting in the hub of western Newcastle and will commence operation of a café on the property in the near future. With the opening of the café, we will also be offering further employment opportunities as well as hospitality training through the Work Assist Program. The nursery café is the perfect meeting place and a chance to relax among the beautiful gardens or to catch up with friends on the shaded verandah.

Meanwhile, Our lawn maintenance crews have already been busy travelling all over the Hunter region making lawns short, edges straight and hedges neat. The guys in the lawn maintenance team are doing a remarkable job and have employed eight assisted workers from the Work Assist Program since March.

Stay tuned for updates in the next edition of Lifestyle Matters and be sure to drop by for a coffee when the café is up and running.



Camp Connect Tasmania

In February this year, twenty five young people living in foster care joined us for Lifestyle Solutions Tasmania's first Camp Connect - sibling reunification camp, held just north of Hobart.

This was the first time any camp in Tasmania had been run specifically for siblings in foster care who are either not in contact with each other or spend only very little time together.

The camp took inspiration from US-founded Camp-to-Belong, which is centred on providing opportunities for siblings living in separate out-of-home care placements to reunite and create lifetime memories together.

Siblings that attended Lifestyle Solutions' Camp Connect enjoyed three days filled with fun activities such as abseiling, flying fox, water slides and trampolining. They celebrated their brother or sister's 'birthday' in one big party for everyone, created a 'memory book' filled with photos and stories from their time spent on camp, and left a lasting gift to their brother or sister by decorating a pillow slip, which they got to take home.



Wallsend Community Nursery
expert gardening advice



Camp Care Tasmania

In a series of firsts for Lifestyle Solutions in Tasmania, this year has also seen the first funded Lifestyle Solutions' Camp Care, held in Tasmania on the 29th to 31st March 2011.

The key objectives of Camp Care are:

- Develop social skills and behaviour management skills
- Encourage team work
- Form positive relationships with other children and camp carers
- Provide opportunities to participate in a wide range of recreational and educational activities.

Lifestyle Solutions' 'Campinator' Butch Hays joined Tasmania Operations Manager Charley Hodgson and Youth Workers from Anglicare to support fourteen young people who attended the camp.

Butch engaged the campers with his usual flair and energy and over the three days they enjoyed kayaking, basketball, swimming, rock climbing and many other fun-filled activities.

Lifestyle Solutions Tasmania has plans to hold three of these camps a year, and based on the positive feedback received so far, our campers are clearly hungry for more!



High Needs Sensory Group in Action

The Lifestyle Solutions team at our Day Program Centre in Cardiff NSW have been working hard developing sensory-focused activities for high needs people we support with multiple physical disabilities.

The main focus of these activities is to provide the opportunity for people we support to use various senses to move, touch, smell, taste, hear and see.

Lifestyle Solutions staff members assist people we support in these programs to explore their senses and interact with their environment in a way that is meaningful for them.

Sensory-focused activities help to:

- increase self-awareness
- increase resilience
- increase ability to engage with others
- increase ability to participate in social activities
- increase ability to cope with triggers.



Rewarding Experiences



When Linda Griffin accepted the role of Independent Living Co-ordinator, she couldn't have imagined the rewarding experiences she had ahead of her.

Supporting three young men – Ben, Paul and Jason – in the Independent Living Program, Linda has witnessed all of them increase their living skills and achieve wonderful milestones.

Here's what she had to say:

"Ben is always organised and follows up his appointments, taking his briefcase with him to hold copies of everything he needs. It amazes me how he is always well prepared and keeps his files and records in order for all his coming appointments."

Paul is deaf, which sometimes makes communication frustrating for him. Paul recently purchased a diary and asked me to help him write down important dates and appointments. I've noticed a change in Paul's organisation skills and he crosses each day off in the diary so no appointments are missed. He has recently moved into a place of his own and has decorated his new home beautifully."

Paul works at a caravan park at the moment but has recently made enquiries about achieving his forklift ticket and is in the process of finding out what he needs to do to achieve his goal.

Finally, Jason is a young man who loves to have hands-on involvement in his home and has chosen colours for the walls in his house, which he intends to paint himself. Jason is a great gardener and has grown his own herb garden. He has also recently built his own fish tank out of an old bath tub decorated with ornaments and the fish are thriving – I can see how proud he is when people come to visit and make comments about it.

It has only been a short time that I have been in this position but I feel very honoured and rewarded working with these three young men".

New Group Homes in Western Australia

Lifestyle Solutions are pleased to announce that we have recently been successful in our tenders for family group home services in country areas of Western Australia.

In February 2011 the Department of Child Protection handed Lifestyle Solutions the keys to the first of our family group homes, located in Albany Western Australia.

The family group homes will provide supported accommodation for children and young people aged 12-17 years who have complex support needs and require family based support options.



Come and join us!

In August last year Lifestyle Solutions registered a team in the 2010 Sydney City to Surf consisting of people we support, staff, family and friends. Weather on the day was perfect and our team members stepped out in style in Lifestyle Solutions shirts and hats to take on the 14km course. We raised a massive \$1600 from the event and everyone had such a great time that even Heartbreak Hill didn't slow us down!

This year Lifestyle Solutions are putting another team together for the 2011 Sydney City to Surf to have some fun and raise awareness of our support services. The goal this year is to make the team bigger and to raise more money!

Will you accept the challenge and join us on our journey?

If you are not in NSW don't be disheartened, there are plenty of opportunities around the country for you to gather a team of people we support, colleagues, friends and family and have a great day out whilst raising funds for Lifestyle Solutions.

July 2nd & 3rd
Gold Coast Marathon Festival 5km and 10km.
www.goldcoastmarathon.com

July 17th
Lawler Partners Winery Running Festival, Newcastle - 6km and 10km
www.huntervalleymarathon.net

August 5-7th
Brisbane Marathon Festival - 3km and 10km
www.brisbanemarathon.com

August 8th
Sydney City to Surf - 14km
www.city2surf.com.au

August 28th
Perth City to Surf - 4km and 12km
www.citytosurf.activ.asn.au

September 18th
Adelaide City to Bay Adelaide - 3km, 6km & 12km
www.city-bay.org.au

October 9th
St George Melbourne Marathon Festival 4km, 5.7km and 10km
www.melbournemarathon.com.au

October 16th
Burnie 10km Run, Tasmania
www.burnieten.com.au

You can choose to run, jog or walk in your event and you can fundraise as a team, a couple or individually. Start training now!

Lifestyle Solutions have partnered with Everyday Hero to provide an online fundraising webpage for each participant. In just minutes you can build your own page and approach your supporters for a donation by emailing them the unique link of your webpage. Each donation is recorded on your page along with any messages of support from your donors.

We would love you to become a member of a Lifestyle Solutions team in your area. If you are interested, please contact Fundraising and Events Manager Brooke Cross at brooke.cross@lifestylesolutions.org.au



Fundraising Trivia Night Madness

Lifestyle Solutions recently held their first Fundraising Trivia night in Newcastle NSW. Staff, family, community members and friends came together in teams of ten and answered questions on topics such as sport, movies, music and history. The event saw over 100 people attending to support the good cause. Thanks to our generous sponsors we had some amazing prizes to give away throughout the night and fun was had by all. We are very pleased to announce that with the help of all who attended, we raised \$2,000!



Helping Children with Autism Program

Firstchance Inc. is a not for profit organisation supporting families of children and young people with disabilities from birth to eighteen years of age. They offer family centred programs including early childhood intervention, training and skills building, occupational therapy and family support.

Lifestyle Solutions has worked in partnership with Firstchance for two years, and it is this partnership that led to the successful establishment of the FaHCSIA program through the Helping Children with Autism package.

The Helping Children with Autism package commenced in February 2010 and offers a range of trans-disciplinary service options for families including Speech Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Psychology and Social Work. In addition to the improvement in children's interaction and communication skills, a significant highlight of this program has also been empowering parents to realise they have the skills and opportunities to facilitate their child's interaction and communication skills in everyday routines.

The FaHCSIA Helping Children with Autism program provides a flexible, family-centred service that targets the needs of each individual child through home, preschool, school and community visits. Services provided through the program aim to build capacity and responsiveness of parents and carers so that they become the main facilitators of their child's development.

Service areas for this program are available now in Newcastle, Port Stephens and Lake Macquarie in NSW.



Tammi and the Panthers

Tammi is a person we support in Port Macquarie. She wrote to us about her recent experience meeting the Panthers Rugby Team:

"On Friday the 18th of February I was at the local shopping centre with my support worker, Cheryl. I saw some of the Panthers Rugby League Team who were in town promoting the game the next day. I spoke to them and asked who they were playing against. They told me it was the

Newcastle Knights and then I wished them all good luck and asked if I could get a photo with them. They were really nice and happy to have a photo with me and asked if I was coming to see the game. I said that I hoped to go.

I went to the game with my cousin to see who would win and of course the Panther's won. The score was 28-22."

What a great photo!



Sail away with me: Sailability

People we support at the Day Program Centre in Cardiff have also been enjoying getting out on the water every Thursday afternoon, participating in the Sailability program at the Toronto Amateur Sailing Club.

Sailability is a worldwide, volunteer-based organisation which, through the activity of sailing, enriches the lives of people with a disability.

This has been a fantastic experience that has provided an opportunity for people we support with high support needs to engage in sports in an outdoor environment.

Every Thursday both staff and people we support look forward to being out on the water and participating in such a fun and exciting activity.



Meet Bernard

Bernard is part of the Lifestyle Solutions Life Choices program in Port Macquarie NSW. He spoke to us about the cooking program he attends.

"I like to cook meals and cakes to take home for my family to enjoy. My assistant in the kitchen is Melissa, who helps me to make healthy choices and clean up after the cooking program.

Everyone is proud of what I cook – with a bit more experience I think I will be able to convince Mel to go on 'My Kitchen Rules' with me!"

Bernard's father wrote to Lifestyle Solutions last year, saying:

"Since Bernard commenced at Lifestyle Solutions his lifestyle has improved considerably.

One great change in his life has been his weekly activity with Bag-o-Magic. He participates in many activities there including music, dance, drama and painting.

Recently at Port Macquarie Craft Show one of Bernard's paintings was sold which was a great boost to his morale and a little to his pocket".

We're proud of Bernard too, thank you for sharing your story with us!



Warming the Hearts & Minds



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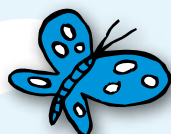
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