

Family Support - Addressing The Needs Of Teenagers At Risk

Greetings from Family Support!

We sure have kicked off 2010 with a bang. Due to the changes occurring with the Department of Community Services (DOCS) we have had a landslide of referrals come in and almost doubled our caseload since the end of January when the changes were put into action.

The new **"Keeping Them Safe"** protocol allows other government and non-government agencies to play a crucial role in assisting families that have been referred to DOCS but are not at risk of 'significant harm,' and could benefit from some sort of intervention. These referrals have more often than not come from the new **Child Wellbeing Units** that have been set up in school systems and police departments. They receive the referral and find the appropriate service to help the family that is referred.

That is where we come in. However, whereas we are happy to work with these families, we are not receiving any extra funding to do so. We are at maximum capacity and have had to start a waiting list for any new clients.

We apologise if this has caused any sort of inconvenience for our clients and hope to meet the needs of our current clients as quickly as possible so that we can address the needs of our future clients rapidly as well.

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Family Support is also hoping to start a new interactive group as well. We have noticed that there is a lack of resources in this area for our teenagers that are at-risk. We hope to meet this need head on by starting a group for teenagers.

However, to put this group into action we need your help. We want the group to be something that our teenagers look forward to and can learn from.

We want the group to be open to all teenagers, of all shapes and sizes, of all types of behaviours. In order to do this we need to know what type of group will get our teenagers through our door. If you have a teenager that you think could benefit from some further peer interaction and/or behaviour management, etc., or know someone who does, please let us know and what you think he or she would respond to. Or better yet, have your teenager give us a buzz or email and let him or her tell us what they would be interested in.

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As of now we are leaning towards a group that teaches independent living skills, in a fun and interactive way, preparing our teenagers for when they are living on their own and part of the real world. We would do this by doing fun and exciting activities throughout the community and incorporating those skills within the activity. Our Family Support worker has done groups like this before and has found them to be a great success.

But what do YOU think? As you are our clients and community members we want to create a service that works best for you, so please give us your input. We are also looking for volunteers to help facilitate this group. So if you do not know or have a teenager that could participate in this group, but you yourself would like to be involved, please let us know as well.

All of us on the Family Support team are hoping that you are finding 2010 to be a wonderful year and that we can add to that year in a positive manner. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about our service please feel free to give us a bell at 9349 8200 or shoot us an email at familysupport@jnc.org.au. We would love to hear from you!

Kind regards,
Tangee Lucas
Family Support Worker

A Good News Story - for a Change

I was standing in the \$2 shop today and I got talking with a lady who was waiting to be served. As the conversation went on she asked where I worked, I told her that I worked at the Neighbourhood Centre down the road.

The lady proceeded to tell me how great the Neighbourhood Centre was, and that it had helped a friend of hers a few years back.

The story she told me was about a young man estranged from his family (due to drugs) and was living homeless on

Maroubra beach. Sarah, who was then the JNC Family Support worker had worked with the young man, helping him to sort out his drug issues and re-connecting him with his family. He now lives with his mother and works for his father.

A true success story that we did not get to hear about till 5 years down the track.

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