



NEWSBRIEF

The Deaf Society of New South Wales

Autumn 2010

ANTENNA

I am delighted to present this issue of Newsbrief, my first as Chief Executive Officer, and share our recent news with you.

We moved into our new head office at 69 Phillip Street, Parramatta in late 2009. We were extremely fortunate to locate suitable office space with an existing fit out which resulted in enormous savings. We now have a safe, professional working environment which promotes more efficient and positive teamwork. Our new premises also enable us to offer improved access to educational opportunities for deaf students as well as enhanced support for deaf job seekers.

We have been busy developing our new strategic plan which will take us through to our centenary year in 2013. The plan will be available in English and Auslan on the Deaf Society's website from July. I look forward to keeping you up to date with progress on our goals.

We will continue to focus on expanding services to meet needs within the Deaf

Community, as well as enhance our existing specialist support such as Auslan (Australian Sign Language) interpreting, independent living skills training and community work. In common with other similar non-profit organisations, we are faced with finding solutions to the many and diverse problems which can confront people who are disadvantaged in some way. Solutions to these problems can be found, but sourcing the necessary funds to implement them is not easy.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing generosity which has

made it possible for the Deaf Society to continue our vital work in improving the lives of Deaf people and their families across the State.

Sharon Everson
Chief Executive Officer



After 15 years at Macquarie Street, Parramatta, it was work as usual until the big day of the move.



Visitors from Thailand's National Office for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities met with the Deaf Society staff for information sharing whilst in Australia. We were happy to share our experiences in supporting Deaf people which will lead to improvements in local programs in Thailand. Our visitors took a photo opportunity with the CEO and Becky Rose Mundy in our new reception and foyer area.

Deaf-Friendly Families

Over 95% of deaf babies are born to hearing parents, many of whom do not have any experience of deafness or hearing loss. For some parents this can be a bewildering and unsettling time.

Many of these families contact the Deaf Society of NSW for information, advice and support. Often parents are seeking contact with other families who have dealt with the challenges of raising deaf children.

The Deaf Society's Parent to Parent Mentoring program creates supportive relationships between parents of deaf children who share their insights and experience with families of newly diagnosed deaf babies and children.

Your financial support helps fund this innovative program, as well as operating Sign'N'Tots, a special playgroup for deaf mums, dads and grandparents and regular Deaf Family Days.



Your help can create a life of opportunities for deaf children and their families



We were delighted to welcome deaf students from Bairnsdale West Primary School, Victoria on their field trip to Sydney to visit Stephen Nicholson, Manager of Client and Community Services, who undertook a two week teaching placement at the school as part of his education degree.

Building Support and Self-Esteem for Deaf Teens

While our Deaf-Friendly Families Program has been a great success for the “littlies” and their parents, there is still much work to be done in improving support for Deaf teenagers

during the challenge of adolescence.

The inaugural Crossing Borders Summer Camp, held in 2009, was a major initiative in building self-awareness and self-esteem for Deaf teenagers.

A similar Camp is being planned for 2011 and fundraising has already begun. Once

again Bunnings Warehouse has come to our aid by allowing Deaf Society volunteers to hold barbecues at metropolitan locations in Sydney.

Your generosity helped to sponsor twenty deaf children attend the 2009 Camp; we do hope we can rely on your assistance again.



Deaf Education Network – Creating Education and Vocational Pathways for Higher Learning

The Deaf Society was extremely fortunate to receive funding from the Australian Government through the Teaching and Learning Capital Fund for Vocational Education and Training.

This grant enabled the establishment of two training rooms, as well as the installation of state of the art computer and training equipment which assists our Deaf students,



particularly those enrolled in computer skills courses.

The DEN graduation held in March saw graduates receive accredited qualifications in

a number of areas including computer studies, literacy and numeracy courses as well as our accredited Auslan programs.

Well done to all our graduates!!



Computer Skills Study students show off their well deserved certificates at the recent DEN graduation in March.

Mullauna Village – Celebrating 15 Years of Care

Mullauna Village celebrated its 15th Anniversary on 5 March 2010 with a special morning tea and barbecue lunch. The Deaf Society was represented by Anthony Goringe, President, and Sharon Everson, Chief Executive Officer, who joined residents and well-wishers in celebrating this special milestone.

Five of the original Deaf residents who moved to Mullauna Village in February 1995 are still happily residing at the Hostel where their special needs are met through the employment of trained deaf liaison workers as well as support from Deaf Society staff with banking and shopping excursions.



Cutting of the anniversary cake - Betsy Larkin, one of the first hearing residents, Deidre Bullimore, Hostel Supervisor and David Jones, one of the first deaf residents, lead celebrations for Mullauna's 15th Anniversary.

Independent Living Skills Program



Social outings offer more than just a day of fun for participants of the independent living skills program and Friday D.E.A.F. Club. A recent trip to Taronga Park Zoo provided an opportunity for travel training, budgeting and improving social skills.

Strategic Planning – Setting the Direction for Future Services

We commenced work on the development of our upcoming strategic plan in late 2009 with interviews and community consultations with

stakeholders as well as an on-line survey in both English and Auslan.

Workshops were also held with staff at all levels as well as the Board of Directors. Ten community consultations were held in both metropolitan and regional areas of the State.

Our thanks are extended to all our stakeholders for their valuable input into the planning process. The draft plan, our blueprint for future directions, will be tabled for adoption by the Board at its June meeting, and an English and Auslan version will be available on the Society's website from July.



Nola Colefax, OAM, addresses the deaf senior's consultation meeting, encouraging older deaf people to identify ways the Deaf Society can provide enhancements to their lives.



Colin Allen, Director of Services, facilitates discussion at the combined client and community services workshop.



Feedback from deafblind participants at the community workshop was made possible by utilising the skills of deafblind relay interpreters.

Family Picnic Day



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