

Pave the Way Newsletter

July 2007

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The next 12 months at Pave the Way

The Pave the Way team recently completed planning the work of Pave the Way for the next financial year. We will continue the 1 day workshops, *"Planning for Now, Tomorrow and the Future"* and *"Building Lifelong Support Strategies"*, a number of which are organised in partnership with Disability Sector Training Coalitions and other agencies. Our very successful 6 day live-in workshop *"Visions to Action through Planning"* will also continue.

We also plan to develop new workshops. We are looking at a new 2 day workshop with a focus on vision and planning, a 1 day workshop on working together and a half day workshop on using information in our planning. We are also considering a series of evening sessions, probably fortnightly over 10 weeks, as an alternative format to the new workshop on working together. All our upcoming workshops are listed on the back page of each newsletter.

For the last 12 months Sharon Bourke has visited Far North Qld and South West Qld bi-monthly. This year we will expand our regional focus to include Central Qld. In addition to our work in the Brisbane and Sunshine Coast areas, we aim also to focus on the Gold Coast. While these are our areas of focus, we encourage families anywhere in Queensland to contact us. We also conduct workshops in other areas, with workshops already scheduled in North Qld, Charleville and the Lockyer Valley.

Catherine Raju will continue her work developing information resources relevant to planning. This year her focus will be funding and Centrelink, building on her recent Information Sheet on housing and support.

To assist us with the work at Pave the Way, we welcome a new full time staff member to the team, bringing our full time staff to five. Julie Van Oosten will commence with Pave the Way in early July and will focus on supporting individual families with future planning. We are receiving an increasing numbers of calls from families asking for assistance with "taking the first step" in planning or with developing a support circle.

Lastly, to assist families from outside Brisbane we are in the process of obtaining a 1300 number. In the meantime, if you phone from outside Brisbane, please ask us to phone you back so that the call is at our expense, not yours.

**If you would like further information on any of the above, please contact
Jeremy Ward on (07) 3291 5800**

It's all about knowing the right questions to ask

We have enjoyed talking with parents and other family members over the past month in response to the Housing Information Sheet which accompanied the previous newsletter. These conversations have often highlighted the importance of *being prepared* for the task of tracking down information.

Using important key words in a phone query can often lead you to the correct person immediately. Sometimes it can even mean the difference between being told "no" straight away and at least being given the chance to inquire further. Similarly, asking *ourselves* the right question is important before beginning the hunt for information. Clarifying the question can change the whole direction of the search.

The following stories are examples of how having the right questions can help in the search for information. These are combinations of people's experiences and do not describe any one family completely or include real names.

"Clarifying the question can change the whole direction of the search."

When Bill began thinking about his son, Peter, moving out of home his first plan was to find a group home somewhere not too far from the family. In conversation with Bill it soon became clear that neither he, nor his son, really wanted this kind of living arrangement, it was simply the only option they had considered. After talking further with Peter and the rest of the family Bill began asking a much bigger question – "What would make a good life for Peter when he is no longer living at home?" With this different starting point the search became much broader. The family is now investigating different ways for Peter to live independently with support. They have made application for Public Housing and are finding out about shared tenancy arrangements in privately rented properties. They are exploring the idea of combining some paid support with ongoing family connections to ensure Peter's safety and well being no matter where he is living. It will be some time before Peter can move out of home but the search now involves more than simply finding a place to live.

Ben's parents decided to explore the possibility of building a self-contained flat as a first step towards more independent living for their son. They needed some basic information to guide their decisions about whether to plan for a detached dwelling on their property or a renovation under the existing roofline. Finding information about planning regulations proved to be difficult. When they first rang with a general question they were told that the council no longer gives information about planning. The breakthrough came when they found out the important words to include in their initial query were "house code" or "guidelines for a self-contained flat". These "magic words" alerted the call centre to the fact that this was a specific request which could be answered generally by the town planning section. This was an important first step in knowing whether they needed to pay for further advice from a private Planning Certifier.



For further information about the Housing Information Sheet or to receive a copy please contact Catherine Raju on 3291 5800

Families sharing the wisdom – it's a question of asking

Pave the Way has been fortunate to work with a number of families who are safeguarding the futures of their sons and daughters by inviting others in to assist them with planning and decision making. Tony, Marlene, Deb and Alison Crawford have generously offered their insights about asking others in:

What were the blocks to asking?

We thought people would be too busy, we didn't want to impose.
 We didn't know what we were asking of people.
 We are very independent – it makes asking others difficult.
 We were afraid that people would say no - rejection is difficult.
 I would feel sad if they did not feel the way I do about Ali.
 We worried that it would have an affect on the relationship afterward if people did not want to join us.

What enabled you to get over the blocks?

For a long time, we didn't, it helped to have Pave the Way involved.
 We decided to start with family.
 Knowing the right questions - wording the invitation the right way.
 In the end, we just bit the bullet - we knew we had to start (something).
 Now, we are more deliberate and look for opportunities.

Where did you start?

I started asking people who I thought may say "yes" – people closest to me – people we trusted e.g. family, an ex-worker who had great personal qualities and people who knew Ali. They said "yes".

Has it been worth asking - what are the benefits of a support circle?

This process makes you look at what is there in front of you more closely and deliberately. It has opened up Ali's life considerably.
 We look at her life in a different way, we look at Ali in a different way.
 We are open to possibilities of a full life with all the opportunities it offers.
 We feel comfortable knowing we have the final say.
 We have looked at things that we did not want to think about.
 Members of the support circle have got to really know Ali better and are aware of the possibilities too.
 Some members spoke of wanting to search for a more fulfilling life for themselves after this experience.
 Ali is a person in her own right, involved and with talents and gifts.
 Ali is a band member now.
 She has taken direction of her life – she is more capable now than before the circle.

Hints for other families

It can be exhausting – lots of activity generates when you invite others in. Take care, take time out and plan realistically. When you start, you see opportunities everywhere.

"Once you start a support circle, you are more deliberate about everything, you could never go back to the way things were."

*"I am a happy woman." -
 Ali*

Pave the Way

Pave the Way assists families throughout Queensland to clarify their vision for their family member with a disability and to plan to implement that vision. We encourage planning which is vision driven, 'whole of life', developmental, outside service planning and which safeguards family members in the long term. We believe it is other people who keep people safe and support the development of personal networks, including Support Circles.

Contact us

Please contact us if you would like to be on our mailing list, or would like information or assistance developing a vision and plan or developing a support circle or similar network. If you are part of a group of families and would like us to come and talk about these issues, let us know.

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Jeremy Ward

Sharon Bourke

Catherine Raju

Julie Van Oosten

Michelle Schneider

Christine Douglas (Consultant)

Upcoming Events

"Planning for Now, Tomorrow and the Future" – Jeremy Ward

Townsville:	3 July 2007	(DSTF)
Ingham:	9 July 2007	(DSTF)
Ayr:	10 July 2007	(DSTF)
Charters Towers:	11 July 2007	(DSTF)
Ipswich:	7 August 2007	(Alara Association)
Esk:	9 August 2007	(Alara Association)
Charleville:	27 August 2007	(Parent 2 Parent)
Boonah:	11 September 2007	(Alara Association)
Brisbane:	22 September 2007	(PTW)
Logan:	17 October 2007	(Alara Association)

"Building Life Long Supports & Safeguards – Exploring Support Circles and Networks" – Sharon Bourke

Brisbane: 21 July 2007 (PTW)



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To book into one of the above workshops, please phone the relevant contact. PTW (07) 3291 5800, DSTF 1800 851 848 or (07) 3234 0190, Alara Association (07) 3817 0622 or Parent 2 Parent (07) 4654 3500