

Pave the Way Newsletter

July 2008

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"During July, everyone on the Pave the Way mailing list will receive a survey asking them for feedback about their involvement with Pave the Way."

Is Pave the Way on the right track?

In September 2008, Pave the Way will have been in existence for 6 years. From its beginning as a very small project funded by Mamre, Pave the Way has grown into a Queensland-wide project which now employs five full-time staff, one part-time consultant and, until November 2008, a part-time research assistant. Pave the Way is now funded by Disability Services Queensland.

In October 2005, when we were a much smaller project with just two part-time staff, Pave the Way invited an external team to undertake an evaluation of its work. That evaluation, led by Professor Lesley Chenoweth, then from the University of Queensland, was very helpful in guiding us to our next stage of development.

We now think it is again time to open ourselves up to external scrutiny. We have asked international consultant Michael Kendrick to lead a team which will meet in Brisbane during the week 20 to 24 October 2008. This team will be made up mainly of parents and other family members from around Queensland, as well as including input from interstate and possibly New Zealand.

The aim of the evaluation will be to find out how useful Pave the Way has been to families throughout Queensland in their planning for the future and to have the evaluation team inform our future directions and development.

During July, everyone on the Pave the Way mailing list will receive a survey asking them for feedback about their involvement with Pave the Way. This involvement might have been through attending a workshop, requesting information to help with planning, asking Pave the Way to facilitate a planning session or to assist the family to start a support circle. It will be entirely up to individual families whether they participate in this survey. The information provided will be anonymous and used to compile a report for the evaluation team.

With the survey we will also ask families if they would like to speak with the evaluation team in October, either by phone or face to face. Those invitations will be separate from the survey document, so that survey feedback remains anonymous.

We hope that many families who have had contact with Pave the Way will be able to participate in this evaluation so that we receive broad, Queensland-wide feedback on the work of Pave the Way.

If you would like further information regarding this survey, please contact Jeremy Ward on (07) 3291 5800

Information Sheet 3 – Centrelink

"...is designed to alert families to these possible benefits and includes suggestions for communicating effectively with Centrelink and definitions of commonly used terms."

"In keeping with our approach to providing information, the document is simply a starting point for making the most of Centrelink."

The website also includes a range of links to other useful sites located under "resources".

Pave the Way's third Information Sheet, "Centrelink", will be available on the website shortly.

Most families who have a family member with a disability will have had some contact with Centrelink but may not be aware of the range of payments, allowances and other benefits they may be entitled to receive. The Information Sheet is designed to alert families to these possible benefits and includes suggestions for communicating effectively with Centrelink and definitions of commonly used terms. It also highlights some of the issues families have experienced as they negotiate the complex and often changing world of Centrelink in an attempt to best meet their family's needs.

Some people may feel that the small amount of financial support available from Centrelink is not worth the effort of dealing with such a complex bureaucracy. Others may simply not know the kind of services that are available. While financial support from Centrelink is limited, payments and allowances can be an important component when negotiating complex financial and living arrangements for a family or an individual. Rent Assistance, Mobility Allowance and the Centrepay service, for example, can all play a part in the combination of supports for a young person living away from their family.

In keeping with our approach to providing information, the document is simply a starting point for making the most of Centrelink. It is not designed to replace information that Centrelink offers itself, nor to be a definitive guide to all possible payments. As usual, we would appreciate any feedback you have about the Information Sheet when it is available. If you would like us to send you a copy, please contact the office on (07) 3291 5800 or 1300 554 402.

New on our website

Stories

Thank you to Dianne Mandeville for the story about her family's experience of establishing a support circle. Dianne writes about moving from her reluctant starting point of "...hating to ask for help" to being able to write, "I would encourage anyone..... to just take that first step and ask one person."

Articles

Jan Dyke's article, "Choreographing the Future" includes eleven key elements identified by families which they believe will help assure the future for their sons and daughters with disabilities.

For further information about Information Sheet 3 – Centrelink, please contact Catherine Raju on (07) 3291 5800

Support Circle Facilitators

When families first start thinking about developing a support circle they may be unaware of the importance of having a facilitator. Preferably the facilitator will be someone who is not directly responsible for the day to day care of the family member with disability. This is often a relief to families as the thought of having to organise and run the circle meetings can be quite overwhelming to the point of the family not proceeding with the idea.

Facilitation is defined as 'to make easy' which summarises the role perfectly. The facilitator simply helps the circle to have a focused conversation and to ensure that everyone involved has the opportunity to participate in a safe and respectful manner. The facilitator also acts as a model in relation to respect for the family and the family's authority in all matters relating to their family business.

Pave the Way can work through a process to assist families to find a facilitator, preferably someone from within a family's or their circle's networks. If that is not possible Pave the Way will try to find someone through Pave the Way's channels. The benefits of the facilitator coming from the families' networks are many but include the following:

- Because the family and the circle members will know the needs of the family and the person with disability better than the Pave the Way worker there may be a better match of facilitator to the family
- As the family and circle group will have worked through a process and have thought about the qualities of the person they will have a stronger sense of what it is they can expect from the person in the role
- Finding a facilitator from their own networks would give a newly formed circle an opportunity to work as a team on a task while still 'forming' as a group (and have an achievable outcome at the onset!)
- The family and the circle members would have a number of networks and connections which Pave the Way simply would not have
- This strategy is family driven and therefore more empowering to families.

The facilitator role requires a commitment of up to 5 hours per month. Some of the responsibilities may include calling a family prior to a circle meeting to talk about what the focus of the meeting will be. They may take notes during the meeting and distribute these among the circle members. In addition to facilitating the meetings the facilitator may also call the family after a meeting if needed. The facilitator role is a small but very important role. A good facilitator will assist the circle to find its feet and build a very strong foundation for its ongoing success.

"Facilitation is defined as 'to make easy' which summarises the role perfectly."

"A good facilitator will assist the circle to find its feet and build a very strong foundation for its ongoing success."

For further information regarding circle facilitation, please contact Julie van Oosten on (07) 3291 5800

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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Join our email database

Thank you to all the families who have requested to change over to our new email database. For those who have not yet had the chance to register, it's not too late. Just email or phone us with your contact details along with your email address.

Upcoming events

Planning for Now, Tomorrow and the Future – Jeremy Ward

Brisbane 18 July 2008 (PTW)

Building Lifelong Supports & Safeguards – Exploring Support Circles & Networks

Roma 22 July 2008 (DSQ)
Rockhampton 18 September 2008 (PTW)

Visions to Actions through Planning – Six day live-in workshop

Coolum 15-17 Aug & 7-9 Nov 2008 (PTW)

Regional visits

Goondiwindi

Julie van Oosten 17 - 19 July 2008

Stanthorpe

Julie van Oosten 23 - 24 July 2008

Cairns

Sharon Bourke 21 - 24 August 2008

Rockhampton

Julie van Oosten 18 - 19 September 2008



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To book into a Pave the Way (PTW) workshop, please phone (07) 3291 5800 or 1300 554 402, or email pavetheway@mamre.org.au or for the (DSQ) workshop phone (07) 4622 8875. The workshop calendar can now be viewed on our website www.pavetheway@mamre.org.au. For all regional visits please contact Julie van Oosten or Sharon Bourke on (07) 3291 5800