

MONTHLY NEWS

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Editorial

Hi Everyone,
Once again we have been very busy this month but I will leave it to Lisa to catch you up on all of that. Don't forget her contact details:

Ph 5608 3079; email grandfamily@internode.on.au

During our travels this month, Lisa and I have met some very helpful community group leaders and have gleaned some useful information.

In this month's newsletter I am going to concentrate on the legal aspects. There will be other updates in future newsletters.

Remember that the newsletter will take a well earned break during December and January. (I can then get my spring cleaning done. Oh joy!)

Unfortunately, Lisa will only be with us in an official capacity until about the end of December. She has proven to be a great asset to KinKare and has shown such passion for grandparents that I believe, and hope, she may continue in a voluntary manner after that time. We are still working on ways of gaining funding for her to stay.

Lisa has also arranged for guest speakers to most local groups during the next month or so, so please support her with your attendance.

This month, we also have an article from the Family Relationship Centre in Logan which has recently started.

Our readership has grown, once again, quite dramatically and I welcome all new people to our newsletter. As always, I remind readers that it is your contribution that makes our publication worthwhile so please keep those entries coming. We especially want to hear of any school holiday programmes being run over the Christmas break for publication in next month's issue.

Many thanks also to Maged and Marjie for doing an interview with Channel 7 recently on grandparents denied access. This is a daunting experience and you both did very well.

As always, I hope you enjoy your newsletter and look forward to hearing from you.

My love,
Maree

A letter from Lisa

The past few weeks have taken on a life of their own. This period has been taken up with setting up new support groups, and all that entails. Maree and I have spent a lot of time on the road, visiting local area Interagency meetings and providing these groups with information about grandparents raising grandchildren and those denied access, as well as handing out flyers and any other relevant information. We've also been provided with two wonderful new venues for our **two new groups** commencing in October, namely the Donald Simpson Over 50 Leisure Centre in Cleveland, Oct. 17th 10:30am much appreciated, Mr Ernie Harrison, and Beaucare in Beaudesert Oct 24th Beaucare 10:30am We also thank the wonderful staff there. Please ring for more details.

I've forwarded emails to local schools, agencies and organisations for publication in their newsletters, as well as most of the area specific newspapers. Very positive contact has also been established with Community Development Workers in the many areas we've visited. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank these wonderful individuals, who are too many to name, but you know who you are.



The warm welcome, assistance provided and interest shown by everyone involved indicates the value our communities place in wanting to support and extend their care to grandparents and other relative carers, as well as those denied access. Communities **do** care, so if you have issues of concern, please **approach your local Support Group**, and we'll either refer you to someone who can assist or provide a guest speaker to give information and answer questions at a meeting.

Your COGs Grandfamily Support Worker,
Lisa



MEETING DATES

Please call first as many groups do not meet in school holidays

KinKare EAGLEBY

Meets the second Friday of each month @10:30am, Eagleby Community Centre
Ph Maree 3287 1664

KinKare NERANG

Meets the fourth Wednesday of the month @12:30pm
Nerang Neighbourhood Ctr
Ph Maree 3287 1664

SUNSHINE COAST KinKare

This group has now decided to hold joint meetings with Community Solutions.
Please see below

KinKare INALA

Meets 2nd Tuesday of the month @ 10:30am
We are trying to get this meeting happening again so please let us know if you are planning to attend. It is quite expensive for me to go only to find no-one there.
Ph Maree 3287 1664.

KinKare GLADSTONE

Please contact Pauline
Ph (07) 4978 0501

KinKare WARWICK

**Currently needing a facilitator.
Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.**

ZILLMERE & SOUTHBANK

Indigenous Grandparent Support Group
Meets twice monthly
Please ring Tess Ph 3252 4371

Grandparents As Parents

Community Solutions Inc.
Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

Please phone Sharon 5437 9499

CAIRNS & DISTRICT

G'parents Support Group

Meets the first Wednesday of each month @9:30am,
Hambledon House Community Centre, Edmonton
Ph Janet or John (07) 40 555 161
Email johnjan@cairns.net.au

TOWNSVILLE region

Nth Q'ld G'parents in Need of Support (GINOS)

For details of this group, please contact
Ph. Nev (07) 4723 3520
Email trcota@bigpond.net.au

Please Note: Updated phone number



Group Meetings

For those who would like their meetings placed in this column, just drop me an email or letter and I would be only too pleased to spread the word.

There is no requirement to be a KinKare group.



Newsletter Items

Just another reminder to all groups, the **newsletter articles are for distribution** to any relative carers. Don't hesitate to pass on the newsletter in its entirety or relevant articles as you see fit. The only thing we ask is that the intent/content of the article is not compromised.



Please Note

All contributions to the newsletter are gratefully accepted. Please email them to me for transfer to the newsletter. If you need someone to chat to, we are always happy to hear from you. Phone Danni 3299 1764 or Maree 3287 1664, or your local support group leader.





Some Legal Issues

During the course of our travels this month Lisa and I have found some new and important news on the legal front for nearly all of our carers. I am including two articles copied from the web which I think you may find valuable.

Attorney-General Robert McClelland today announced an additional \$400,000 for Legal Aid Commissions to enhance the delivery of family dispute resolution services to grandparents and other extended family members.

Attorney-General Robert McClelland said

"The relationship between a child, their grandparents and extended family is worth investing in. Grandparents can provide children with love, support and an understanding of where they come from, significant to their care, welfare and development."

The additional funding for family dispute resolution services will be used for the development of;

- More proactive intake and screening procedures to identify cases where it is appropriate to include grandparents and extended family members
- A best practice training model for staff involved in multi-party family dispute resolution, and
- A national strategy for providing information to grandparents and extended family members about the services available to assist them.

The Victoria Legal Aid Commission will manage the projects on behalf of all State and Territory Commissions. Where children will benefit from spending time with their grandparents and extended family, it can be helpful to involve them in these dispute resolution services

Robert McClelland said

"This is a positive initiative that demonstrates the Rudd Governments strong commitment to supporting programs which can help minimise the negative impact on children associated with family breakdown."

I found this article at www.familylawwebguide.com.au

Unfortunately there was no phone number attached but please ring me for further details if needed.

The same solicitor who alerted me to the last item has also shown me this one re **interviews with the Dept of Child Safety**. He also says he advises everyone **not to go to a meeting without an advocate or the like**.

KinKare does not provide this service as we are too small to do so but an agency like **FCQ (Ph 3268 5955)** does.

It is unfortunate that taping has had to be an alternative but accurate, or any, minutes of meetings are "hensteeth" it seems.

This article has been copied from a section found at:

www.childsafety.qld.gov.au

Video-taping of departmental employees

Departmental employees can be the subject of video or audio taping. **People have the right to record a private conversation to which they are a part of**, however, they are not allowed to communicate or publish any part of the recording to any person (except in accordance with the *Child Protection Act 1999* or the *Invasion of Privacy Act 1971*).

It is very appropriate that staff members are not placed in jeopardy by malicious taping of conversations but it is also necessary that you have hard evidence of any matters discussed. There are therefore conditions, under which you can play these recordings, and they will be outlined to you at the time of recording, they are also available on the above website.

Legal Aid

Another important piece of information we have found in our travels is the following copied from the new brochure put out by Legal Aid Q'ld. called "Can I get legal aid?"

If you are 60 years or over, you can have equity in your home

up to \$510,000 if you:

- receive an income-tested allowance or benefit and
- have lived in your home for five years or more
- or moved out of your home or bought an alternative home because of disability or illness.

Don't get too excited though as **there are still a number of other conditions to fulfil**.

For further details look up www.legalaid.qld.gov.au

Or Ph 1300 65 11 88



Our Personal Page

Much to my own dismay, I have had to severely shorten this article but we always need more stories to gain awareness. Please write yours, in ways it can't be identified, and send it in noted for publication.

Silent Child Abuse

To rob children of the love and pleasure of their grandparents is a form of child abuse.

Children need loving relationships with extended family including grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles, on both sides, for their proper development. To rob children of this pleasure is terribly destructive.

Children value and treasure their grandparents. Grandparents have the time, life skills, and these days of an extended life span, they have the health and fitness to play and have fun with them, teach them and tell them about "the old days"

There are a lot of grandparents out there who do not have the love and pleasure of their grandchildren, usually because of some minor frivolous issue. These grandparents are referred to as "denied contact" grandparents. Their grandchildren do not have a voice, and are at the whim of the parents. They are the ones suffering silent abuse.

I am one of those grandparents and this is my story.

I grew up in a large happy family with the love of lots of extended family around. As we grew up and had family of our own my parents became grandparents to a large brood. They loved them all and looked after them on and off as was needed. They were especially needed in my case as I was bringing up my only son on my own and had to rely on them to care for my boy while I worked. They were always there for us. My son knew the love of his grandma and grandpa.

My son grew up and married and my husband and I became grandparents to a lovely little boy. We were over the moon. I had finally become a grandma and just loved the role. We loved our grandson and he just loved us. When he was asked by his father "where would you like to go today" he would answer "see dad dad" When we had him for the day he would hide his little head under the cushions on the sofa, so we wouldn't see him, when it was time to go home.

A short time after his third birthday, because of a minor family issue, which could have been solved with communication and tolerance, my son and his wife decided not to allow us to see our grandson or he to see us. We pleaded with them, wrote letters, phoned emailed but they would not allow us to see him. We tried legal action, but at that time grandparents did not have any legal rights to contact with their grandchildren. We tried mediation, but that did not amount to anymore than a two hour visit once a year, which I was not prepared to accept because I felt it was not in the best interests of our grandson to have an off / on relationship with us. He loved us. It was not his fault that he was not allowed to see his grandma and grandpa when he wished.

During this time, of absolute heartbreak, a little baby girl, our granddaughter, was born. We did not know her name and were only told of her birth by a friend.

It was just too much for me and I became very ill. I had a mild stroke soon after. I became very depressed and didn't want to live. I tried counselling but nothing would stop the continuing tears. I had not only lost my grand children but also my son, who I loved so much. I had poured my life into raising him

I didn't ever think this would ever happen to me.

To be continued next month.....

Laughter is the Best Medicine!



As a stranger entered a little country store, he noticed a sign warning, "Danger! Beware of dog!" posted on the glass door. Inside, he noticed a harmless old hound dog asleep on the floor beside the cash register.

"Is that the dog folks are supposed to beware of?" he asked the owner.

"Yep, that's him," came the reply.

The stranger couldn't help but be amused. "That certainly doesn't look like a dangerous dog to me. Why in the world would you post that sign?"

"Because," the owner explained, "Before I posted that sign, people kept tripping over him!"

Tough Love vs. Spanking - Good Argument

Most of the populace thinks it improper to spank children, so I have tried other methods to control my kids when they have one of "those moments".

One that I found effective is for me to just take the child for a car ride and talk.

Some say it's the vibration from the car, others say it's the time away from any distractions such as TV, Video Games, Computer, iPod, etc.

Either way, my kids usually calm down and stop misbehaving after our car ride together. Eye to eye contact helps a lot too. I've included a photo below of one of my sessions with my son, in case you would like to use the technique.



This works with grandchildren as well!!!!

Please do NOT try this at home without adult supervision.