

ADVENTURE WEEKENDS

A SUCCESSFUL COMBINATION OF FUN AND TEAM WORK

By Peter Coupland – Senior Counsellor

Camp for Bereaved Junior Boys

October 2010

Can you imagine 12 young boys sitting as silent as a mouse by the edge of a river for fifteen minutes? They did. And they were rewarded with witnessing a very rare and special event – platypus swimming in their natural habitat.

While camping at Biloela, the Outdoor Education Group's property in the Southern Highlands, all we had as a modern convenience was a roof over our heads. Everything else was very much bush-style.



Joshua Stubbins shares his experience:

“Hi my name is Joshua and I'm 11 years old. I want to tell you about one of the best adventure weekends I've ever been on. My dad's name is Phil and he died of Coronary artery disease 3 years ago on Christmas Eve. My dad would have loved sitting in front of the fire and just talking. It was great going canoeing. We paddled downstream a bit then played dodge ball. It was great. On the way back, we saw 3 water monitors. I loved seeing all the wildlife – especially Sandy the wombat, the friendliest and happiest wombat I've ever seen. Plus a wild platypus!

My favourite part was when we went abseiling and, although thinking we were going down 6 foot when really we were going down a 10½ foot drop, it was still really fun. I enjoyed the cooking... and the eating! Lasagna and damper come to mind (my dad would have loved the lasagna!). It was great as usual to talk about our dads – if they would be proud of us, if they would have liked what we did and stuff like that. We each wrote a letter to our dads about what we'd been doing & why we thought they would be proud of us.”

“A Friend's Place” is somewhere you can be sad or happy and be with other people who understand what it feels like to lose a parent. The adventure weekend is an extension of this. Thank you so much to all those whose support and donations make this possible.

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– Joshua Stubbins –



Expedition for Teenage Boys

October 2010

“It was really a great trip and I felt like our dads were a part of all of this as well”.

This remark from one of the participants on our recent expedition style adventure says it all.

Over 4 days, 8 teenage boys completed an expedition requiring them to work as a team while camping, navigating difficult terrain, cooking on camp stoves, climbing and abseiling, all while carrying their own gear.

Whilst doing this, they discussed the changes and challenges that have occurred in their lives since their fathers had died. They shared ideas on how to get through tough times and imagined what it would be like if their dads could be part of the adventure. The expedition gave them a great sense of determination to try new things and responsibility to share the load – the kind of things you would do on a typical father and sons camp!



* Cash donations have not been used for the production of “Friends Indeed”. All printing has been donated. Design and artwork donated by Anna Lane (0412 411 966).

4 WAYS YOU CAN HELP

The NCCG is a registered charity and provides free of charge services to bereaved families. We are fully dependent on donations from the community to sustain our organisation.

THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS YOU CAN HELP:

- 1 Volunteer your **TIME** OR **EXPERTISE**
- 2 Offer the NCCG access to any **RESOURCES** you may have
- 3 **DONATIONS** (even the smallest amount can make a difference)
- 4 **SPONSORSHIP** of a special project or a core service.



National Centre For Childhood Grief

A.B.N 79 098 660 130

childhoodgrief.org.au Phone: 1300 654 556 PO Box 327 Epping NSW 1710

CORE SERVICES

Our core counselling program requires approx. \$1,250 per year to support a grieving child.

You can contribute in the following ways:

\$50	=	Support a child for one group session
\$100	=	Support a child for one month
\$300	=	Support a child for three months
\$625	=	Support a child for six months
\$1,250	=	Support a child for one year
\$2,500	=	Support 2 children for one year
\$5,000	=	Support 4 children for one year
\$18,000	=	Support a group for one year

NB: All children's details are kept private

PLEASE DONATE TODAY TO CHANGE A CHILD'S LIFE!

To join our monthly regular-giving program via direct debit:

Contact Sophie Robertson on 0448 173 307 or email sophie@childhoodgrief.org.au

To make a one-off donation:

visit www.childhoodgrief.org.au and click on the “donate” button.

OR

email: sophie@childhoodgrief.org.au

All donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible and will be issued a tax receipt at the end of the financial year for regular givers.



EDITION 3 • 2011

FR^{ENDS} INDEED

Newsletter of the National Centre for Childhood Grief



National Centre
For Childhood Grief

Providing support to newly bereaved children and families
childhoodgrief.org.au

The far reaching effects of world events.

By Mal and Dianne McKissock – Clinical Directors

In recent months, our corner of the world has been battered and bruised by disasters, from devastating drought and fires, to floods, cyclones and earthquakes. Our hearts have gone out to everyone most affected, particularly those who have been bereaved.

Media attention presents us with graphic images and heart wrenching stories, and contributes to an upsurge of community spirit, compassionate concern and practical help.

The speed at which information is now transmitted around the world is good in many ways, but has its downside. From a positive perspective, we feel part of a global village, no longer isolated as that country ‘down under’ – far away from all the real action of life. The downside is that we rarely have the kind of stress free periods we all need in order to regroup and rebuild our resources – emotional, physical, and spiritual. Daily news bulletins tend to keep us poised for fight or flight, reminding us of all that is distressing about life.

Everyone needs fallow periods – times of peace and quiet. These fallow periods provide us with time to process life events, and to remind ourselves that much of life is still beautiful, that some things remain within our control, despite the vagaries of nature and the behaviour of some human beings.

Bereaved families are particularly vulnerable to reports of disturbing events. They may be re confronted by graphic images, identify with those who are bereaved and suffering, reminded again of their own powerlessness to save the lives of those they love. They may regress, >



> and from that perspective, experience feelings of resentment that the whole world appears to care about death when it is on a large scale, or occurs in dramatic or heroic circumstances. Their internal conversation may include questions like "Who cared when my husband/ wife, father/mother, brother/sister died? Where was all the community compassion then? Who gave us financial help? Who understood the pain of our grief?" This internal dialogue may live side by side with genuine feelings of compassion for those who are suffering.

As counsellors, medical practitioners, pastoral care workers, as relatives, friends, neighbours, teachers and so on...we need to remain sensitive to the impact of newsworthy disasters on families in our care.

Waiting lists

Referrals to the National Centre for Childhood Grief (affectionately known as "A Friend's Place") have increased in recent months, occasionally resulting in the dreaded 'waiting list'. Waiting lists are not only distressing for bereaved families, but for the counsellors who do their best to respond as quickly as possible. At these times, families are encouraged to use the email support service provided by "A Friend's Place". Occasionally we hold seminars at the Centre to 'hold' people until a counselling session is possible.

State Street's generosity

We are all so appreciative of State Street for funding the training of five new support workers. The increase in counsellors has made it possible for us to run three groups for bereaved children this year, and to plan a number of additional activities designed to increase their long term resilience.

The NCCG Outreach program

Another exciting development is increasing our outreach program. We will provide resources, email support, and training for teachers at a far west school for indigenous children. Later in the year we both hope to make a field visit to the school to increase our understanding of their needs, and are currently seeking funding for this project.

STAFF UPDATE

The team at "A Friend's Place" continues to accommodate life's ebbs and flows.

Kristy, a former children's counsellor at the Centre, moved to Queensland at the end of 2010 and is now employed in a counselling position with Canteen in Brisbane. From all reports, she is very happy in her new role and we wish her all the best on this new adventure. She remains in regular contact with her former team mates and we look forward to her news updates.

Senior Counsellor, Sylvia, is now a proud mum to beautiful Marcus who is now 8 months old. Marcus seems to have inherited his mother's calm exterior, more evident now he is past some early difficulties. He is keeping Sylvia almost as busy as she was at the Centre. Sylvia looks great and motherhood appears to be fitting her like a glove.

Office Managers, Ella and Valda, have continued to keep the administrative side of things running smoothly and have a great co-operative relationship. Ella has recently shown amazing courage, determination and stamina recovering much more quickly than anticipated from a post-surgery infection. She is now back in her position and on the improve every day.

And finally, our Business Development Manger, Sophie, continues her energetic and creative fund raising efforts, as well as capably and warmly promoting the Centre to the wider community. This promises to be a full, exciting and life changing year for us all.

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

By Rick Taylor



Hi everyone and welcome to the third edition of *Friends Indeed*, the newsletter for the National Centre for Childhood Grief, commonly referred to as "A Friend's Place".

This year we benefited greatly as a result of **State Street's** generosity, agreeing to fund scholarships for additional counsellors. Tragically we have a waiting list for our services and we approached State Street for support. Being able to help a bereaved child is an incredible skill that takes years of training and practice and we are lucky that our senior counsellors have the capacity to provide that training. It is a

unique skill to be able to listen to a grieving child, to hear their story, to be compassionate and empathetic and be able to help them: help them learn to live with that grief in their life.

Using State Street's funding, we were able to provide an intensive training course to a new team of volunteer workers. We invited several school and social counsellors as well as existing grief workers and medical staff to this course. The ripples spread far and wide following this course with the attendees taking their new-found skills into their own workplaces as well as being valuable support for us. I would like to thank State Street for supporting our vision and look forward to working with our expanded team for many years to come.

We also welcome two new members to our team this year – Valda Tucker and Ella Bullen. Valda and Ella manage the day to day running of the National Centre for Childhood Grief and ensure that everything runs smoothly. They do everything at the centre apart from the counselling itself and they are both an invaluable part of the team.

Sophie Robertson has also joined the team as Business Development Manager, working part time to help develop the sustainability of the centre. Sophie is a parent of two boys who we helped, and she wanted to give something back. She is a talented business woman and is using her skills to help raise funds and the profile of the centre. Sophie has recently been joined by Nina Olle and Di McKissock to help initiate and oversee fund raising and resource building projects.

I would like to again thank everyone who has donated time and money to our charity this year. In particular I would like to thank Mura Ryan, Emmanuelle Delannoy, Richard Waters, and the rest of the team at Macquarie Bank, Dr Raper, Ian Hembry, Nigel & Janice Westlake. We have also enjoyed strong support from several companies this year and I'd also like to thank Ruth Johnstone and the other Directors at The Caledonia Foundation, Kimberley-Clark Australia, National Council for Jewish Women of Australia, and The Graeme Wood Foundation.

We are a small charity and every donation means so much to us. The financial support is a fantastic help – counselling is both intensive and expensive. Although the bigger message is that you, the people in our "Global Village", care about these grieving kids and take the time out of your busy lives to help them as they may be experiencing the worst time in their lives. It certainly puts things in perspective and I thank everyone for their continuing support.

Richard M. Taylor



THANK YOU

A big thank you to the following organisations for their generous contributions. Their support has made it possible to continue the Centre's ongoing programs of individual counselling, group support and resilience-building weekends. It has also enabled us to train a team of counsellors to ensure longevity of our much-needed services.



National Centre For Childhood Grief

WHAT DO WE DO?

The NCCG ("A Friend's Place") provides free individual and group counselling for bereaved children and young people (up to the age of 18 years) and their families.

The philosophy of the NCCG is based on the following 4 principles:

- 1 Grief is a natural response to loss
- 2 Children, like adults, grieve when someone close to them dies and they need opportunities to express this grief in an understanding and supportive environment
- 3 The duration and intensity of grief are unique for each child
- 4 With support, children have the capacity to integrate grief into their lives if the environment provides acceptance, compassion and safety

Parents' support groups are run simultaneously with the children's groups. We also act as advocates for individuals and families to assist them in overcoming specific challenges. Additionally, we provide community education seminars and workshops.

Counselling services are provided for children and families in specific situations. This helps to identify and assess the most appropriate and effective response to those who have experienced traumatic deaths including suicide, homicide or terrorism.

For more information about the NCCG, or if you would like to put a friend in contact with us, please visit www.childhoodgrief.org.au or phone us on 1300 654 556 or email afriendsplace@me.com

childhoodgrief.org.au

HELPING YOU HELP THEM

THREE USEFUL RESOURCES FROM THE NCCG

ONLY \$66 PLUS P+H



KIDS' GRIEF

A Handbook for Group Leaders

By Dianne McKissock OAM

The essential resource for all those involved in the care of dying and bereaved children and their families.

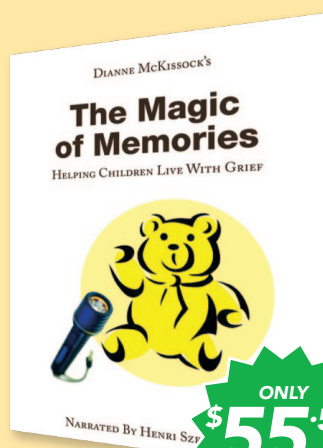
All proceeds of sales support the ongoing work of the NCCG.

THE MAGIC OF MEMORIES CD

By Dianne McKissock OAM
Narrated by Henri Szeps OAM

These 5 real life stories, narrated by Henri Szeps, are designed to help adults understand and facilitate children's grief.

All proceeds of sales support the ongoing work of the NCCG.



ONLY \$55.50 PLUS P+H



THE GRIEF OF OUR CHILDREN

By Dianne McKissock OAM

Ideal for newly bereaved families.

All proceeds of sales support the ongoing work of the NCCG.

ONLY \$38.50 PLUS P+H

ORDER NOW

www.childhoodgrief.org.au

Ph: 1300 654 556

Email: afriendsplace@me.com