

CITIZEN ADVOCACY - SUNBURY & DISTRICTS Inc.
NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2011

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Co-ordinators Report : June 2011

As winter sets in, our work continues to develop with the introduction of new Advocates and Protégés and the ongoing work of support and, ways of encouraging and motivating new people into the program. The New Year began in early February, with a National Citizen Advocacy network meeting, hosted by this program. Coordinators joined us from New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria to share ideas and to talk about the broader issues.

It was sad to see our Administration Assistant of many years, Joan leave our program at the end of March. Joan was a loyal, tireless worker, who did so much to help keep our program in order.

After advertising the position in the local paper, we were overwhelmed with the amount and quality of people applying for the position. I am glad to say, after narrowing down the 80+ applicants to six final interviews, we were able to make our decision and appoint Melita Bonett, as our new Administration Assistant. Melita's focus will be to perform all the duties of the administration position, but also to provide assistance in the promotion of the program in the general community. Melita is making good progress and has been able to get the ball rolling by organising the development of our own C.A Sunbury website which should be a great asset in providing information to prospective advocates and protégés, as well as a resource to people already involved in the program.

Another project I will be working with Melita on is the production of a promotional DVD about our program and becoming an advocate. This will be done as a joint project with the North East Citizen Advocacy program and we will be applying for funding through the 'Victorian Volunteer Small Grants' funding 2011-2012. We would welcome people's ideas and input into the website and would welcome people's stories or experiences that could be used to inform others and encourage participation in the program.

David Abela
Co-ordinator

One Person at a Time Conference

To be held at Melbourne Park Function Centre, Batman Avenue, Melbourne on August 9 -10th, 2011. This conference includes a range of inspiring speakers who will share factual stories of people with a disability, taking up valued roles in our communities.

The conference is for people with a disability and their families or carers, advocates and all interested.

For more details contact:

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RETIREMENT OF JOAN SPELDWINDE

Joan has worked as a part time secretary for Citizen Advocacy Sunbury, firstly on a voluntary basis, then on a paid basis since 2002.

In March, Joan submitted her resignation. She has excelled in this position, and with her previous experience, has brought much insight to Citizen Advocacy.

The committee of C.A.S. gave Joan a farewell luncheon on Tuesday 21st June, in recognition of her time spent with us. We wish her good health and every blessing in all future experiences.



APPOINTMENT OF MELITA BONETT

Melita has been appointed as the new, part time Administration Assistant, taking over from Joan in May.

Over the past years, Melita has been employed within administration for a large corporate company and looks forward to now working within a smaller, highly dynamic team.

Melita and her husband Dave, have a five year old daughter, and have been living in Sunbury for the last seven years.

For over a decade, her family has been involved with Riding for the Disabled (RDA) Oakland's. Melita has a love for horses

(and dogs) and has two horses of her own.

Since beginning with us, Melita has attended a Hume Council Grant Writing Workshop, and had begun works on the development of a new website.

MY LIFE - BY ELIZABETH LYNCH - COMMITTEE MEMBER & PROTÉGÉ.

When I was a child I went to the Royal Children's Hospital from the age of 3 years, to the age of 17. I have a disability, a speech impediment and was a slow learner in my early years.

When I was a child mum didn't understand me when I wanted things. Mum would say to me "Elizabeth show me" and I would. Also people would take over from me; they would say "give it to me or I'll do that". So I just sat there and did nothing at all!!

During my secondary school my feeling was of being a failure because of no skills and no qualifications.

I live with my elderly mother who has a stroke and I am her carer.

I have been on the committee of Sunbury Citizen Advocacy for four years. Whilst on the committee of management, the coordinator David Abela asked me, "how I was coping with my elderly mother?"

David asked me if I would like him to find me an advocate, who could help me find services which would help my mother and me; also to help me with opportunities to get involved in the community.

Below: Elizabeth working on our website with our new Administration Assistant, Melita.



MY CITIZEN ADVOCATE

My advocate is a friendly, knowledgeable lady, who assists me with any problems I do not understand and talks to me, and gives me lots of confidence. I feel she is a very close friend. Marie, my advocate, is a great support to me. I can phone her and talk to her when things get difficult. We also go out for coffee and enjoy each other's company.



**A Tribute to
Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger
1934-2011**

Dr Wolfensberger had a strong commitment to people made vulnerable in a society where individualism, utilitarianism and hedonism reign. He made a huge contribution to people with disabilities. He was a visionary, a devastating analyst and honest critic.

He was also controversial and ignited many debates, involving strong differences of view. Such is a culture of engagement with complex questions. You never had to guess at the meaning of his words. He was strongly averse to political correctness, a characteristic which earned him some critics. He was courageous in advancing and, defending his meticulously researched theories and concepts.

In 1999, seven major developmental disability organizations in the US proclaimed Dr Wolfensberger one of the 35 parties that had been the most impactful on "mental retardation" worldwide in the 20th century. Dr Wolfensberger's work was also recognised by the US magazine 'Exceptional Parent' as one of the great 7 contributions to the lives of people with disabilities, along with Salk and the polio vaccine, braille, Americans with Disabilities Act and the wheelchair.

He was perhaps best known for developing social role valorisation theory from his, and Nirje's, concepts of normalisation. Social role valorisation has been taught to many using and running disability services, and applied to various degrees, in government policies and service practice.

Dr Wolfensberger also developed the concept of citizen advocacy, facilitating long-term relationships between a person with disability (or other vulnerable people) and a volunteer citizen. He wrote a monograph on advocacy. He developed PASSING, a detailed methodology for assessing disability services with regard to how well they rate on meeting the needs of the people they serve. He wrote a highly practical protection schema for disabled people who are hospitalised - increasingly relevant in our efficiency- and highly short-term curative-based hospital care. Much more... he authored over 40 books and monographs, over 250 chapters in books and many journal articles.

Many people who have disabilities have benefited from his work in a change in focus from disability as a medical issue, or captives of care to one where a good life means living with others and in settings that are normally valued in our society. His work was instrumental in the deinstitutionalisation of thousands of people with disabilities. It has informed disability advocacy. In his own life he personally modelled compassionate service to 'needy people', a much used Wolfensberger phrase.

Advocates Catch Up Dinner

When : Friday 22nd July

Where : The Olive Tree Hotel, 111 Evans Street Sunbury

Time : 7pm

RSVP : By Friday 15th July

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**CA Sunbury will subsidise \$15.00 per head*

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