



Xavier News

Summer 2009

Xavier Childrens Support Network

A Beachcomber retreat at Currumbin would put a smile on anyone's face!



In the early hours of the 7th June 2006, my husband Shaun's and my world was changed in a way we never anticipated when our daughter Ruby was born. That day brought both extreme joy and sadness into our lives as Ruby was our first born but not what we had planned.

Within hours of her birth Ruby was diagnosed with a severe brain injury. As a result of this injury she has quadriplegia cerebral palsy, vision impairment,

epilepsy and significant delayed development.

No words can describe the utter feelings of helplessness and fear that we experienced in those first few weeks. The world of disabilities was foreign to us. We found ourselves on very unfamiliar grounds. We suddenly had to grapple with medical specialists, hospitals and therapists - let alone adjust to being first time parents. We were shell shocked and in a state of grief when we brought our daughter home for the first time after five weeks in intensive care.

The next few months were the hardest we have ever experienced. We wondered what sort of journey we were embarking on.

From a personal perspective, all I knew about special needs kids was from the outside looking in – and from that point of view everything looked like a burden. In my ignorance I couldn't understand what parents meant when they said these children had been a gift to them. Now that I am on the inside I can understand what they meant – as I have received many gifts from Ruby.

On the funny side I feel like I've obtained a combined degree in speech therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy. I became a master at inserting her nasogastric tube and can find my way blindfolded around the Royal Children's Hospital. Writing funding appli-

cations and learning government speak are another few tricks I've picked up along the way. Not many people can include those unique skills in their resume!

But these were not the only gifts Ruby would bestow upon me. One of the most precious things she taught me within weeks of being born was that I had married the right bloke. She brought us together in a way that I think takes other couples many years to achieve.

Ruby also taught me that you have to let go and that you can't control everything – that stuff happens in life and that the best way to deal with it is to accept it and move on.

However, I think the most important gift I received was learning to appreciate what you have – in the here and now - like your child's first smile. We received this incredible gift from Ruby in May this year during a beachcomber break organised by Xavier. We had waited nearly three years for that smile. It brought us such joy. I wanted to shout it from the roof tops. That smile will sustain me for years to come.

While Shaun and I don't like to focus too much on the challenges of caring for Ruby, we can't ignore that they exist – Ruby does and will always require 24 hour care for all her needs. We manage as best we can with great support from family, friends and the great staff at Xavier.

But life doesn't seem like a burden. We have a contented, happy child who loves nothing more than to be cuddled and who returns affection. Life has gone on and it is a good life – so good in fact that number two is due just after Christmas! I can't wait to see what gifts this one has in store for us.

Strategic Plan 2009-2012 At a Glance

Objective One

To maintain the level of supports and services to 190 families of children with disabilities

Strategies

- Continue to manage effective budget development and financial monitoring at all levels
- Maintain and monitor the Annual Strategic Plan
- Fulfill the performance agreements and accountability standards required from funding bodies i.e. Communities (Disability Services) and HACC
- Plan an effective response with DSQ (Greater Brisbane Region) for the roll out of Growing Stronger policies and procedures and implementation of the Early Intervention Program
- Maintain the Family Support Facilitation Program under present policies and operational guidelines
- Maintain increased linkages with external service providers and funding organisations to access additional supports for families

Objective Two

To enhance the flexibility and range of support options for families

Strategies

- Collaborate with Disability Services (Brisbane region) in the implementation of the Early Intervention Program to ensure Xavier can maintain a flexible, individualised approach to service provision
- Seek opportunities through the roll out of the Early Intervention Program to support service development in areas of identified unmet need i.e. respite, therapy
- Conduct annual family satisfaction surveys
- Conduct an annual workshop for Keyworkers and Support Workers specific to their role in maintaining Xavier's principles
- Re-design and implement backup/emergency respite options for children accessing structured respite
- Revisit fund raising schemes with Xavier Board, management and staff for opportunities to attain additional avenues of funding

Objective Three

Maintain and enhance communication processes for families, staff and community

Strategies

- Complete the introduction of IT programs i.e. equipment and asset registers, electronic filing, for increased efficiency and access
- Increase the skills and usage of computer systems by staff across the organisation
- Maintain and enhance Xavier's website, newsletter, family information booklet, staff manuals and organisational brochures
- Continue to promote the development of an email Parent Consultative Committee
- Maintain Lynn's Line for staff input to management decisions and feedback
- Increase opportunities for staff to receive ongoing information regarding financial issues, funding bodies policy and direction changes i.e. information sheets from the CEO, manager information at meetings etc.
- Managers/CEO to encourage direct contact from staff re concerns or queries and respond positively to an open door policy
- Develop a PR package for Xavier which can be utilised for fund raising and raising public awareness opportunities

Objective Four

To maintain and improve the knowledge and skill levels of staff



More Strategic Plan...

and families

Strategies

- Continue to access training for staff undertaking Cert III through Capability Queensland
- Continue to provide prioritised external training opportunities for staff, utilising subsidised training opportunities from Communities and HACC i.e. management training, behaviour management
- Continue staff training as outlined in Xavier's training calendar including orientation (Xavier principles, legal frameworks, WH&S safety), teambuilding, multi-cultural practices, proficiencies etc.
- Increase opportunities for staff to attend community service workshops, participate in community networks and interact with other community organisations
- Increase opportunities for staff to share skills and knowledge i.e. cross team discussion, group supervision, staff rotation across areas
- Provide training for families in areas requested within the allocated budget including CPR, manual handling and futures planning
- Increase opportunities for families to attend community workshops i.e. promote involvement in government

Objective Five

To enhance staff satisfaction and effectiveness

Strategies

- Continue to conduct an annual staff satisfaction survey and action plan to address issues
- Maintain a developmental Staff Performance Review system
- Increase opportunities for staff networking both formally

and informally i.e. joint meetings with discussion topic and/or speakers, team lunches, social events, celebrations

- Consider re-introducing a staff rewards system i.e. appreciation box, awards
- To introduce a variety of mechanisms to increase staff participation at all levels into policy and service development
- Management and staff to take responsibility in nurturing a positive and mutually supportive environment through periods of change and financial stress

Objective Six

To maintain and enhance the quality of Xavier's service to families

Strategies

- Maintain Xavier's Quality Monitoring and Auditing Schedule
- Continue the role of the quality team in order to implement and monitor Xavier's continuous Improvement Plan
- Plan and undertake annual audit review of the DSQ Quality Assurance system
- Participate in review of processes to be undertaken regarding quality audit system (DSQ)
- Continue to meet risk management standards which reflect good practise in line with Workplace Health and safety Queensland, the Commission for Children, Young People and Child Guardian, Work Cover QLD etc

Xavier Thanks the Zig Zag Foundation

Xavier was recently successful in obtaining some much needed funding from the Zig Zag Foundation in order to purchase a number of pieces of specialised equipment for Xavier children. Xavier greatly appreciates the generosity of organisations such as the Zig Zag Foundation as does the children and families who benefit from this equipment.



The Zig Zag Foundation, launched in May 2007, is a Brisbane based charity fundraising organisation that works tirelessly to raise money on behalf of reg-

istered local and national charities (with an emphasis on Queensland). The funds raised are aimed to assist sick and underprivileged children from 0-18 years for specific special projects and needs which otherwise would not be met through government funding or other charity organisations. The Zig Zag Foundation is run by a group of volunteers and has no administration or wage costs, ensuring every dollar goes where it is needed most. Over the last two and a half years the Zig Zag Foundation has granted over six hundred thousand dollars to forty one Queensland charities.

Xavier encourages all families to support the people that support us so if you would like more information about the Zig Zag Foundation or about attending one of their many fundraising events please go to their website www.zigzagfoundation.org.

Beachcombers

Beach Buggy's

As we all know gaining access to a suitable Beach Buggy can be difficult. Thanks to our newest O.T on North Marie, we now have a list of places where families can access the use of a Beach Buggy while on holidays without the need to make room in their car or van to take it with them.

Some of the Buggy's are hired or a small donation is required. There may be a request of a holding deposit that is refunded when the Buggy is returned.

Below is a list of a few of the locations where Buggy's are available:

- ✦ Alexandra Headland
- ✦ Coolum
- ✦ Kings Beach
- ✦ Maroochydore
- ✦ Mooloolaba
- ✦ Noosa
- ✦ Moffat Beach
- ✦ Southport
- ✦ Broadbeach
- ✦ Kingscliffe
- ✦ Pottsville



Noosa Beach Hire Buggy

If you are interested in accessing a Beach Buggy in the area's listed above please contact your Beachcomber Coordinator who can give you more detailed information.

Liberty Swings

Variety have done a wonderful job of putting in Liberty Swings around Brisbane, however, you may not be aware that there are some Liberty Swings near some of your favourite Beachcomber retreat destinations. As a lot of families are going away over the summer holidays this may be an added activity that you can add to your holiday agenda.

Liberty Swings located at Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast are:

- ✦ Broadbeach – Cascade Gardens
- ✦ Palm Beach – Laguna Park
- ✦ Caloundra – Cotton Tree, golden Beach & RSL (portable Swing)
- ✦ Noosaville



Dakota on Liberty

Who can use the Variety Liberty Swing?

The Variety Liberty Swing is accessible via a MLAK master key (Master Locksmiths' Association Key). The MLAK is available for people with a verified disability, and is a master key that fits into specially designed locks. This key also can be used to access wheelchair accessible public toilets.

You can apply to Variety Queensland for a free MLAK key by sending a letter outlining your request and eligibility, along with a copy of your letter of authorization from your doctor, disability organisation, local council or health centre, to: Appeals Coordinator, Variety Queensland, PO Box 2071, Milton QLD 4064 or ph: 3368 3321. MLAK keys are also available from some local councils and can be purchased from the Master Locksmiths Association of Australasia (phone 1800 810 698).

Staff Upgrading from Cert III to Cert IV

Xavier's desire is always to be considered by the families it supports as a progressive organisation; leading the way, when it comes to skilled staff and user-friendly policies and procedures. We train our Community Team support staff in as many as 20 different proficiencies, ranging from the Giving of Medications to the Transport of Children in Xavier Vehicles. In fact we go further and ensure that our staff understand what it means to work in the world of disabilities, applying Xavier values in an ethical and lawful way.

In addition to all of the Xavier skills and proficiencies, we believe our staff should have training that fits them to work competently in the world of disabilities at large; that Xavier should be seen to employ staff at an educational level that is recognised by vocational authorities across Australia, and, that we give our staff the opportunity to progress both educationally and vocationally. In light of this philosophy, we decided many years ago to encourage our staff to study the Certificate III in Disability Work. This was taken up so enthusiastically by our staff that now we make the Certificate III a minimum requirement for

ongoing employment with Xavier.

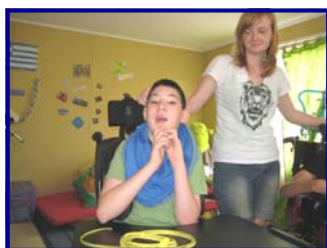
In line with our desire to continue to be a front-runner, we are encouraging our Support staff to take their formal education a step further; so just recently, eleven intrepid souls signed-up to study the Certificate IV in Disability Work. When they attain the Certificate IV they will be able to provide enhanced services to you, our Xavier families, and to enhance our continuous improvement program with their newly acquired expertise. We expect that, building on their Certificate III, they will complete their Certificate IV by August 2010, or maybe even sooner. We believe in supporting our staff, so they can support you.



Kids Club

What a great year we have had at Kids Club..... We have welcomed some new members, farewelled a few too, been very creative and had lots of fun—no time to be blue....

Hope you and yours have a very happy holiday season and we look forward to seeing you at Kids Club.



Medication Charts

Xavier is in the process of changing the giving of medication documentation due to increasing legislative requirements and the need to cease the transcribing of medication orders.

Therefore a new Medication Chart has been devised that will fulfill the above requirement; this chart will not be duplicated for the different programs within Xavier service. The chart will stay in your home with your child and will go with them when they require medications during the Xavier program that they are involved in. Staff are not permitted to give a medication if they do not have the chart with them nor the chemist label with the bottle or package of medication.

The family is to complete the front and back pages of the new medication chart and the doctor completes the colour coded blue, black and red pages. The green pages are for nurse initiated medications where a parent had a prior script which they needed to fill at the last minute, for example antibiotics, then an RN can write up this medication for that respite occasion. This must be followed up by the parents having the doctor sign the green page off when able. This nurse initiated process is for emergency only and best not to become a regular occurrence.

Legally Xavier staff are not permitted to give medications/ vitamins/mineral supplements or alternative therapies that have not been written up by a medical practitioner in the chart. The blue page of regular medication will last 6 months if used on a regular basis. There are extra blue pages that can be inserted in the charts for routine medications – please call the Xavier office if needed.

Families are encouraged to keep the medication chart with the child's medications and take the chart with them to each medical appointment so that changes can be documented.

The end of Feb 2010 will hopefully be the date where all appropriate families would have been transitioned over to the new charts.

If you have any questions relating to the new Medication Chart process please do not hesitate to contact a Xavier RN.

Families are encouraged to keep the medication chart with the child's medications

Promoting Change In Our Communities

SHUT OUT

In August 2009, a report entitled “Shut Out: The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia” was launched by the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council and presented to the Australian Government.

This report highlights that people with disability have the same desires as everyone else for a fulfilling and productive life, yet all too often struggle to access the things most people take for granted. It also demonstrates the determination and strength of people with disability, their resourcefulness and innovation.

This report will inform the National Disability Strategy

and help governments to identify the barriers and issues facing people with disability, their families and carers. The work through the National Disability Strategy will continue by the Australian Government in partnership with state and territory governments, and with support and advice from the Council.

For more information on the Strategy, and to download a copy of the report please visit the FaHCSIA website at www.fahcsia.gov.au or phone 1800 050 009 to order the report in print.

Blue Skies

In September 2009, the Hon Anastacia Palaszczuk, the Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children’s Services and other guests joined the Blue Skies Group in the official launch of the Blues Skies Scenario. The purpose of the development of the Scenario was to establish a vision for an alternative future for people with disability, their families and supporters, for consideration to the broader disability sector and the community. The scenario includes a range of strategies for achieving the vision and the expectations for people with disability, their families, service providers, all levels of government and the broader community.

The Blue Skies Group was developed around concerns that many Queenslanders with disability don’t get the support they need to live decent lives in the communities of their choice; and there is a high level of reliance on a funding and service delivery system that is predominantly crisis driven. The Scenario offers an alternative future which focuses on the development of a more inclusive community.

If you would like to know more about the Blues Skies Group and the Scenario or provide input into the development of a vision of a preferred future, please visit www.blue-skies.info.

New look Xavier Newsletter

We take great pleasure in introducing our fresh new format for the Xavier Newsletter. We are very interested in any suggestions or comments regarding this new look. Please feel free to send any feedback to either Sue at [south on postmaster_s@xcsn.org](mailto:south_on_postmaster_s@xcsn.org) or to Paula at [North on postmaster_n@xcsn.org](mailto:north_on_postmaster_n@xcsn.org).

Xavier Thanks the Community Benefit Fund



The Queensland Government's Gambling Community Benefit Fund provided \$11,236.50 to Xavier Children's Support Network for the purchase of mobility equipment for the loan pool to assist with recreational and community access.



No Interest Loan Service (NILS)

Carers Queensland has recently introduced the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) in partnership with Good Shepherd and the Queensland Government. NILS provides interest-free loans for individuals or families on low income. It is a community based program that enables people to access fair, safe and equitable credit for the purchase of goods and services. The scheme is available to carers of genuine low income state wide from September.

Loans of up to \$1200 can be offered for the purchase of

essential household goods and carers genuinely of low income and who have a health card or pension card are eligible to apply.

To find out more about NILS for Carers, please call Carers Queensland on 1800 242 636 or your nearest Carers Queensland Regional Office.

Storage of Personal Information at Xavier

When your family commenced service with Xavier, a personal information file was created; both in hard copy and electronic.

Your files contain such things as-

- assessment information
- individual support plans
- copies of correspondence
- signed consent forms
- staff file notes
- therapist and nurse prescriptions, and
- copies of direct care documentation e.g. care plans and medication forms.

Your hard copy file is kept in a locked cupboard and your electronic file on protected computer equipment. Your family files can only be accessed by relevant staff needing to enter or retrieve data i.e. staff *directly* involved with your service provision. If you wish to access your file, you can at any time request permission in writing to the area manager.

The area manager may also access your file to conduct regular audits to ensure documentation complies with service standards.

Your personal information once you no longer receive service from Xavier, is archived securely until 21 years after your child's birth. It is then destroyed by shredding and deletion from the computer system.

Up Coming Events

Christmas School Holidays



Looking for ideas, you may already be familiar with the popular Brisbane's Child magazine but you can also visit their website at

www.webchild.com

On the website you can view their calendar of events by a specific date or week or month and then access detailed information about the events including contact numbers and prices. You can also search by categories e.g. Library stories, art & craft, playgroups, community notice etc. Definitely worth a look if you are looking for new ideas to entertain children.

Xavier Childrens Support Network

Southside
284 Pine Mountain Rd
Mt Gravatt East QLD 4122
Ph 07 3216 8811
Fax 07 3216 8778

Northside
1935 Gympie Rd
Bald Hills QLD 4036
Ph 07 3261 6950
Fax 07 3216 6055

www.xcsn.org

Christmas Closure

Just a reminder that Xavier will be closed over this holiday period from noon Friday 18th December 2009 and reopening Monday 4th January 2010



Parent Training - January–June 2010

2010 JAN	2010 FEB	2010 MARCH	2010 APRIL	2010 MAY	2010 JUNE
Holiday Season	12/02/2010 CPR/SFA South	10/03/2010 Futures Planning North & South	28/04/2010 Manual Handling North & South	14/05/2010 CPR/SFA South	16/06/2010 Futures Planning North & South
	26/02/2009 CPR/SFA North			28/05/2009 CPR/SFA North	

CPR = Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation

SFA = Senior First Aid

Manual Handling = Lifting, Holding, Back-care etc.