

Over

Mountains

to the Sea...

PARISH DISABILITY CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

Dear families and volunteers

As I drive between the Macarthur and the Shoalhaven, I dream of ways I can connect the wonderful families and volunteers I meet and communicate your ideas and stories to each other. I hope you are impressed with the letterhead. I painted it and my trusty assistant, Joy scanned it and together we produced this idea of a newsletter. This is the result. What do you think?

INVITATION TO ALL VOLUNTEERS, PARENTS AND CARERS TO MEET OUR NEW DISABILITY ADVOCATE

The big news is that the Diocesan Office of Disability welcomes Jacinta Wall to the new role of Disability Advocate. Jacinta's role is to assist people with disabilities to experience their spirituality and their inclusion in the Parishes of the Illawarra and Southern Highlands in our Diocese. I urge you to try and attend one of the following:

MACARTHUR - MEET & GREET

Parents / volunteers are invited to meet Jacinta on Thurs 14 September, 10:30 - 11:30am at Centacare, 35A Cordeaux St, Cambelltown OR 1:30 - 2:30pm at St Paul's Meeting Room, Corner of John and Mitchell Streets, Camden.

SHOALHAVEN - MEET & GREET

Parents / volunteers are invited to meet Jacinta on Wed 27 September in the St Michael's Parish meeting room (demountable) 20 North St., Nowra 2:00 - 3:00 pm OR 7:30 - 8:30pm.

AWARENESS MASSES

MACARTHUR - An Awareness Mass hosted by the youth of Macquarie Fields Parish was held on 13th August. This was a celebration of the gifts of all people and an experience of each person having a place in our Church and knowing that everyone also has a story that longs to be heard and shared.

SHOALHAVEN - We are planning a second Awareness Mass in Nowra on 2nd or 3rd Sunday of November. More information in October.

NEW SOCIAL ACTIVITY IN SHOALHAVEN

FAMILY & FRIENDS DISCO

Dance the afternoon away at Shoreline Restaurant, Cnr Kinghorn & Douglas Streets, Nowra

When: 12 noon to 4pm, Every 2nd Saturday
Jul 15, 29 Aug 12, 26 Sept 9, 23 Oct 7, 21
and so on. **Cost:** \$5.00 pp includes Sausage Sizzle and entertainment Soft drinks & chips on sale. **Further details:**
Judy Davies 4421 6757 or Jan Lewis 4423 2801

JAN WING, VOLUNTEER from SACRED HEART PARISH CENTRE, BOMADERRY

We rejoice with Eddie and Jan Wing on the occasion of Jan's Reception into the Catholic Church on 6 August 2006, the Feast of the Transfiguration. Welcome!

SEND AN EMAIL to jheininger@materdei.org.au to receive future newsletters electronically. Put "Shoalhaven/Macarthur Newsletter" in the subject heading.

HAPPENINGS IN OUR SHOALHAVEN COMMUNITY

I have a story about my son, David who has made giant steps towards his independence over the past 11 months. At the age of 37 he and our family started to explore the possibility of David living away from our family home in Bomaderry. He started to visit "Eloera" in Ulladulla, an hour's drive from us. He visited one day a week for many weeks. This was an attempt to familiarise him with his new home. There was a nerve-racking period for our family when David was then introduced to an overnight stay, which was repeated for many months before he became comfortable with this extraordinary change in his life. In May this year the big day arrived when David was ready to move to "Eloera" for weekly stays. David now comes home to Bomaderry each weekend. Our family has received extraordinary support and friendship from Betty Garratty, a parishioner from St Michael's Parish, Nowra. We have also received wonderful understanding and help from the Manager of "Eloera" in Ulladulla. Now David loves returning to "Eloera" and looks forward to seeing his new friend, Daniel.

He gives me the biggest 'goodbye' hug and a beautiful smile and his wave assures me that he is happy and contented with this new chapter in his life.

Judith Winnem from the Bomaderry Parish Community

HAPPENINGS IN OUR MACARTHUR COMMUNITY

On Sunday 13th August 2007, a very special event occurred at our Sunday Mass at St Clare's, Narellan Vale. Rachel received the three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation. At 19, Rachel decided she wanted to make her First Communion and be confirmed because she had attended these occasions for her cousins and wanted to do the same as they did. She wanted to have the same chance they did to become a part of the Church.

At Mass she followed everyone else up the aisle, and as they received Communion, she received a Blessing.

Rachel is a good example of being embraced by the faith of her extended family that also asked for Rachel to receive the Sacraments and be welcomed as a fully initiated member of the faith community. A young woman who can independently offer up a prayer, put ever so simply, "pray for my nanny and pop and please look after them" and in doing so touch a whole community, surely does answer Henri Nouwen's question:

"How can people with disabilities give their spiritual gifts to us and call us to love?" By sharing her gifts and her participation in our Church life, Rachel has strengthened our whole community.

Alison Gatt, volunteer from Narellan Vale Parish

CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER by the Brisbane Team has good disability information. To receive a copy, email to mcl.fl@bne.catholic.net.au with a subject heading "Parish Disability Connections"

PROHIBITED EMPLOYMENT DECLARATION

NSW Child Protection regulations require that only the current approved version is to be used. Consequently a new form is enclosed. Could Shoalhaven volunteers please complete the form and return it to me at your earliest convenience. Thank you.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY 3/12/06

Check the website below to find out what activities are on in your area <http://www.internationaldayofpeoplewithdisability.com.au/>

Thank you for reading this 'hot off the press' newsletter and please take the opportunity to attend the one hour meeting to have conversations with the new Disability Advocate, Jacinta Wall. See you there and blessings upon you and your families,