



Investing In Our Youth Inc is a not for profit community based organisation that promotes the healthy development of CHILDREN and YOUNG PEOPLE in the South West Region.

E-NEWSLETTER

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WHERE DID IT ALL BEGIN?

Investing In Our Youth Inc grew from a community forum in Bunbury in 1999 featuring guest speakers from the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research. This forum led to the formation of an 'Investing in Bunbury's Youth' steering committee. The founding members aligned with a model of prevention and community mobilisation called 'Communities That Care'. Communities That Care (CTC) was developed in the USA by Professor J. David Hawkins and Professor Richard F. Catalano. The model identifies and addresses priority areas to promote healthy development before young people become involved in problem behaviours.

This model promotes the idea that certain risk factors can increase the chance that a child will grow into a young person or adult with problem behaviours such as involvement in youth crime, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, or school failure. Alternatively, protective factors can buffer children and young people against negative consequences. Protective factors can include measures such as strengthening parental-child relationships, and giving children and young people the opportunities to be involved and valued in their families, schools and communities.

The model of risk and protective factors is still relevant and timely and has been featured in recent reports released by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth.

Investing In Our Youth supports a united and proactive approach to promoting the healthy development of children and young people, by working in partnership with community service organisations, business, government and the wider community.

SOUTH WEST DISABILITY COALITION REFERENCE GROUP LAUNCH SERVICE DIRECTORY

Hooray! The SW Disability Coalition Reference Group is celebrating the long awaited launch of a directory for families with children with special needs.

Mayor David Smith is hosting an afternoon tea at the City of Bunbury to celebrate the directory launch on July 29.

Other dignitaries at the launch will include President of the reference group, Naomi Amat, and Dr Ron Chalmers, Director General, Disability Services Commission, WA.

Naomi Amat has been a key driver in this project and should be recognised for the significant amount of volunteer time she has contributed to collecting information for the

directory. Naomi has been supported by a reference group with representation from organisations such as Investing In Our Youth, Australian Red Cross, Disability Service Commission, Milligan, Enable, and the WA Country Health Service –SW.

Those interested in securing their own copy of the directory can register their interest by email at admin@milligan.org.au.

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Acknowledgements

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ROYALTIES FOR REGIONS FUND LEAF TRAINING PACKAGE

Members of the award winning Linking Education and Families (LEAF) program steering group are jumping for joy after receiving news that an application to the Royalties for Regions scheme has been successful in securing funds for a LEAF multimedia training package.

The LEAF program is a school based program that caters for families with children aged 0-4 years. The program aims to assist children in the transition to school as well as raising parental awareness of the importance of the early years. The program is currently running at South Bunbury Primary School, Bunbury Primary, Withers Primary, and primary schools at Collie and Yarloop.

As part of the LEAF program Play Cafes are offered at kindy one day per week. Parents enjoy Play Cafes because they provide a great family introduction to kindy. They also appreciate the opportunity to interact with other mums and dads and to access lots of useful early childhood information.

Children love Play Cafes. They play and learn through interactive activities such as play-dough, painting, stories and rhyme, cutting, gluing, drawing, singing, throwing balls and bean bags, music, marching, printing animal tracks, and using finger puppets. They also practice their social skills such as sharing and taking turns while enjoying indoor and outdoor activities.

There is a lot of interest from schools in the region who would like to develop more links with the community. A self learning LEAF training package will help make this

a reality providing easily accessible links to the program, research links and a wide variety of 'early years' information. This will assist primary schools who have an interest in delivering the program. It will also help them to develop partnerships between the school and the community.

The LEAF program is founded on exemplary partnerships between the Department of Education; the Western Australian Country Health Service—SW; the Department for Communities; Investing In Our Youth Inc, Local Government Authorities and the South West Development Commission.



Pictured: LEAF steering group members - WACHS-SW Community Health Nurse Claire Philipps, LEAF Program Coordinator Fiona Farren, IIOY Project Officer Carmen Gregg, and South Bunbury Primary School Principal, Ian Harvey, (absent, Parent Representative, Rebecca Cotton and Department for Communities representative Bernie Evans).

AND THERE'S MORE GOOD NEWS FOR LEAF...

In yet more positive developments for the Linking Education and Families program, we are pleased to report that Fiona Farren is one of ten national award winners in the 2009 National Excellence in Teaching Awards. This is a well deserved award for Fiona who maintains a

creative and committed approach to working with families with young children.

We are also very pleased to learn that Minister for Health the Hon Dr Kim Haimes, has confirmed that the Child and Adolescent Community Health Service plans to examine the feasibility, cost and effectiveness of the LEAF program and have built a review of the program into their 2010-11 Operational Plan.

INTRODUCING INVESTING IN OUR YOUTH CHAIRPERSON, PROFESSOR RHONDA OLIVER

Investing In Our Youth could not function without the continued voluntary support of Board members. Board members will be invited to provide us with a brief profile in upcoming newsletters. Professor Rhonda Oliver (pictured) is the current Chair of Investing In Our Youth.



Tell us about your background?

I was a classroom teacher working in and with schools for more than 10 years. I have been a researcher and worked at universities for a number of years. I started at UWA and have been with ECU for nearly 14 and a half years. Internationally I am known for my work on child second language acquisition, nationally and locally I am recognised for my literacy research and my work

related to indigenous education. I have most recently been working with the Wongutha school (a boarding school for Indigenous students located near Esperance, (but with students coming from all around the State).

Why do you support the work of Investing In Our Youth?

Because I think it is very, very important. I really do believe in investing in young people. They are our future and beside deep down I really like young folk!

What would you like IIOY to achieve in the future?

Our purpose is to act in an advocacy role for young people, and although we have clear goals, I appreciate our flexibility and so I would like us to continue to be responsive. Our great strength is that we can really respond to what is happening.

What are some of your interests outside work?

I am a keen supporter of the Wildcats and follow my son who plays SBL basketball (sadly he played only 13 senior games this year before dislocating his foot). I also love gardening and design - something that has rubbed off on our daughter – who is in her final year of architecture.

BE ALCOHOL AWARE

The Investing In Our Youth Board has adopted a plan to set priority annual and biannual targets. IIOY is currently targeting teen alcohol awareness.

Applications have been submitted to access funds for young people to develop alcohol awareness activities. This plan is dependent on funding and would rely on guidance from a steering group with expertise in the drug and alcohol field.

Investing In Our Youth are also actively seeking funds to reimburse expenses for a visit to the South West from Bruce Clark from the Leigh Clark Foundation. The Leigh Clark Foundation is a registered charity, promoting alcohol awareness among young people and their parents.

www.leighclarkfoundation.com.au

Bruce Clark tragically lost his son Leigh when Leigh consumed a 375ml bottle of imitation vodka essence (approximately 22 standard drinks) at a private house party. Bruce now donates his spare time to talk to sporting groups and high schools.

Investing In Our Youth has purchased a DVD released by the Paraplegic Benefit Fund titled 'Three' <http://www.pbf.asn.au/index.php?id=41>. This DVD is made by young people for young people and tells about the choices that can change lives. Although it predominantly has a road safety message, each of the stories shared in the DVD involve alcohol. The DVD runs for 27 minutes. Please feel free to borrow this DVD – we would like to see it widely used.

DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS

State Commits Funds to Promote Responsible Parenting

Of interest in the WA State Budget 2010/11 is an announcement that 28 million over four years has been allocated to expand Responsible Parenting services in regional areas. The Responsible Parenting Initiative (RPI) aims to promote the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children do not engage in anti-social, truanting or offending behaviour. This service provides intensive support to parents to help re-establish their natural authority

and to improve family relationships. For more information see <http://www.community.wa.gov.au/DCP/Resources/ResponsibleParentingInitiative/>

Office of Early Childhood

The WA Commissioner for Children and Young People, Michelle Scott, and Prof Fiona Stanley are campaigning for an office of early childhood that will sit outside any existing government departments and report directly to a Minister who has clear responsibility for this area.

The Department of Education has established an Office of Early Childhood Development and Learning. However, at this stage, that Office is only responsible for administering the COAG Early Childhood Agenda (which basically comprises implementing the National Quality Standards, universal access, and the building of the five Early Learning and Care Centres). The Office has not expanded its remit to cover early years in general. It is a confusing environment for early years practitioners, and this is the primary reason that the Commissioner and others have been advocating for the establishment of one agency to encompass all the varying elements of early child development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many agencies (too many to name) have assisted our efforts to resource local projects for children and young people by providing specialist advice and writing letters of support. Thank you for your time and your resilience!

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