

FaPMI Newsletter

(Families where a Parent has a Mental Illness)



Welcome to the Spring edition of the 2017 newsletter. Term 3 of school is almost complete. It's hard to believe that we are heading towards term 4 in only a few weeks!

It is really great to have input from you as the reader, and the feedback we have received regarding the MAT program is very helpful. (See page 5)

The book reviewed this edition was *Lola Night* and it was riveting. It covered a lot of difficult ground, but I found it very honest and real. The reading level would be middle to upper secondary school.

Exciting news for FaPMI is we now have full staffing in our team. Georgia Cripps is our newest member, but she is not new to Eastern Health. She is the Senior Social Worker for the Mental Health Program and has worked across the program for many years with consumers and their families. We are very excited to have her on board, and she works Thursdays and Fridays.

FaPMI Coordinator Team

Bronwyn Sanders (Mon, Tues, Wed) CHAMPS Referrals

Kirsty Jungwirth (Mon, Tues, Thurs)

Michelle Hegarty (Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri)

Georgia Cripps (Thurs, Fri)

Becca Allchin (Tues or Wed)

Ph: 9871 3988, Murnong Clinic, 4 Bona Street, Ringwood East

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If you would like to contribute to the newsletter in any way, please contact **Kirsty Jungwirth, Editor, on 0457 544 096 or kirsty.jungwirth@easternhealth.org.au**

Programs:

FaPMI Family Fun Day :

When? Sunday 29 November, 3pm—7pm

Where? Lifeworks, Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood

CHAMPS and MAT programs will be running in Term 1, 2018,.

Contact Bronwyn Sanders to make a referral on 0408 291 580



Lyrebird Track & 1000 Steps in Ferntree Gully

History and facts of the 1000 Steps Kokoda Track Memorial Walk:

The walk was first created in the 1900's, originally made from the trunks of fern trees laid along the wetter areas to make climbing easier. In the 1950's permanent concrete steps were installed. The 1000 steps represent the 'Golden Staircase' a name given by the Australian Army Engineers and others into the track between Uberi and Imita Ridge in Papua New Guinea.

There are not actually 1000 Steps, there are approximately 770 and the total ascent is 290 metres.

It's a lovely place for a walk but if you find a walk too strenuous, there is a great playground at the base of the walk where you can have a picnic with the family.

How to get there:



Public transport:

Take the Belgrave line train and get off at Upper Ferntree Gully station, walk east following the Burwood Highway to the Ferntree Gully picnic grounds entrance which is near the intersection of Mount Dandenong Tourist Rd. The walk starts approximately 1km from the train station.

By car:

Enter the car park from Burwood Highway, there are plenty of parking spaces but it's very busy on weekends. You can park at the train station which is an easy walk to the picnic grounds.



School holiday activities— The William Ricketts Sanctuary

The William Ricketts Sanctuary covers four acres of beautiful fern gully land with 92 ceramic sculptures, near the top of Mt Dandenong.

Situated in the Dandenongs in a ferny glade, William Ricketts Sanctuary is a place of beauty and tranquillity, due both to the natural setting and the mystical sculptures half hidden among ferns along the pathways. It is a place for quiet reflection and for contemplation of the essence of the vision of William Ricketts. Many travel across the world to visit this place time and time again.

Things to Do

Kiln-fired clay sculptures of Aboriginal figures are discreetly set among rocks, fern trees and Mountain Ash. These sculptures are an expression of Rickett's philosophy - that all people need to act as custodians of the natural environment in the same way as Aborigines, the inspiration for much of his work.

Stroll through the gardens and explore the 92 ceramic sculptures of people and animals which merge with the natural surroundings.

Enjoy the audio-visual display featuring William Ricketts where visitors can see for themselves the vision and passion that live in his art.

Heritage

In the 1930s, William Ricketts bought a four-acre bush block on Mount Dandenong and called it Potter's Sanctuary. Word spread about the extraordinary sculptures that began to adorn the property. In time, the Victorian Government heard about his work and, in the early 1960s, the land and adjoining blocks were bought for the people. William Ricketts lived on at the Sanctuary into his nineties and continued to create his sculptures until his death in 1993.

Opening Hours:

The Sanctuary is open daily from 10:00am to 4:30pm daily (except Christmas Day).

The sanctuary will close during dangerous weather conditions, high fire risk or for major works. Check current conditions on the day of your planned visit to confirm it is open.



Cost:

Free Admission

Source: www.melbourneplaygrounds.com.au

Helping Others Really Does Help Ourselves

Author: Dr Helena Popovic, www.drhelenapopovic.com



In the late 1930s Harvard researchers began a study of over 700 men that tracked their physical, mental and emotional health for the next 78 years. Not surprisingly, having a difficult childhood (characterised by illness, abuse or extreme poverty) often led to fewer opportunities and less happiness in later life. However when they reached adulthood, those individuals who decided to mentor young people going through hardship became more contented and fulfilled than those who had no such interaction with the next generation.

Another notable finding was that men who engaged directly with troubling issues, rather than sweeping them under the carpet, had better relationships with people. Unresolved issues can drain us of energy and distance us from others, even if we think we've put the matter out of our mind. It isn't that we deliberately withdraw or pay less attention at work—the unconscious burden of an upsetting event smoulders in our subconscious. Speaking (not shouting to the person you believe is responsible for your distress gives them the opportunity to explain their side of the story. You may even discover it was all a big misunderstanding.

An earlier study that tried to uncover the secret of becoming a centenarian (living to 100 years) found that longevity wasn't related to having less stress in life—it was related to knowing how to bounce back *after* stressful events. In fact one of the centenarians attributed his long life to 'Going to bed when I probably should have stayed up worrying.'

Another researcher Steven Locke studied the effects of stressful life events on the immune function of Harvard graduates by measuring the number of natural killer (NK) cells in their blood. Those who coped poorly with stressful events and reported feeling anxious or depressed had fewer and less effective NK cells. When their cells were placed in the presence of infectious agents, they were sluggish in the attack. Conversely those students who experienced stressful events but handled them effectively showed higher immune cell activity—even higher than for students who experienced few demands and low anxiety.

Overcoming challenges also boosts brain growth. Two groups of rats were reared under identical conditions. They all belonged to the same breed and were fed the same food. The only difference between them was that one group were given food without having to work for it while the second group had to overcome obstacles in order to get food. After three months the scientists scanned the brains of all the rats and found that those who had overcome obstacles had bigger brains (a larger cerebral cortex) than rats simply given food without having to exert any effort.

Friedrich Nietzsche was onto something when he said 'That which doesn't kill us makes us stronger.' It also makes us smarter.

For any further information about books, workshops and blogs by Dr Helena Popovic, email at: enquiries@drhelenapopovic.com

Personal Story

From Little Things Big Things Grow...

The MAT (Martial Arts as Therapy Program)

Both myself and my son are so thankful to be a part of this program. It has been such an amazing tool for my son to use in everyday life. The program has built Logan's confidence and taught him to have a voice and use his words. He has made friendships from the group. I wish the program could run longer because if I could see such a big change in just 6 weeks, I would love to see what 10 weeks could do! The kids and families we met are fantastic. Meeting people in similar situations was great.

Craig the instructor was great. He was firm but fair with his approach, which worked great with the kids. He was a great positive role model. The organisers were nothing but amazing and so welcoming. With mental illness this makes it easy to walk into a new environment.

Logan's Say:

Logan said it was good. We got to break a board at the end. It was soooo cool. I liked meeting new kids.

Thank you so much.

PS Something for the parents to do while we wait might be nice. For example, information to help with the kids and to get to know the other families. Also gives Craig time to work with the kids without the families around to interrupt or kids to play up because mum or dad are in the room.

Regards,

Elizabeth O'Brien



Spotlight on a Service

What is your name? Kathy Collet

Who do you work for? Eastern Health Adult Mental Health Program

What is your role? Carer Consultant

How long have you worked in this position?
4 1/2 years



Tell us about your job.

I am employed to represent the carer voice at many levels within the Adult Mental Health Program at Eastern Health. I see my role as ensuring that Carers health and wellbeing needs are included as core work across the Adult Mental Health Program.

I attend a range of meetings at a Strategic Level to represent the Carer Voice and ensure carer's needs are considered when developing policies, procedures, and implementing work practices across the Adult Mental Health Program. I also coordinate the Eastern Carers Network.

I am responsible for administering the Carer Support Fund, which assists carers and families of consumers who are case-managed by Eastern Health. The carers and families may be under financial pressure due to their caring role.

The other program I encourage people to attend is 'Understanding Mental Illness', which is a program that operates monthly to provide information and support for carers, friends and family members who know or support someone who has a mental health difficulty.

What is the best part of your job?

I like giving carers within the Eastern Metropolitan Region a voice at Eastern Health.

What is a key achievement you are proud of?

Change takes time. It has taken 4 years to implement the Carer Experience Survey—which will be completed annually alongside the Consumer Survey. The purpose of the survey is to provide accurate data around how we are responding to carer needs and if carers are being included in the recovery journey of their loved one.

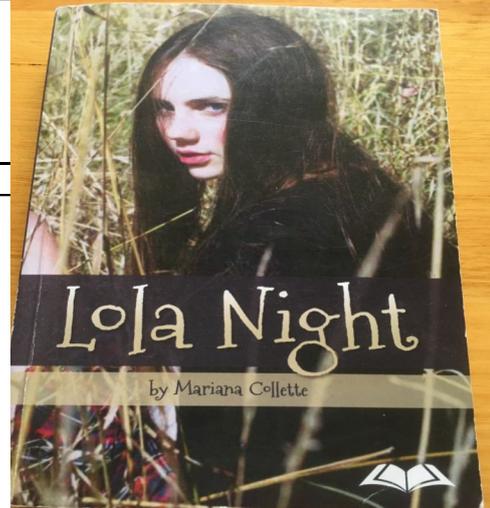
Always having carers needs on the agenda at every meeting and embedded into clinical practice—I'm the squeaky wheel! It is very exciting to see the peer workforce growing at Eastern Health—people with Lived Experience assisting at all levels of service delivery.

Book Review

By Kirsty Jungwirth

Lola Night

By Mariana Collette



This riveting book, which may primarily appeal to upper secondary students, due to the fact that it is a chapter book with a lot of writing, and few pictures, explores some really difficult but realistic struggles that often teenagers can experience.

The story is about a teenager Lola, written from her point of view. Her grandmother has gone to prison due to killing a man when driving when drunk. (There is a significant back story to this which evolves towards the end of the book) As a result of this, Lola's mother has a breakdown and she ends up in hospital. Lola then goes to live with her best friend's family. Lola has visits and contact with her father, which also provides challenges for her. Lola and her family's story, whilst confronting, is also hopeful and highlights the resilience and benefits of support from others, which enable the situation to improve for them all over time. It's a roller-coaster ride for Lola, but she never gives up. The story highlighted to me that it 'takes a village to raise a child'. Many of the choices Lola makes are ones many teenagers face, and having people to support her assists her to handle very difficult experiences with courage and determination.

