



Family Access Network Spring Newsletter 2020 - Volume 111

FAN

CEO UPDATE

Welcome to the FAN Spring newsletter. It has been a very cold winter trying to keep warm with high utility costs is a significant challenge, particularly at a time when we are all required to be at home other than for essential absences. I know for many it is fatiguing to hear about COVID19 however I wanted to acknowledge in the newsletter the incredible resilience of so many of the young people we support, how they have embraced engaging with us in a very different way, we know at times this is tough as nothing quite replaces being with someone in person. I am also very proud of how the FAN team have been creative and resourceful in sourcing the necessary items for clients, developing new ways of working, maintaining individual and group work in an ever changing situation.

All of our services, groups, partnerships and sector collaborations have continued, albeit digitally – the newsletter contains lots of important updates on what has been happening at FAN, please do take the time to read. If you happen to be reading this newsletter as a hard copy, we would be very appreciative, as would our newly developed Environmental Sustainability Portfolio, if you would consider signing up to receive electronically – thank you.

The FAN Annual General Meeting, to be held at 3.30pm on Wednesday 7 October, this will be a very different AGM, as it will be via zoom and participants are members, Board, Staff, Volunteers, Clients, Award recipients and their supporters – on this occasion it will not be promoted more widely. The AGM has several functions, reporting to members on our program outcomes, presenting financial audited report, electing Board members and also acknowledging and encouraging the achievements of young people – which for many of them and indeed for us is a very powerful experience, while this will be a different experience we hope it will nonetheless be memorable.

Please note the Annual Report will be available on the website following the AGM, and a copy may also be sought by contacting fan@fan.org.au

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following for their support to FAN in recent months:

- DHHS COVID19 capacity funding, extending LGBTIQ Capacity Building Project funding to December 2020, Additional Housing Establishment Fund, and Working for Victoria 0.5 EFT
- Melbourne Women's Fund

Thank you on behalf of FAN and to all that help FAN support our clients and assist them to achieve their goals.

Regards
Sue

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Board update

Creativity during lockdown

'Never let a good crisis go to waste', Winston Churchill.

When working to form the United Nations after World War II, Churchill spoke this well-known quote. While the task in front of you right now might not be forming a unifying intergovernmental organisation that aims to maintain international peace (!), I think that we are tasked with finding some meaning and opportunity amongst the crisis that is COVID-19.

I've been buoyed by the community spirit that I've seen during our Melbourne lockdowns. As the parent of a toddler, I've been keenly interested in the community pop up activities for kids. During lockdown 1.0 we had teddy bear hunts (there may still be a bear wedged in my front fence...) and pictures of rainbows in windows. For lockdown 2.0 we've seen the rise of Spoonville – communities of painted and decorated spoon characters. Spoonville originated in the English village of Winnersh and has spread to Victoria recently. This week our childcare centre has announced that they're starting a Spoonville community at the centre entrance as a way of keeping non-attending kids connected to the service. What a fantastic idea.

Small things, but they've had great impact for isolated families, including mine. So, watch out for a Spoonville community on your next week, or why not start one!

Kelly Rafferty - Treasurer



Homeless Support Services

During the winter months as we try to pull ourselves through the darkness, cold temperatures and rain, it's easy to find ourselves in constant retreat for our own self-preservation. As we over-indulge in our comfort foods and seek warmth by hiding under the blankets; we tend to neglect our personal aspirations that fulfill our inner-selves and allow for more wholesome experiences.

The good news, as the days become longer and the weather is getting warmer, spring provide us with the best opportunity to rejuvenate, reenergise and connect. Below are some activities to make the best of this season

Garden Walk

Use your allocated exercise time to get out and immerse yourself in the local parks and gardens. Gardens provide us with an opportunity to pause, slow down and appreciate the world around us. Gardens can also teach us the value of patients, care, cultivation and planning. Take a walk through your local parks and gardens this spring and notice the daffodils as they begin to bloom, take in sweet smells wafting through the air and listen to the sounds of the birds singing in synchronicity. A walk in the garden could be just what you need to revitalise yourself to fully embrace the warmth and sunshine that spring provides.

Spring Clean

When is the last time you did a thorough dusting and deep cleaning of your physical space? Use this time to do those jobs you may seem to never have time for. Giving your household a thorough clean will leave you feeling happier, accomplished and satisfied. Cleaning is also good for your health, by removing that build-up of dust, you will be helping your immune system; which seems to become overly excited around this time of the year, ahh-choo!

Gratitude Break

As if winters can't be challenging enough, we have had to endure the last one alongside a global pandemic. As the outside world is throwing us challenges that we never could have imagined, now is an ideal time to inject ourselves with some positivity. Journal your gratitude by writing down things that you are most grateful for in this moment. This activity will help you bring focus to the things that bring joy and enliven your world. The Science of Gratitude (2018) has also showed gratitude journaling can improve your physical health, sleep and increase mental fortitude.



Creating Connections - Private Rental Brokerage Program

Accessing and maintaining private rental housing for young people can be difficult at the best of times but is exasperated during this pandemic. The uncertainty of income and adjusting to this 'new normal' being at the forefront of many young people's experiences. The PRBP is continuing to support young people in accessing and sustaining private rental housing during this time through providing one on one support and brokerage assistance.

Please contact one of our Youth Support Workers at FAN to inquire about the PRBP or if you have any concerns regarding your housing circumstances. Also the Tenants Union Victoria have some fact sheets for people in private rental housing (see link below) in regards to the renting law changes during the pandemic: <https://www.tenantsvic.org.au/advice/coronavirus-covid-19/>.

Children's Program

The Children's Program - Early Years provides timely support to young pregnant / parenting families and their accompanying children, providing them with appropriate services and therapeutic interventions. The Children's Program -Early Years provides the framework to ensure FAN's physical space, resources, work practice and policies are consistent with and operating at best practice to support a child safe environment.

The Children and Young Families Support Worker is committed to providing a range of early interventions for children and to act as a resource for parent's staff and volunteers by conducting educational workshops and information sessions on current underlying issues regarding children.

For information on the current or future programs please contact FAN on 9890 2673

LGBTIQ Capacity Building

FAN is delighted that the LGBTIQ+ Capacity Building project has received an extension of funding, through to December 2020, and that all consultation, training and support is available online.

This project offers tailored support, including consultation, workshops and training, to any organisation providing services and/or support to people who are at risk of homelessness. The project aims to increase awareness and undertaking of LGBTIQ+ inclusivity in services. This work is particularly important during COVID-19 with LGBTIQ+ communities experiencing increasing stress around disconnection from community, experiences of family violence, policing, and reduced access to medical affirmation services. Services may also be experiencing challenges in translating existing inclusive practices into the online environment.

For more information or to arrange support for your organisation, please contact the project worker, Jordi Kerr, on 0413 601 172 or jkerr@fan.org.au.

Pathways to Resilience - LGBTIQ + Family Violence Therapeutic Support Group

FAN is running a new group for LGBTIQ+ young people (ages 15-25) who have experienced family violence. Experiences of family violence includes having their identity and/or appearance being dismissed, controlled or put down by parents, siblings, and/or partners.

The group meets weekly on Tuesday afternoons during school terms. All groups are currently being held online. Topics include self-care, character strengths, mindfulness, healthy relationships, helpful people, and positive emotions.

For more information or to join the group, please contact the group worker, Miles Milton, on 9890 2673 or mmilton@fan.org.au. (If you are a worker making a referral, please ensure consent for the referral has been obtained.)

Life Skills

Eastern Diversity Group

Eastern Diversity Group is a social support group for young people aged 15-25 who are of diverse gender identities, expressions, sexualities, and/or sex characteristics that are, or at risk of becoming homeless. Spring has arrived and EDG is in full swing with a variety of creative and fun activities!

Due to COVID-19 regulations, EDG has been getting together online via Zoom. During a time of social distancing and isolation, EDG has been a safe place to have some fun and keep our minds off the troubles of COVID-19. EDG has participated in online games such as JackBox Games and Minecraft. EDG has also engaged in online painting classes and Japanese plant workshops called 'Kokedama'. Recently, EDG had a Netflix party and watched the movie 'Pride' together.

Coming up this year we are still looking forward to enjoying a candle making workshop, a cooking class, online board games and much more!

We will be meeting every Thursday from 3pm to 5pm online. Call us on 9890 2673 or send an email to mmilton@fan.org.au if you're interested in joining the group. During a time of social distancing and isolation, EDG is a great place to meet some new people and have fun some fun!

Young Mum's Group

Since March 2020, the Young Mum's group have been meeting online due to the restrictions in place for COVID-19. Everyone adapted very well to the changes and instead of the usual arts and crafts activities we played a lot of online games that tested our drawing abilities. We have also made play-doh, discussed the Loch Ness Monster in depth and provided a safe space to discuss the uncertainty around the pandemic and restrictions.

The YMG is held via Zoom on a Tuesday 12pm-1pm during school terms. If you are interested in joining or would like more information you can contact Maddie on 9890 2673 or msill@fan.org.au

Peer Leadership Program

The Peer Leadership Program is informal education support program for Young People who have transitioned through our Homeless Support Services. Young people are in this program identify and share their strengths, learn how to utilise them to the benefit of their peers and the community. Graduates of the program will also be encouraged to contribute to other Life Skills Program that are run by FAN.

We have almost completed the first and will have our graduation week for our first lot of participants. During the term the participants have been designing a program activity plan. In the final session of the program, participants will have the opportunity to conduct and facilitate their activity with the group.

The next group will commence on September 16th, It will be run weekly online for 8 weeks, if you're interested in participating give us a call on 9890 2673 or send an email to aong@fan.org.au, we would love to have you with us!

Volunteers

Please see below current Volunteer Vacancies at Family Access Network , if you have any questions or queries regarding these vacancies please contact Oriana on 9890 2673 or ophutully@fan.org.au.

LEAD TENANT - FAN is currently seeking to engage a Lead Tenants aged 21 or over to assist us to support three young people in a shared living house in Balwyn. This is a voluntary live-in position that involves a 12-month commitment in exchange for rent free accommodation. You will have your own bedroom and bathroom. The Lead Tenant is required, in liaison with the agency, to ensure that house rules are maintained. The Lead Tenant is not a professional support role but rather a positive role model living in a shared property. The Lead Tenant would pay for their own food and cleaning products, utility bills are approx. \$30 per week. This position is ideally suited to someone who is interested in, or actively studying, in the Human Service Field. This position offers ongoing training and support. The purpose of the position is to act as a role model for young people to help them to live and share in independent accommodation.

VOLUNTEER MENTORS The aim of the Volunteer Mentor is to act as a neutral and consistent role model and provide friendship and support (on a one to one basis) to a young person between the ages of 15-25 years. Mentors and young people meet on a weekly basis –at a time and place that is mutually agreed -and engage in a range of low-cost activities that build positive adult relationships and community connection.

Thank you for your support!

Alfred Felton Bequest
Austbrokers Countrysde (Staff)
Canterbury Council of Churches
City of Whitehorse
DACHS Group Printers
Deakin Uni
Department of Health and Human Services
Department of Premier & Cabinet (Home Affairs)
Eastern Emergency Relief
Goods 360
KevCom
Kogo
Linc
Lion's Club Box Hill
Melbourne Inclusive Church
Orcadia Foundation - Caroline & Derek Young
Pride Foundation
Ringwood Magistrates Court
Rotary Club of Box Hill
Salvocare Eastern
Share the Dignity
St Dominic's Parish, East Camberwell
St Kilda Mum's
Street Smart
Youth Affairs - HEY Grant
Youth Connexions - Whitehorse City Council

Allan Rogerson
Ange Morgan
Brett Philipp and Band (5 Shades of Grey)
Dr. Cal Andrews
Cara Pitruzzello
Colin Bellis
David Burlew and Band (Max Zero)
Diane Godfrey
Irene Kay
Justin Bonney
Kelly Rafferty
Malcolm Romano of Designsense Web
Margaret Ogilvie
Paul Linossier

Useful Contacts

Housing Assistance

Eastern Region Opening Doors 1800 825 955
Melbourne City Mission Youth Support 9614 3688

Crisis Counselling

Lifeline – 24hrs 13 11 14
Suicide Helpline- 24hrs 1300 651 251
Kids Help Line – 24hrs 1800 551 800
Mens Line 1300 789 978
Parentline 13 22 89

Sexual Assault

Eastern CASA 9895 3281
Sexual Assault Crisis Line 1800 806 292

Health

Family Planning Victoria 9257 0100
Maternal & Child Health line 13 22 29
Nurse On Call – 24hrs 1300 60 60 24

Domestic Violence

Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre 1800 015 188
Eastern Domestic Violence Service (EDVOS) 9259 4200

Child Abuse

Child Protection Crisis Line 13 12 78
Child Abuse Prevention Services 1800 688 009

Legal Aid

Eastern Community Legal Centre Box Hill 9285 4822
Boronia 9762 6235

Alcohol & Drugs

Direct Line 24hrs 1800 888 236
Youth Substance Abuse Services – 24hrs 1800 458 685
Eastern Drug & Alcohol Services 1300 650 705

Sexuality & Gender Identity

Gay and Lesbian Switchboard 9663 2939
Transgender Victoria 9517 6613