



Family Access Network Summer Newsletter 2020 - Volume 112

FAN

CEO UPDATE

Welcome to the FAN Summer newsletter. We are all encouraged that we are enjoying the lessening of restrictions, coinciding with more welcoming weather to be out and about – nonetheless the team at FAN remain committed to working in a COVID-safe way and so we are progressing safely back into face to face contact across all of our programs, groups and partnerships. Once again I thank the team for their commitment and creativity during 2020.

All of our services, groups, partnerships and sector collaborations have continued, albeit most of them 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 was held on Wednesday 7 October, and although it was via zoom it captured well and celebrated the work of FAN, the achievements of clients and volunteers, election of Board and endorsement of our Annual Report – congratulations to one and all for a successful AGM. In particular I would like to acknowledge the award recipients:

Rhys Fox Achievement Award
Evelyn Pitman
Codyee Currie-Caine

Stephen B McLoughlin Encouragement Award
Romie Haroun
Natasha Issmael

Leo Clarebrough Volunteer Recognition Award
Brooke Fletcher & Joe Horak

I am pleased to confirm the election of the 2020 – 2021 Board of Governance: Di Godfrey Chair; Jose Abolo Deputy Chair; Kelly Rafferty Treasurer, Hannah Hodges Secretary; and fellow Board members, Bronwen Henry, Richard Scott, Raylene Carr and Ange Morgan – I look forward to working with you in the year ahead. Please note the Annual Report is available on the website www.fan.org.au

In November we undertook our Accreditation with QIP, against the QIC, DHHS and Rainbow Tick Standards – I would like to thank Michelle Thompson for her key role in overseeing the process and to the board, staff, volunteers, clients, and stakeholders who contributed to the process and participated in interviews. We had a great result and are thrilled to have received a number of EXCEEDED practice Rainbow Tick – more information on that will be available in the next newsletter as we are currently in the process of finalising reports and outcomes with QIP.

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

- AB Countrywide
- Maddy Reidy
- Rachel Foster
- Julieanne Darling

Thank you on behalf of FAN, your support goes directly to our clients and assists them to achieve their goals.

On behalf of the Board and the FAN team, I extend my warm wishes for the holiday season.

Regards
Sue



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Board update

2020 has been a busy and challenging period, particularly for Melbournians, as we navigate a rapidly changing environment, made more complex by the COVID-19 pandemic. I would like to thank the staff at FAN for their outstanding efforts during this time and recognise the strength in leadership at FAN that has allowed us to continue to support our clients in a meaningful way. We have achieved and will continue to achieve some wonderful things and we are learning a lot on our current journey.

Throughout, FAN's role remains constant in our brief to respond to the diverse needs of homeless and at-risk young people and young families. A great quote from Helen Keller "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much" is particularly relevant. To our clients and colleagues, you have seen more oddness embedded into your journey than ever before. Because of this you have developed a flexibility that you probably did not know you had and it is a time for you to celebrate all you have achieved amid this uncertainty.

It is a privilege to serve my third year as a board member with FAN and bear witness to the work FAN does on behalf of its clients and the broader community. As we approach the festive season, I would like to take the opportunity to wish everyone happy holidays!

Bronwen Henry - Board Member

Homeless Support Services

COVID-BLUES

2020 has been a bit of a curveball and a difficult time for many of us. Moving towards COVID normal with reduced restrictions is a great time to focus on resetting and getting back to some kind of normalcy!

CLEAN YOUR SPACE

Cleaning can be a real pain and not many of us enjoy it but cleaning a space you reside in can do wonders for mental health and emotional wellbeing. A clear space equals a clear mind!

Wash that mountain of clothes and throw out that can of soft drink that has been staring at you since March because it is time to motivate your brain and kick those isolation blues. Giving your household a thorough clean which will leave you feeling happier, more accomplished and satisfied.

SELF-GROOMING

During COVID-19, even though many of us had more free time than we knew what to do with, self-betterment became difficult after the seventh day in pyjama bottoms. Get out there and get that yearly haircut, trim that beard or get that makeover and step out as a new you!

SOCIALISE

We are heading back into the warmer months which is a great opportunity to catch up with friends in the park. A lot of people are excited to catch up with friends but some of us have climatised to the isolation and are feeling anxious about leaving the home. Be mindful of if your friends are a bit hesitant to hanging out as after all these months social outings might be a little too much to handle.

SELF-CARE

Self-care is a highly individual practice. There's no set prescription for how or when to do it. You should take time every day to do something for yourself. It can be as simple as going for a walk, watching your favourite movie or even having a dance in the kitchen to your favourite tune.

BE MINDFUL

Finally, be aware of your thoughts and feelings and the mental health of the people around you and how they feel.

COVID-19 had been a hard time for all of us and some people who were outgoing and appeared to be positive might have struggled during COVID-19 lockdown.

Ask if your friends are okay, ask them about their days and check in with how they feel. A simple "are you okay?" can sometimes go a long way for people who might be struggling.

Creating Connections - Private Rental Brokerage Program

The Christmas period and end of 2020 is now approaching and with this a time for reflection on our achievements and triumphs. This year has had additional hardships on the young people who we support through the PRBP and it becomes more apparent how important a stable, secure and affordable home is essential to young people's well-being. What is even more astounding is these achievements have continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and the regulations around lockdowns in Melbourne during this time.

The program has continued to assist young people navigate the regulations around lockdowns and continue to apply and access housing in the private rental market. It is important for young people to have an understating of their rights and changes during the pandemic and the Tenants Union of Victoria have published a great guide around this: <https://www.tenantsvic.org.au/advice/coronavirus-covid-19/>. For more information regarding the Private Rental Program you can contact a Youth Support Worker at FAN on 9890 2673.

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

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. Group will be facilitated online until the end of the year. 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.

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.

Summer has arrived and it is starting to heat up as we head towards COVID normal. During COVID-19, EDG has been facilitated online which has been extremely important in a time of social isolation.

EDG has been a safe place to have some fun with activities such as candle making workshops, origami, drawing classes and online games. As the weather warms up, EDG hopes to return to face to face activities and enjoy the sunshine such as picnics in the park!

We will be meeting every Thursday from 3pm to 5pm online. Call us on 9890 2673 or send an email to miltonm@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

As for almost everyone in the world, 2020 has been an interesting year for the Young Mum's Group. The group thrives off the social connection and sharing of experiences, so the online format did make it difficult to get the most out of the group. All of the group members made an excellent effort to attend the group weekly despite all difficulties. We are looking forward to our final group of the year being a picnic in the park where we can discuss the year that was.

The YMG will be going back to in-person next year. 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

In 2020 FAN re-established the Peer Leadership Program, this program is available to FAN clients who have transitioned through FAN's support services. The program is delivered on-line over a period of 8 weeks, participants will have the opportunity to develop leadership, communication, group work, and organisation and advocacy skills. After the initial 8-week educational program participants are provided with individual support with the opportunity to be linked to volunteer, educational or potential employment opportunities where they can further practice their skills.

We have had great engagement from the group current participants, the group has been focusing on the dynamics of teamwork and group facilitation skills. Participants were able to identify the roles they are more naturally drawn too, in doing so they gained a better understanding of they contribute in group environments and they were also able to highlight skill and traits they could work on to become a more rounded team member.

Volunteers

Please see bellow 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.

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.

Feedback - have your voice heard

At Family Access Network, we strive to provide the best support and services to our clients. A big part of ensuring that FAN is delivering the best possible support is receiving and implementing the feedback received by our clients.

Listening and acknowledging the clients voice allows us to keep our services up to date as well as change aspects of our services if necessary. Feedback loops are critically important. As part of quality governance, continuous improvement and good practice, it is essential that the client voice is not only sought and heard, but that it is genuinely used to influence change and the feedback loop is closed.

With groups such as the Young Mums & the Eastern Diversity groups we've had an overwhelming consensus that participants feel acceptance, respect and the ability to be themselves, the feeling of no judgement and being surrounded by individuals who they can relate and form friendships with.

With other parts of the FAN organisation such as HSS & PRBR clients have expressed how grateful they are for the support, not only financially but emotionally as well. Below are some examples of the feedback FAN has received.

"FAN always had my best interest at heart and never made me feel like a lesser person because I needed this support, just feeling supported and respected really gave me that boost I needed to keep going"

"My worker always had my best interest at heart and never made me feel like a lesser person because I needed this support. The financial support was of course amazing and stopped me being homeless, but just feeling supported and respected really gave me that boost I needed to keep going".

"My worker was incredibly kind and helpful through my entire process of looking for rental and then moving. She kept checking in continually and even after I had moved and settle".
"Thank you for this amazing program. If it wasn't for this program we don't know how we could have been in our home we have now. We are so thankful and appreciative for this program and for the workers who make it happen".

If you would like to leave any feedback or provide suggestions on how FAN can improve it's services, please contact fan@fan.org.au or call 9890 2673

Thank you for your support!

AB Countrywide
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

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
Maddy Reidy
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

Boronia 9762 6235

Legal Help

Eastern Community Legal Centre Ph: 1300 32 52 00 (1300 ECLC 00)

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