



Family Access Network Winter Newsletter 2021 - Volume 114

CEO UPDATE

Welcome to the FAN Winter newsletter. I am writing this on the last day of Autumn and in day 4 of our fourth lockdown – so it feels chilly and a bit grim on several levels. We had welcomed the return of face to face contact with clients and colleagues as 2021 was progressing. However the current situation reminds us that we are dealing with a pandemic that constantly evolves and with that our responses need to continue to be nimble. The team at FAN remain committed to working in a COVID-safe way and we all learned a lot from 2020 about creative ways of working and we are proud that all of our services and groups have continued throughout, albeit at times digitally. Workers and clients are now eligible for vaccination, if you are a client supported by FAN and you are unsure of the process please speak with your support worker who will assist you.

In April the FAN Board and staff team met to acknowledge the 40th Anniversary of FAN, it was the first time that the Board and staff had been physically present together so it was a double milestone event.

This 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 Environmental Sustainability Portfolio, if you would consider signing up to receive electronically – thank you.

In 2020 the Board decided to postpone the development of the new Strategic Plan to 2021, this was a common approach due to the uncertainty and also the impact of the pandemic. We are now approaching the new Strategic Plan with excitement, and have to date held a half day session with the staff, which resulted in some great observations, and we are very interested to hear from clients and other stakeholders. The Board will hold a meeting in July to consider the annual outcomes linked to the current Strategic Plan, and build on those to identify the Strategic Plan for 2021 – 2024. The final version will be presented at the 2021 40th Annual General Meeting in October.

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

- Maddy Reidy
- Ben Allen
- Donald Kay

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

Regards,
Sue



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Happy Birthday FAN!!



Board update

There is no way I expected to be writing this note in lockdown again, but as all Victorians can attest, who knows what the next day, week, month will hold. Heading back into lockdown has again reiterated the importance of volunteering. Why do I say that? I think of volunteering as effort or actions that benefit others, as opposed to yourself directly. That is not to say volunteering can't benefit the volunteer, and in fact there are many reasons that I choose to volunteer including the impact on me. Over the years I have volunteered at sporting organisations, not for profit associations, community run childcare and kindergarten centres and committees and charity boards such as FAN's.

Volunteering provides the volunteer a perspective they may not otherwise experience of life, people, beliefs, challenges and successes. It allows a person to contribute in a small way to the betterment or support of someone else's wellbeing, or even something else, such as the environment or the local park.

Your volunteering is not measured on the number of hours of you commit, the recognition you receive, or the magnitude of impact your contribution makes; it is simply you taking time to assist someone else. That could range from cooking a meal for your neighbour, through to volunteering your time at FAN for a few hours a week.

As COVID continues to impact mentally, financially and physically on our community, volunteering is as critical as ever. It also highlights the importance of organisations like Family Access Network. The way Sue, Michelle and the entire team have continued the development and running of programs and the support of our local community over the past 14 months of uncertainty has been nothing short of amazing, and on behalf of the Board I wish to extend a heartfelt thank you and sincere appreciation.

Finally, even though the weather has started to cool a lot more, there are still plenty of opportunities to explore the local neighbourhood. The photo included here is one I took last year during one of those very cold mornings!

Richard Scott



Homeless Support Services

The colder months are coming, for most of us this means a laborious climb out of bed only to walk out the front door to be greeted by the grey, gloomy skies with the wind and rain blowing in your face.

Below are some ideas to help you crush those winter blues.

Light up your room

Find some nice lamps to warm up your room on those cold gloomy mornings, even better yet grab yourself a Himalayan salt lamp to emit a warm pink glow to create a relaxing mood in your living room.

Keep active

Exercise, no matter what the conditions, has proven to reduce anxiety and increase wellbeing. Rug up and go for that walk or if you have some spare quite at home roll out the yoga mat and salute to the sun.

Find A Winter Hobby

A winter hobby helps you keep your mind busy and gives you tons of satisfaction. Knitting is a good example of a winter hobby that can distract you from the from the world outside, so try it out while you are catching up on favourite light TV shows. Other ideas include art and craft, or board and card games with family and friends.

Stay connected

During these colder months it is easy to give into the temptation of the couch and Netflix binge. Social interaction is good for your brain health and promotes a sense of safety, belonging and security.

Plan a night out with friends, there is nothing more comforting than walking off the cold frosty street into a pizza restaurant with woodfire oven sizzling up everyone's favourite food.

Or head to the Winter Village with family and friends, located at federation square in the CBD. Entry to the village is free and you can grab a hot chocolate with marshmallows from the pop-up bar. And, if you are feeling game, carve up a few laps around the ice-skating rink. The event is child-friendly and runs from June to August, more information can be found at thewintervillage.com.au.

Creating Connections - Private Rental Brokerage Program

The Private Rental Brokerage Program (PRBP) aims to support young people in securing housing in the private rental market. Whether a young person is looking for an existing share house, going to rent a new house with friends or looking for a house to live on their own there are many things that can be done to make give themselves a head start.

Some of these tips include:

Budgeting – ensuring you are not spending more than half your income towards your rent and bills and not looking and applying for properties that are out of your individual price range.

Application Pack – Have everything photocopied or on you emails and ready to go before you attend rental inspections so you can apply for a property straight away! These include your identification, proof of income (payslips or income statement) and have the application for the property already filled out.

Cover/ Introduction Letter - Another great tool is writing an introduction letter to add to your rental application, this is a great way of introduction yourself to a landlord/real estate and provides the opportunity of why you are the right person to rent the house too!

Rental References - Before you apply for any properties make sure you have a think about any rental references – it is a great idea to get any rental references you have in writing to add to your application pack.

These tips can make this process easier and ensures that you are organised and have all the information that a landlord or real estate agent require. If you have any queries regarding the PBRP please 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

Talking with Pride is a 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 at 4pm during school terms. Topics include self-care, character strengths, mindfulness, healthy relationships, helpful people, and positive emotions.

The group is currently conducting intake so if you or someone you know would be interested in participating, please contact the group worker, Miles, on 9890 2673 or mmilton@fan.org.au.

IDAHOBIT Day 2021

FAN in collaboration with Whitehorse Council Youth team, FReeZA Flying Pig Events, EACH and Headspace celebrated IDAHOBIT (International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia) by having a rainbow presence at Box Hill Central. FAN collaborated with a chalk artist to create a huge 3D rainbow magic carpet that people in the community could take photos with. There was also lots of freebies provided by other organisations such as rainbow ribbons and stickers and also provided was fairy floss, temporary tattoos, info, a DJ, snacks and many more activities. The day was a huge success, with many members of the community participating to celebrate diversity and take a stand against discrimination.



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.

EDG has been a safe place to have some fun with activities such as excursions to the aquarium, escape rooms, time zone, mini-golf and bowling as well as some arts and crafts activities where we have made jewellery, jewellery boxes and potted plants. Still to come for this term is an excursion to the Imax Cinema, paper weaving, pottery making and a trip to ACMI in the city.

We will be meeting every Thursday from 3:30pm to 5pm. Call us on 9890 2673 or send an email to miltonm@fan.org.au if you're interested in joining the group. EDG is a great place to meet some new people and have fun some fun!



Young Mum's Group

The Young Mum's Group is off to a great start for 2021. We are thoroughly enjoying being back in person and at the Burgess Family Centre. Our Art Therapy student Steph has been running arts and craft sessions with the mums. Last week they did self portraits.

The remainder of term 2 will be held at Burgess Family Centre, Box Hill on Wednesday's at 12-2pm. 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 is taking a break but will be back and ready to resume face to face in August this year. We have redesigned the program with some new games and activities and are looking forward to delivering the program in person. If you have had experiences in our service or any other homeless services and would like the chance to develop personal capacity and unlock your leadership potential, then call the office on 9890 2673 or email aong@fan.org.au

Volunteers

With International Volunteering Week approaching, we would like to say a big thank you to all our past and current volunteers for their dedication, commitment, and support. Volunteers at FAN are an integral part of our work and add so much value to the young peoples lives. There is no doubt that each and every volunteer has made a positive impact to the young people in which we work with. Alongside Volunteering Australia FAN acknowledges that it is time to Recognise. Reconnect. Reimagine. this National Volunteer Week (NVW).

Volunteering Opportunities

We currently have 2 Volunteers positions available!!!

Eastern Volunteer Group – Volunteer

We currently have a Group Volunteer Position available at our Eastern Volunteer Group (EDG). EDG runs on Thursdays 3.30 from FAN and other various locations. The Group Volunteer role involves engaging with the participants, assisting with activities and assist the group facilitator.

Lead Tenant – Box Hill

A Lead Tenant (LT) is a positive role model (over the age of 21) that young people in the property can learn from and build friendships with. The Lead Tenant can have a full time job, study, a combination of both or even be in between jobs. We are looking for somebody with a positive attitude that can be positive role model in these young people's lives.

In exchange for your valuable contribution the LT gets to live in the property Rent FREE! You do have to pay for utilities which are capped at approx. \$60 a fortnight, you would also be responsible for your own food/internet/cleaning products etc., just like you would be in a share house. You would have your own bedroom and ensuite bathroom, both with a key lock only you will have access too. We expect this to mimic real share living, so don't feel like you can't stay away for the weekend or stay out every so often.

If you are interested in either of these opportunities, please call Oriana or Michelle at Family Access Network on 9890 2673.

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.

'It gave me hope, Miles listened attentively and went above and beyond to help'

'My support worker Oriana was amazing and always willing to go above and beyond for my family, we will miss her dearly!'

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