



Easter edition

2005



From Kathryn Treston (Director)

MAMRE-BILLIA

*An Easter Message from
Rachel Johnson*

Hello to you all,

When pondering the meaning of Easter, especially here at Mamre, the word RESURRECTION always seems to stand out, and when I looked into the definition of this word it particularly feels relevant, not only for this time of the year but also for the journey for the families we are supporting.

When I looked deeper into the meaning of this word, the following definitions were evident: Rebirth, reappearance, restoration, resurgence, renewal and revitalization. Greg Buckley's article this edition certainly eludes to a similar essence when describing the importance of families gathering.

Mamre's vision, and its support for families, this year with the Inspirit Conference in September, through to day to day practical supports is surely about this also, a resurgence, a renewal for families, for people with disability. This is what we always aim to achieve, side by side with families.

In recent weeks we have received

documentation and an invitation to share in the consultation process DSQ is holding for the proposed changes to the way funding works for families. DSQ states that proposal is an **improvement strategy for: assessment, prioritisation, services and funding.** As an organisation Mamre will feed into this process, but would also like to **strongly encourage all families to have their say into the "HAVE YOUR SAY" document.** If the proposed recommendations are actioned there is no question this will have an enormous impact on the future direction of individualised assessment and funding, the role of community organisations and the role of DSQ in the lives of families. There are several ways families can access the documentation – via the internet, the website to visit is www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/consultqld, you can obtain a copy of the document by phoning Department of Communities on 1800 102 225 or Disability Information Access Line 1800 177 120 or 1800 010 222 (TTY).

Lastly, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to some of the newer families to Mamre, and to all families,

Inside this issue of news and musings:

Music Event Invitation
Parents Share Their Stories
Siblings' Update
Anna's Health Treats
Stafford House Happenings

Coorparoo News
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Parent Program
Reflections on Mamre Charter
A Fond Farewell



*AN EVENING OF MUSIC
UNDER THE STARS
WITH
JOHN COLWILL & FRIENDS*

*Where: In the Garden
21 Eldridge Street, Toowong.*

*On: Saturday, 30th April.
Time: 6.30pm for 7.00pm start.*

Wine & cheese will be served.

*Tickets: \$30.00 per person.
(\$20.00 donation; \$10.00 cost.)*

*For ticket purchase
please contact Rose or Margaret D
on 3857 5133 not later than 15th April.*

*Please join us for the third in a series of Mamre musical Events.
Well known Brisbane music identity, John Colwill, has once again generously
donated his and fellow artist talents and time to perform a program of classical
and contemporary music.
Judith Henley, the outstanding opera star, who enchanted the audience at the
last mamre musical, has again made herself available.*

*All proceeds from this event will go towards INSPIRIT, Mamre
Family Conference on September 8., 9, & 10 at Celebration Lawn,
Roma Street, Parklands.*

THE VALUE OF FAMILIES, SHARING, TALKING & GATHERING.

When parents come together, there is a universal understanding of some fundamentals - the unconditional love we feel, our willingness to go to the wall for our children and our palpable grief and fury when our children are hurt.

Sometimes, in the waves of emotion, parents turn against other parents. It is usually fear or misunderstanding which makes this happen; however it can be more destructive than the worst behaviour of a service provider. This has happened to me a number of times.

Perhaps I deserved it: I was loud and cocky, confident that dreams could become reality and challenged the most exhausted parents to get going again. To those people I apologise.

Nonetheless, it takes great courage and humility for parents to reconcile. For many years Mary and I did not see "eye to eye". We held different views and stood our ground - until recently. Mary's daughter was doing badly, her service was failing her and Mary was at her wit's end. In desperation she turned to me for guidance.

To offer assistance was one of the best decisions of my life. Mary is now a close friend. She taught me more than I could have ever helped her. We have worked together to make a better life for her daughter.

That's what I love about being a parent. We can do amazing things working together.

Margaret Ward



When we meet with professionals, doctors, therapists, providers, public servants, educators, generally we are seeking to fix things - to treat, to modify, to manage, to medicate, to finance, to apologise, to cajole, to explain, to correct and be corrected, to pacify.

More often than not when we leave, we feel diminished in some way - angry, isolated, patronised, confused, trivialised, disillusioned, disempowered, marginalised or alone.

When we gather as families, we come together as equals, sharing the love, pride, disappointments, celebrations and joys of our family life.

Surely, we should not be surprised that when we leave we feel uplifted - valued, understood, accepted, encouraged and empowered. We are not alone; we are sharing the journey.

Greg Buckley



Meeting up with and getting to know other families through Mamre has been wonderful for our family. As well as always enjoying the social aspects, I love being able to meet and talk with people who share similar issues who just know actually what you're talking about is great.

Sharing information, ideas and advice with other parents have also been of great benefit (we've learnt that the 'experts' don't always know best). I always look forward to the Mamre get-togethers - they're fun, relaxing and very welcoming.

Michelle Franklin



I have found it very valuable to meet up with other parents who have a child with a disability. It is good to talk to other people in the same situation as you. You don't have to explain yourself they understand.

We are able to offer each other mutual support. Parents are also a great resource for each other. At other times it is an opportunity to have some fun and celebrate different things in our young persons life.

I have been involved with a group of Mothers for over ten years and have found it a great support. We have become good friends and we are able to have a lot of fun but also support each other in difficult times.

THE VALUE OF FAMILIES, SHARING, TALKING & GATHERING.

Going out for dinner with friends is an enjoyable evening. When meeting new friends you tend to try to find out something that everyone shares in common. Tony & I share with David & Rose, a connection through out children with a disability. Whilst the children don't have the same disability we still found it easy to start a conversation. The conversation & friendship isn't limited to discussing disability issues but can be enhanced by the understanding you have of the things that can arise in your life. The evenings always end in laughter and we value our time together.

Bambling



ATTENTION ADULT SIBLINGS

I had the opportunity to attend the Siblings Conference in Adelaide last year and was able to meet other adult siblings and chat about our journeys. Many of us have not had the opportunity to listen or participate as a group of siblings before—it was both exciting and scary at the same time! I came away relieved and reassured that there are other siblings out there who have similar joys and sadness. I would like to extend an invitation to other Mamre adult siblings who would be interested in gathering to share a meal and listen to a guest speaker for an evening. If you are an adult sibling or if you know an adult sibling who would be interested in this evening, can you please call me at Mamre on 3857 5133 or email (sherryn@

mamre.org.au to express an interest.

Siblings Australia

Some of you may know of Kate Strohm and the Siblings Australia Project in Adelaide. The project is under threat due to loss of funding. You can help with membership or donations - visit www.siblingsaustralia.org.au.

www.Mamre

Be on the lookout for the upcoming launch of www.mamre.org.au. The site is currently being developed by Tell and will be available for surfing on 30 April 2005.

ANNA'S HEALTHY TREATS GUILT FREE AND DELICIOUS

GLUTEN AND DAIRY FREE
LOW FAT AND SUGAR
BUT STILL YUMMY

ANNA'S INGREDIENTS ARE FROM
ORGANIC SOURCES WHERE POSSIBLE

AVAILABLE AT THE MOMENT...
FRUIT AND NUT BITES
CAROB BLISS BALLS
CHOC ORANGE
BANANA LOG
PLUS MORE HEALTH TREATS TO
COME....
(COST: \$5 PER DOZEN)

TO ORDER: PLEASE RING
NOELLA ON 3289 2606

Anna was always frustrated by the lack of snacks and treats that were good for her, BUT also tasted good. Anna's diet needs to be free of gluten and dairy as well as reduced fat and sugar.... but Anna found that reduced everything else, often, meant reduced taste as well!

Anna enjoys cooking and baking, so with a little help from her family and support workers, Anna began making her own healthy and yummy snacks and started a business selling them....."Anna's Healthy Treats".

KEDRON NEWS

Hello Friends

We hope you had a great Christmas and New Year break. We also hope the school holidays were kind to you. They seemed to go so quickly here. At Kedron we alternated between taking full advantage of the air conditioning to using some of the activities provided through the "Chill Out" program. One of these was the Animal Rescue which operates out of the Down Fall Creek bush and parkland at Chermside. There are some excellent accessible concrete walking paths that you can use anytime.



Following the school holidays we had our two week-break where the house is closed for annual repairs and maintenance. Following that we were involved in Mamre staff training. The house then is open again for what we call the official start of the Kedron year. As most of you would know we have our bookings organized for the first half of this year but, if at any time something comes up and may need some support, please don't hesitate to give us a call. Together we may be able to come up with a plan.

Community member-wise all is still the same on the home front with myself, John, Stevan, Jade, Gayle and Yeukai and our ever valuable helpers from time to time in Maria and Jo.

NEWS FROM STAFFORD

Well Christmas has come and gone in a flash, and we are now looking forward to Easter! There have been some staff changes here at Stafford in the past couple of months. We have welcomed Margaret Ward to our team! Margaret has been busying herself working on the Inspirit conference two days a week.

After almost 6 years of working with Mamre in her roles as Key Worker and Administration Assistant, Pam Watson has decided to pursue other interests and has resigned from her position. Pam has been an extremely valued staff member and we will greatly miss her warmth, her encouragement and the humour she has brought to the Stafford community.

Tim has kept up his commitment with providing us with

lunch on Thursdays. Staff eagerly wait as Tim "unveils" his dish!

James continues to volunteer his time to help us out on Tuesdays. We love having him here and the work he does is always much appreciated.

We love it when parents or families pay us a visit, so please feel free to pop in for a cuppa if you're in the area, or even if you're not!



Parent Program.

The Mamre Parent Support Program aims to offer parents who have sons or daughters with disabilities, opportunities to focus on themselves; time to connect with others; to rest, relax and renew their energies. It also provides regular information sessions about disability issues. Margaret Rodgers is the Co-ordinator and Susan Wright and Peter Mathams are assistant co-ordinators.

We have slightly changed the process for booking into events this year. We have decided to try doing bookings until June with fourteen events being offered between February and June. Three of these are closed events with set groups. This calendar of events was sent out to families in December. This year, instead of making these events, "first come – first served" we asked people to contact us to let us know which events they were interested in. We considered all the requests and confirmed with people in the last few weeks. Obviously, we couldn't give everyone exactly what they wanted but we hope everyone got a place in one of the things they asked for.

If you missed out, we have vacancies in the Family Forum about Inclusion in Education on 16th April and the Expo of Ideas and Services on Friday 17th June. Please feel free to put your name down for those now or wait until we send out fliers giving more details about times, venues and speakers. If you have missed this process altogether, please feel free to put your name on a waiting list for any of the events as vacancies do arise from time to time.

Making the transition to this new process has taken us a little longer than we thought. If it isn't clear or you are not sure what is happening, please call Margaret Rodgers at the Stafford Office on 38575133.

We will send further details in late May for the second half of the year. All the best, Margaret, Susan and Peter.

COORPAROO NEWS

Coorparoo House, where things usually happen with a "minimum of fuss", has had more than its share of upheaval of late, not the least has been Laini's decision to resign. She has done this after much soul searching, and knows that she will miss the families, and the relationships that have been built up during her time in the job. But she is now Mrs Laini Oldfield, and the chance of working and spending more time with Mr Oldfield (or just plain Jordan if you prefer) and helping to further his business won out in the end. We farewelled Laini on Monday 7 March with a dinner at Coorparoo. Her last official day at work was Friday 11 March, but she will be back for a few days to assist Lorraine Juliana, who has been appointed to the position, and commences Wednesday 30 March. Welcome Lorraine!

We wish Laini and Jordan well, and know that they will maintain contact.

And while most of us prefer meek and mild sons and daughters, Cathie is actually enjoying having a cheeky daughter – she is just so pleased with the interaction that Facilitated Communication is providing between herself and Sam. For parents who are interested in Facilitated Communication, Mamre is conducting workshops during March and April.

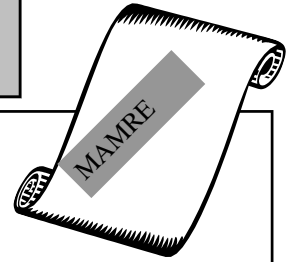
March is also a big month for Jeremy and Sharon, as they facilitate the second weekend of their six-day Pave the Way Workshop 11 to 13 March. Six families have shared a journey looking at how they continue to build a secure and interesting future for their sons and daughters.

Peter has been busy, among other things, planning and facilitating fathers' events. February 19 saw a number of fathers welcomed aboard the Palethorpe's yacht "Persuader" for a delightful sail to Amity. And on 5 April, all fathers are invited to come and sample some French cuisine at the Le Classic Restaurant, right next door to the Coorparoo Office.

"The Shop" (the downstairs area of Coorparoo House) is to receive a facelift. The first week in March saw new air-conditioning installed (we'll all miss the noise – NOT) and there are further plans to make the area a more pleasant and useful adjunct to Coorparoo House.

So if you are in the neighbourhood, remember, you are always welcome to drop in and catch up with people and goings on.

REFLECTIONS ON THE MAMRE CHARTER



In anticipation of the upcoming conference this edition is focussed on the value of families gathering. In spirit represents the ultimate gathering of families to share, celebrate and dream.

Mamre has a reputation for its innate ability to gather the family members it supports. This usually happens around food, whether it be sharing a meal or coffee and a treat. Its preparation appears so effortless, as friendly faces chat while spreading crackers on a plate and the jug boils away in the background. Often appearing incidental at the time, let me assure you there is a philosophy behind these rituals that is deeply rooted in the Mamre Community Charter.

The Community's warm welcome and hospitality is integral in the underpinning ideal that all people may feel valued and included when connected to Mamre. The gathering of families gives meaning to the life of the Mamre Community. When considered in terms of the different purposes each gathering serves to family members, its value is insurmountable.

Families gather for many different reasons including: celebrations, social occasions, family days, fund raising, forums and workshops. The value of such gatherings to families include:

- § Celebration of life and all its complexities
- § Development of relationships
- § Sharing of stories, ideas and information
- § Support in times of crisis or grief
- § Common ground on which to talk
- § Empowerment through collaboration

As the story of Abraham depicts, we strive to offer families a place where they can seek rest and refreshment before continuing on their long journey. We respond similarly to Abraham, through warm welcome and hospitality.

We envisage that families take solace in the pleasures of each gathering, be it fine food, a long hot coffee, or a friendly face. We hope this gives families the space to absorb the refreshment that celebration, information or the right company brings to their spirit before embarking on the next stage of their journey.

The Charter states that we believe that Mamre rests in the hands of God and, as the name implies it is God's friendship that binds us all together. It is upon feelings of friendship, understanding and community that families build their own hopes and dreams for their journey, one that is characterised by connectedness and love.

FAREWELL, AUF WIEDERSEHN BUT NOT GOODBYE.....

Pam Watson.

It is never easy to say farewell to someone/something that has played such a huge part in our lives—especially Mamre. As a parent and a worker, the past twenty-three years is full of so many memories.... My first visit to Mamre with Christopher (as he was known then) who was not 2 years old, morning teas full of scones around the kitchen table in the old Mamre respite house; a haven that became a home away from home for me, and many other parents, mothers in particular; my daughter's baptism, the first to happen in a Mamre house, fund raising fairs, laughter and tears and on and on....

For almost 6 years now I have been privileged to work with Mamre, first as a key worker, and more recently as part of the Administration team. This has all been

such a wonderful time. I am very fortunate to have worked alongside so many inspiring people, from whom I have learned much. I have met many parents and their children. As always, I have been inspired by the strength and determination of families for their son or daughter. This time too has been filled with laughter and occasional tears. And I mustn't forget the food Everyone knows of the Mamre spread. For those who have heard me say occasionally, "Take my advice because I'm not using it" I am now using it!

Thank you to everyone (more than I could actually name) for all the wonderful memories that I take with me. I wish you all much peace, love, harmony, joy, laughter and many wonderful memories of your own.