



Mamre-*billia*

A Word from the Director - Kathryn Treston

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It is good practice to periodically put some time aside to take a careful and collective look at what Mamre does and how it does it, what could be done differently or better and what is being asked of the organisation.

During 2006, as well as continuing to focus on supporting families and people with a disability, Mamre has directed its energy to reviewing in this way. This has involved a high level of discussion, reflection, consultation and organisational soul searching. We know that Mamre needs to be clear about its focus for the coming years to ensure effective support is possible and available for the families who work in partnership.

You will have received numerous invitations to be involved in this process. And thank you for taking up those opportunities. We have heard the thoughts, concerns and wishes of many family members and friends. This lead up time to our strategic planning process is now almost complete and our goals for the next few years will be formulated in November by Management Committee, key staff, family members and people who are supported by Mamre. At the time of the next Mamrebillia I will be able to let you know what are the organisational goals for the next few years.

In this edition of Mamrebillia you will read some reflections of people who have been involved in the planning process in different ways throughout

the year. We have tried to print some of the thoughts of parents, young people who are supported, friends of the Mamre community because all of these groups contribute importantly to Mamre.

Mamre has also engaged in Disability Services Queensland's process of certification against its service standards. (More of this on page 2). This process examines how Mamre provides services. We are happy to say that Mamre has now been duly accredited. You will see a certificate to verify this on the wall in each of the Mamre offices.

Hopefully having engaged in these two processes, Mamre will begin next year with a re-commitment to its vision, with knowledge of what is done well and of the things that need to be addressed. It has been ANOTHER VERY BIG YEAR!

It's been one whole year since the Inspirit Conference (September 2005)!!! Does this photo bring back memories? What a great event and there has been so much good feedback. Some ask when the next one will be. Some I suspect are already planning it quietly in their heads and some need an injection of courage to forge ahead with such an event. I wonder what will happen!!!



Disability Sector Quality System

Every service that receives funds from Disability Services Queensland must now comply with the Queensland Disability Service Standards. This includes Mamre.

These standards are:

1. Service Access

Each person with a disability seeking a service has access to the service on the basis of relative need and within available resources.

2. Individual needs

Individual needs and personal goals are met in the least restrictive way possible within available resources.

3. Decision making and choice

Participation as fully as possible, in decision making, choice of activities and events in daily life in relation to the services received.

4. Privacy, dignity and confidentiality

Recognition of the right to privacy, dignity and confidentiality in all aspects of life.

5. Participation and integration

Support and encouragement to participate and be included in the life of the community

6. Valued Status

Providing opportunities to develop skills to participate in and achieve valued roles within the community.

7. Complaints and disputes

A proactive approach to complaints and disputes management that safeguards service users/supports from retributive action when raising complaints.

8. Service Management

Effective corporate governance through sound and visible management systems and practice

9. Protection of legal and human rights and freedom from abuse and neglect

Upholding the legal and human rights of each person with a disability and taking action to prevent and/or respond to allegations of abuse and neglect.

10. Staff recruitment, employment and development

Recruitment, selection and development of paid and unpaid staff that ensures they have the relevant values, skills, knowledge and competencies to support service delivery to service users.

Each year an independent auditor checks how well Mamre complies with these standards. The auditor talks to families, staff and committee and generally observes how Mamre carries out its business.

Mamre passed its first audit in June and has identified some areas for improvement. The key task for the next year will be to make its policies and procedures more accessible to people with a disability and their families.

I would like to thank all those families, committee members and staff who were interviewed during the audit. At the time it may have seemed another bothersome thing to do. However, your input influenced the auditor to come to the following conclusion:

"Mamre aims to support their families in ways which are most needed. They believe the first and foremost "work" of the community members is that of listening to what family members are saying (and not saying) in terms of their needs to evaluate resources, and where possible to act towards lessening the anguish and anxieties at times experienced by many families. They are pointed in the direction where they need to go by "the families." They see their responsibility is to be attentive to the emerging needs as well as faithful to what they have begun. During the audit process Mamre demonstrated that they are achieving the Mamre Community Charter which underpins and guides their direction. (Mamre) is commended for their efforts and commitment to date in working towards total compliance of the Queensland Disability standard indicators."

Congratulations everyone!

Margaret Ward

"(Mamre) is commended for their efforts and commitment to date in working towards total compliance of the Queensland Disability Standard indicators."

Parenting Workshop

Towards the end of last year, both Keyworkers in the Family Support Young Children program had noticed the increase in requests for assistance with parenting issues. We talked about assisting parents to attend an established course but then decided to explore the possibility of hosting one ourselves. This led to a collaboration with "Kinnections" and a series of sessions in May/June this year to deal with some of the key issues that parents were facing with raising their children. The workshop was hosted by Mamre, facilitated by Kinnections with support from our own Sharon Bourke.

The workshop took the form of 4 Thursday nights

on the northside and 2 Saturday sessions on the southside. The format we chose allowed for input from the facilitators but also provided some flexibility to explore issues and situations that some of the 20 parents that took part in the workshops were experiencing. Some of the topics covered included "Parenting styles", "Values" & "Building a good relationship with your child". The depth of discussion and the insights that flowed resulted in a positive experience for those who attended.

Peter Vacca

Strategic Review - An interview with Luke Cowan

Luke Cowan is a young man who has been involved with the Mamre Community since he was a young boy. Luke was invited to attend the Review and Discernment Day at Riverglenn earlier in the year. Luke feels it was a worthwhile experience because he got to have a say about what is important to him and his family. It was the first time Luke had been involved in a review process and he said that he was thrilled that Mamre valued his opinion. I asked Luke if there

was any particular advice he gave to Mamre and he said " that the baby-boomers need to help us and to get ready to hand over the reigns and that it is time they taught us how to go on with it and have confidence in us to do what is right. I have a lot to teach everyone, young and old. We all have something to teach each other".

Thanks for your input Luke!!!

Julie Van Ousten

Key Worker's Korner

Hi Everybody!

This is a new column where we Key Workers can communicate with families, share information about upcoming Mamre events, share any tips that could be useful for families, and give families the opportunity to ask us some general questions.

The first question for this column is:

Would your family prefer to receive Mamrebillia by email or by post?

There are a number of reasons for changing to an email version. Apart from saving paper, it also enables you to receive your copy in colour. The families that change to the email version would be easily able to forward interesting articles on to other family members or friends

However, we do understand that some families do

not have access to emails or simply prefer to keep receiving Mamrebillia in the same way that they always have. If you would like to swap to email delivery please send your email address to:

katya@mamre.org.au

For families that are searching for craft classes for their child or young adult, I have found that Spotlight have been very supportive about people attending with their support workers, and will even offer suggestions about which classes would be most suitable.

If you have any questions for the staff of Mamre please phone Katya on: 3847 1681 or email:

katya@mamre.org.au

Katya

From a Parent's Perspective...An Interview with Semah Wischki about her Participation in Mamre's Review, Discernment and Planning Process

Aware that Mamre has recently undergone a service quality audit, and that there is growing pressure for the organisation to meet more government requirements, Semah chose to become involved in the process. Subsequently, she chose to attend the Review and Discernment Day at Riverglenn to see what sort of directions that Mamre is considering, and to ensure that the values and the community spirit would be considered in the process.

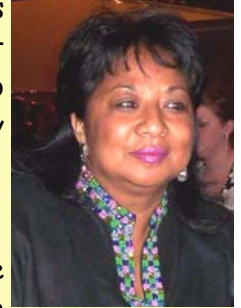
Semah believes that parent input is crucial to Mamre developing relevant services that continue to meet the real needs of families. She says that the day at Riverglenn was really beneficial and that she was able to participate in a meaningful way although she has not been able to attend some of the other events that have occurred since. However, Semah says that Mamre's doors are always open. Even if parents are unable to attend particular events, she says that she has always felt that she could pick up the phone or drop in for a visit to talk to anyone at Mamre.

On the day, Semah says that she found it very reassuring that the community and values were really discussed

thoroughly. She says that Mamre is not the type of organization that just accepts change without reviewing the possible consequences to families and staff. Therefore, community discussions are imperative to anticipating what the possible impacts of change could be. She was also really impressed that Mamre is so cautious about expansion, and that they were really concerned about how to keep the community strong at the same time as growing. Semah believes that the Mamre community is the core of what families value; it gives families a chance to develop friendships and access to opportunities that are more meaningful than just the paid supports.

Semah felt that the relaxed atmosphere on the day really helped, and she thought that many of the parents' discussions happened informally, during meal times and breaks. From this combination of formal and informal discussion, she felt that many of the real concerns of families were covered, especially those families with older children who are facing big changes in their lives. She pointed out that all of the families are at different life stages, involving different issues, and that there are also varying layers of complexity within each of those families. Consequently, the day provided the opportunity for

all of the community members to hear the voices from different stages, and to see from many perspectives.



Semah

In addition, the day offered the opportunity for families to learn about the challenges that services providers face when torn between government regulations, family needs, and funding requirements. Because of Mamre's transparency, Semah thought that it was very educational and offered parents organisational knowledge that they could also use in other contexts.

Overall, Semah thought that the day demonstrated Mamre's integrity and commitment to walking "with" families rather than just assuming that they know what is best.

Semah would like to encourage all parents and other family members who are able to participate in the community, and particularly on planning days. Community input is critical to the organisation's ability to design services that truly meet the needs of families.

by Katya

A Warm Welcome

The Mamre community would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to all the families and staff that have joined us in recent months. We look forward to getting to know you and hope that your association with us is positive and meets your expectations. While we are all on our individual journeys, which we respect,

we'd also like to get to know you better. To that end, we organise various events throughout the year that present opportunities for you to meet other families and staff in Mamre, and we hope that you can avail yourself of those moments. Once again, *welcome*, and if we can be of further service, please give us a call.

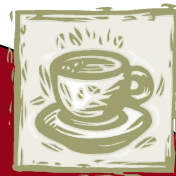
It's Official!

Mamre Southside is moving.

*The new location for Mamre Southside and Pave the Way
is*

1428 Logan Rd, Mt Gravatt (above the Coffee Club)

*There is still some work to do to prepare the premises so
details of the opening and complete contact details will be
announced soon.*



TRAILER FOR SALE

Specifications 6x4
Metal roof design structure with fully
Covered green fitted canopy (with
zips at back – no damage)
\$1000.00 or ONO

Contact Mamre Coorparoo on
3847 1681 for further information

Mamre Coorparoo is having a Garage Sale

Date: **Saturday October 7, 2006**

Time: **8am to 1pm**

Place: **7 Pelham Street Coorparoo**

Items for sale include

Range of camping gear
Child's car seat
Portable Cot
Commode shower chair
Desk chairs
Air Compressor
Kitchenware



Pave the Way - The Future Begins Tomorrow

Pave the Way has now been part of Mamre for nearly four years and very much part of the Mamre scene.

The vision of Pave the Way is that people all over Queensland who have a disability are supported and safeguarded by their family and others to have a good life now and in the future.

Pave the Way assists families and people with a disability to develop a vision for now and the future, to plan towards making that vision a reality, and to develop ways to safeguard that vision and individual when the family is no longer able to do so.

Pave the Way was originally funded by Mamre because Mamre saw that the work of *Pave the Way* fits neatly with Mamre's emphasis on supporting families to develop a vision of what they want for their family members and within Mamre's focus on building informal networks.

Because we believe it is other people who keep people safe, *Pave the Way* supports families to develop personal networks and Support Circles – committed individuals who will be there for the family member with disability in the long term.

In working with families, *Pave the Way*:

- encourages families' planning for now and the future to be vision driven
- enables people with a disability within families to have a voice in expressing their vision and plans for the future
- encourages families and people with a disability to take authority – this is life planning not service planning
- "works with" families and people with a disability - we don't "do for"
- acknowledges that these issues involve challenge and change
- learns and adapts as we progress with families and people with a disability
- aims to be relevant to families and people with a disability – working at their pace
- believes there is not one "model" with which families and people with a disability should be expected to comply regardless of life circumstances
- acknowledges that developing a vision and planning towards its realisation is ongoing and life long and different for every individual - there is no quick fix.

Families already associated with Mamre are welcome to be part of *Pave the Way*. However, we are not key workers and do not replace the work of Mamre key workers in their support of families.

Recent Succession Planning funding from Disability Services Queensland means we can:

- continue workshops we have been providing throughout Queensland
- develop resources relevant to developing a vision and plan
- provide regular newsletters and information on future planning issues
- support individual families to develop their vision and plans
- support individual families to develop informal networks and support circles
- develop panels of solicitors, accountants and financial planners (we have a Brisbane panel already)
- develop strategies to assist families to safeguard their vision and plans and their family members in the long-term.

A key part of our work has been to offer workshops for families. Jeremy Ward's 1 day workshop on "*Planning for Now, Tomorrow and the Future*", is an introduction to future planning issues and includes discussion of

relevant legal issues. Sharon Bourke's 1 day workshop "Building Life Long Support Strategies: Support Circles and Networks" focuses on developing informal networks around family members with a disability, as a long-term safeguarding strategy.

We also run two-day and six-day live-in workshops which offer family members an in depth experience to come together to reflect on, develop and clarify their vision for themselves and their family member. We aim to run at least one two-day workshop and two six-day workshops a year..

Please contact us if you would like to be on our mailing list, need a copy of the Solicitors panel, want information about workshops, or would like assistance to develop a vision and plan or to develop a support circle or network.

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Catherine Raju Development worker
Michelle Schneider Admin/Resource worker
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Making Preparations

A Parents Story

My association with the Pave the Way project began nearly four years ago. A day away from giving birth to our third child I was keen to find out what this project would be about. I waddled over to the Gap to a stranger's house to meet Jeremy and two other Mums, who also were setting in motion preparations for their children's future.

In early October 2006 I will have my first round the table meeting facilitated by Jeremy.

Four years later.

Am I nervous? Yes. Have I invited the people I need to be involved in this discussion?

No. Why? I'm still undecided who those people will be. Will I ask my Dad, my sister, my mother-in-law? How many people should come? If my Mum were here she would surely come. After she passed away eighteen months ago I realised I had lost my main support emotionally and physically. The people I would have asked four years ago have moved on and changed their relationship to my family and support. What's new there?

The project has had a stop start connection with my family as I fluctuate between having nowhere else to turn and managing just fine. I have spoken with Sharon Bourke and Julie Johnson. Participated in a weekend workshop with my husband, with every intention to get a move on ASAP, but something keeps getting in the way.

I think it's my own fear. How do I deal with those big questions looming in the back of my mind when sometimes just the day to day is quite enough?

Yet with each enlightening event I chose to attend,

courtesy of Mamre I'm faced with my own fears in those moments of reflection and re-creation. The future will surely come, just as I look at my almost ten-year-old daughter and remember her bleak prognosis (which really hasn't been quite as bad as I was told.)

She will hit puberty, fall in love, want a job and to move out.

Just as we have helped her to walk and go to the toilet, go to a mainstream school, introduce an understanding of intellectual difference and Makaton, be a part of the local soccer team and circus.

All things I didn't know were ahead of me and feared, I have faced and managed.

So I will ring up some of my family and friends to see if they want to be involved. Must be having a brave day. So they can hear what my fears are.

P.S I'll let you know how it goes next newsletter just in case anyone else is procrastinating.

Donna Toussaint

Reiki

Our trial run offering Reiki at Mamre Coorparoo at 7.30pm every second Friday does not seem to meet the need of potential clients.

If you and/or your family would like us to offer our service in your home, please call the following people to arrange a time

Jasmin: 3821 3596

Sr Nickie: 3398 7867

Barry: bmerc2@bigpond.com.au

“One Person at a Time” - Melbourne Conference

It's a powerful feeling to be in a room with 300 other people who are passionate, enthusiastic and keen to learn and understand so that people with a disability can have better lives - lives that have purpose and meaning; lives like everyone else.

In mid August, I had this experience when I attended a conference in Melbourne entitled “One Person at a Time” - this conference was organised by the Personalised Lifestyle Assistance Project. They advertised this as a chance to 'share stories and insights from the search to create better lives'.

We were very honoured to be asked to share the story of the Building Informal Networks project that has been operating at Mamre for a little over three years. Matthew Lys and Luke Cowan, both in their mid 20s talked about their lives and some of the things they have been able to achieve in the past few years, with the support of family and friends. Matt lives in his own townhouse and Luke is preparing to move out soon. He recently house sat for someone for six weeks as a preparation for the big move. Because all of this doesn't *just* happen their mothers, Carmel Lys and



Di Cowan shared what has been involved from their perspective as parents. As Co-ordinator of

the project I described how the project works and also talked about some of the common themes and issues that have

emerged for the small group of young people who have been able to move into their own place, even as the project has worked with each person quite separately. Before the conference it was a good experience for us to stop and reflect on what we've done in order to be able to tell others about it. We worked hard to ensure that Matthew and Luke could tell their own story instead of having it told for them. At the conference participants gave us good



Di presenting at the conference

feedback about what we had to say. We were delighted that some talked of feeling inspired to go and try new things.

I was inspired by other speakers at the conference and what they had achieved. In their stories, other speakers described the contributions that people with disability were making as artists; florists; admin assistants etc...sometimes these roles help people make money and Jeff Strully from California challenged us all to get more serious about that. The speakers also pointed out how having these roles gives people a chance to develop their passions - surely this must reduce frustration; make life more interesting and provide more reasons to get up in the morning than some of the activities that people with disability are traditionally offered. They also talked about the connections with like minded people increasing the chances for friendships to develop. As you can see I came home with lots to think about !!

Margaret Rodgers

Parents Talk

Hi families

This is another new column where parents can talk to each other to share their stories, their insights, and to ask questions of each other.

The two parent representatives on the Mamrebillia team are going to run this column. These parents are: Semah Wischki and Donna Toussaint.

Many of you will already know Semah & Donna, and for those of you who don't, we would like to introduce them.....:

After living overseas with her family for many years, Semah moved back to Australia to find a better level of care for her son. Semah's family has now been a part of the Mamre Community for nearly six years. Semah is very proactive and involved in many Mamre activities.

Semah and her husband believe that it is important to give their son as many opportunities to experience different aspects of life as possible. He travels overseas often, and is involved in all aspects of the family's social, spiritual and work activities. Their future dreams for him are that he will be able to generate a small income for himself, live in his own home, and lead a typical life supported by his local community.

Since moving back to Australia, Semah's husband has needed to continue working overseas to support his family, and Semah has had to cope with most of her son's everyday care needs by herself. Although this has put some strain on all of the members of the family, they still maintain strong relationships and really enjoy the times they are able to spend together.

Semah would now like to trace her Indigenous ancestry, and go to university to study Indigenous Art.

Donna's family is made up of three children, Freya their eldest daughter (9 1/2), Pele their son (8), Jarrah (almost 4) Donna and Chris.

Donna says "We joined the Mamre community when Freya was around three quite by accident really, after a teacher at the SEDU suggested I might be interested in a presentation by Michael Kendrick".

Freya has microcephaly. Donna describes her as having "A small head compared to the rest of us big heads. She has an intellectual difference and a mostly joyous disposition compared to the rest of us".

Freya's communication is a combination of natural gestures, Makaton, vocal words and some picture cards. She joins in everything and goes to Dutton Park School. Donna has advocated at the school for a program to be implemented to encourage the other children to learn how to communicate with Freya. As a result, there is now a speech therapist that is

running a class on Makaton once a week for all of the children at the school.

The family's dream is for Freya to be fully included in the community, to have great social relationships and to lead an interesting life.



Donna Toussaint

With three children, there is never a quiet moment in Donna's life, but she still finds personal time to do a variety of arts and crafts. Recently, she completed a course in floristry and participated as a designer in a "Wearable Art" exhibition.

Over the coming newsletters, Donna and Semah will be part of the parent team learning and sharing with and from you about our lives.

If you would like to get to know the two parents better, please read Semah's article about the parent's perspective of Mamre's Review, Discernment & Planning Process on page 4, and Donna's story about her personal experience of facing her fears and getting involved with planning for the future with "Pave the Way" which you can read on page 7

I feel certain that between Donna & Semah, they will have a lot to share with other parents. We look forward to hearing your personal concerns, triumphs and questions.

If you have any stories, insights, questions or concerns that **YOU** would like to share, please contact Donna & Semah via Katya by ringing: 3847 1681 or by email:

katya@mamre.org.au

Word from a Friend

Mary Kenny is a friend of Mamre who took up the option to be involved in the current planning session. Mary says: "The invitation to be part of the review and again in the reflection days was very much appreciated by me... I would be delighted to be part of your planning days, discernment and celebration days. These events lead to shared ownership/responsibility. I have a thought that somehow, the unpaid ones, could somehow get together sometime and create an appreciation and celebration of the workers, including the support workers of Mamre, to show that these roles are the hands and feet and minds of the community, and whilst we unpaid folk cannot be there, we are there in spirit and support."

Camp at Mt Tamborine 2006 - Daniel Lucas

It was my first Kids Club Camp with the Salvation Army! This year the theme was “Madagascar” and people came from all over Brisbane to meet up at the camp. I had a great time, let me tell you all about it...

I was excited as we packed into the car, said our goodbyes, and headed up the mountain. A good road trip to camp always involves a pit stop I say. A service station at the base of the mountain was our choice. Mmm, yum, soft drink and chips!



We arrived at night, marked out the boy's territory (found our rooms) then headed off to make some craft. Snack then sack, we were in bed by 9:30pm! The leaders breathed a sigh of relief.

Rise, shine and eat, it's 7:30am; a day of adventure awaits us! This morning we made leather crafts with Nelly and all my friends from Kids Club – here is a photo of me using a hammer on the leather!

Before lunch we learnt all about the Ten Commandments out of the Bible. I got to go up the front with Ben and hold up a sign for the rest of the group. We had heaps of fun learning the Ten Commandments – It helped me in my Faith and showed me how I can live my life as a follower of Jesus.

After “slurp and munch” (lunch) we went on a bush walk with Major Kev. Wow! There were some fantastic views from up on top of the mountain!

In the afternoon we got into the team spirit and went out and played games against the other Kid's Club groups. Some great games thanks Gareth. That night after dinner, we watched a movie outside on the deck under the night stars. It was pretty cold, so we all brought out our sleeping bags and blankets, and curled up in a big bunch.

Sunday morning came and it was time to make a movie with Steve! Our job was to act out the Ten Commandments; I was the star in one of the skits! It was so much fun making our very own movie.

Before the end of the camp, we had a big concert! On the big screen we showed all the parents what we had done over the weekend. We showed them heaps of movies, pictures and lots of singing and dancing. I even



led everyone in a song at the end – I had plenty of fun with my friends. Sadly, as with all good things, it was then time to go home... I had an awesome time on camp thanks to my good friends



So when I think about camp, I know that it was my friends that made it fun for me - thanks guys!

Daniel's experience of going away with his local Kids Club peers is a beautiful story that illustrates how children who have disabilities can be included in typical life experiences that are not specifically arranged for children with disabilities. While Daniel's experience was a very positive one, his family, the Salvation Army and Mamre still needed to do some background work in order for Daniel's experience to be successful. This work involved meetings between the Salvation Army kids club, Daniel's mother and the family's Keyworker. At these meetings it was decided that a male support worker would accompany Daniel to provide support only when it was needed so that he wouldn't hinder Daniel's full participation and relationship building opportunities with his peers and other adults on the camp. The male support worker, Scott, then attended some of Daniel's Kids Club afternoons to get to know all the kids and the staff. Janice and her Key Worker completed Daniel's personal information for Scott. This personal document outlined as many things as possible to assist in ensuring that Daniel felt safe, happy and comfortable in his camp surroundings. This information included a range of communication cards for Daniel to use on Camp. As you can read from Daniel's story, one can have an “awesome time” with just a little help from some friends.

Living the Dream
(An Irish Experience)
 by Kerry Lawson c 2006

Earlier this year, my parents were on a short term ministerial supply with the Irish Presbyterian Church. As a result, the opportunity presented itself for Seán-Michael (10), James (6), and I to spend 3 months in Northern Ireland while they were there.

Seán-Michael has trisomy 21 (Down syndrome) and he and his brother usually attend their local school in Brisbane. The local school in Northern Ireland was oversubscribed. However, a little village school 4 miles away welcomed Seán-Michael and James into P6 and P2 respectively. The school had no "special" staff or resources, they just put classroom climate before curriculum and belonging before learning.

The boys enjoyed their time there immensely and were sad to leave. The day we left the school, there was an assembly just to farewell the boys. The principal said the whole school had benefited by their presence in the school community and said, "Thank you for choosing our school. I saw a side of the P6 students I would never have seen if Seán-Michael had not joined their class."

The research is pretty clear that inclusion benefits the whole school - as our own experience in Northern Ireland demonstrates. However, it is one thing to read about the research supporting inclusion for the last 40 years. It is quite another to actually live the reality of successful inclusion.

The sad thing is that this is how it really SHOULD be anyway. Our experience at this school shouldn't feel like winning the lottery.

EQ claims to provide the resources and registered teachers claim to possess the skills - so attitude is the only ingredient that tips the scales.

If I could wave a magic wand I'd take the boys back so that Seán-Michael could finish his primary schooling with his peers in P7 (from February to June next year). He has been experiencing a real "grief" process since we left and keeps requesting to return. There is a small window of opportunity next year for him to again enjoy genuine membership in this school community. Seán-Michael has been so insistent in his request that I have come to share this vision for him myself - and am endeavouring to make his return to this school a reality.

If you have any suggestions for accessing funding which might assist Seán-Michael and enable him to return to this school in 2007 you can contact Kerry via Katya by phone on: 3847 1681 or by emailing:

katya@mamre.org.au

*Strategic Review - A staff
 members perspective*

Have you been involved in a Mamre review before? In what ways?

Mamre has consistently conducted reviews over the years. We have been operating under Strategic Plans and have undergone many reviews around specific areas of support. Many of these reviews have been conducted internally. We have also been involved in external HACC and Disability Services Qld Quality Service reviews.

Why do you think it is important for Mamre to conduct this review?

Mamre is now nearly 25 years old and many people who are connected with Mamre have been a part of both the Community and service for as long as Mamre has been in existence. Similarly the needs of all families change and evolve, as too does the organisation. It seems very timely to conduct a review to revisit what is important to us about community and service, where we have come from and where do we want to see Mamre go. Mamre is facing, in partnership with families, many pressing issues, dilemmas and questions that require time set aside to stop, reflect and plan, if we are to address these issues meaningfully.

Do you feel that there have been sufficient opportunities for you as a staff member to have your say in this review? What avenues have you used?

As a staff person I have a high level of appreciation for the many opportunities offered to all people to input into the review process. It is imperative that every person is listened to. The process would not be authentic if this wasn't the case. I have attended a number of meetings and gatherings that have involved families, people with disability, staff and friends of Mamre. The process continues.....

What would you say to a fellow staff member who wanted to be involved in the review but wasn't sure how to go about it?

Just ask! Mamre remains approachable and transparent. We would hope that all people were invited to participate in any way they choose, and this invitation still remains.

Anything else you would like to say about the review or the process?

There is a power when people come together to reflect, tell stories, dream a little.... The process has demonstrated this power and the collective wisdom of many has been quite profound. I have appreciated the time people have given to participate, and of course, what they have shared within the process.

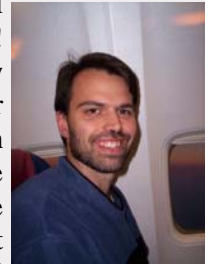
Branko on the carpet - The Value of Discernment

Hi Everyone,

One aspect of Mamre's review has been to discern what values are truly important to us as a community and how we live these values. It seems appropriate therefore to examine this in our personal lives. Discernment can be both very challenging and confronting in our personal lives, because we are invited to slow down and take the time to 'be with' ourselves to reflect on what really matters. Yet how often do we do this??? For most of us, it is often a personal crisis such as illness or loss that may force us to slow down, but this need not be the case. In the Gospels, the ritual of the Sabbath (setting aside a day of rest, prayer and contemplation) is closely tied into this principle. Without taking this time, it becomes very easy to run on auto-pilot, and become less conscious of how our words and actions might be negatively impacting on our lives and those around us. Discernment can also help us to learn and grow from our experiences so that we don't repeat the same mistakes. Socrates emphasized the pitfalls of an "unexamined life" and would frequently question others as to what the motives were behind what they were doing. By taking the time to reflect and discern, it can also help to re-energise and give us fresh ideas. Fr Lawrence Freeman talks about building a 'contemplative rhythm' in our lives and I have found this very beneficial. In my times of contemplation, I set aside a regular time each day to do a combination of meditation, reading and journaling. During this time I often reflect on certain experiences that occurred and get new insights on them. You may like to think about how you can build your own 'rhythm' and what things help to nurture you and reflect on your life. There is also great value in talking through issues with others so we can 'bear witness' to one another and allow for a different perspective. This can either be through family, friends, supervision or personal counseling.

During our review of values, Kevin Treston also touched upon the concept of 'Emotional Intelligence' or EQ, which was popularized a few years ago in a book of the same title by author Daniel Goleman. One definition of emotional intelligence is "the innate potential to feel, use, communicate, recognize, remember, learn from, manage and understand emotions" (Hein, 2005). I see discernment as a central theme in this definition. A practical application is to think of us having an innate emotional guidance system, which sort of acts as a 'feeling compass' by letting us know whether we are on the right track or in harmony with what we truly value. For example if we are stressed, then we can choose to view it as our

emotional guidance system letting us know that our thoughts or actions are not in harmony with what we truly value. This is like an emotional alarm bell that says STOP!! LISTEN!!! By paying attention, we can slow down and discern what's going on for us and avoid further pitfalls. This then can become a regular practice, and the more we practice, the better we become at it. In this light, a great acronym for stress becomes **Signal Truthfully Revealing Everyone's Soul Sense**. So experiment with paying attention to and discerning the emotional signals your body is sending you. I have found this practice gives me greater clarity and added depth and meaning. Have fun with it too!!



In peace,

Branko

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