

familyfocus

Summer 2012

A cracker day of cricket!



Above: Player signings with Retravision Warriors Marty Paskal (L) and Ryan Duffield (R).
Inset: Young Warrior, Eric Bamford, with his signed bat & out on the WACA pitch with his parents.

Therapy Focus was delighted to invite families to enjoy a day out at the cricket on Sunday 6th November, as part of a new partnership with the Western Australian Cricket Association (WACA).

Around 30 families joined Therapy Focus in a designated families area to watch the Retravision Warriors take on Queensland as part of the Ryobi One-Day Match series.

The excited participants were treated to pizza, player signings and a visit from Therapy Focus mascot Sunny the Sunflower, all whilst loudly cheering on the Warriors.

10 year-old Therapy Focus client, Eric Bamford, was lucky enough to be selected as the 'Young Warrior' for the day.

Eric joined the Warriors on the pitch for warm up, tossed the match coin and received a goodie bag, including a signed cricket bat.

"Eric has just started playing cricket at our local club and is really enjoying it," Eric's Mum Margaret said.

"Being the Young Warrior was a great opportunity for him to see a real cricket match and test out his new skills on a real cricket pitch."

Therapy Focus would like to thank all the families who attended, and the WACA for their generous support.

Is your child keen on cricket? Cricket Champs is a fantastic new cricket program that caters for children with disabilities. To find out more visit the Cricket Champs website at www.cricketchamps.org.au.

You can also find out about local cricket clubs in your area, by visiting the WACA website at www.waca.com.au.



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Go green & get online!

In an effort to conserve the environment and utilise existing resources, Therapy Focus strives to deliver Family Focus via email. Please ensure you let us know your preferred method of delivery.

Season's Greetings!



On behalf of the Therapy Focus Board and all the staff, I would like to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

As we prepare to celebrate another successful year gone by, we take time to reflect on the year that was. We thank our families for their invaluable support over the past year, as you are the reason we exist.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend a special thank you to Mr Ray Glickman, who has retired from the Board after eight years of service, and Mr Ross Lyons who has resigned to take up an opportunity over East. Thank you both for your valuable contribution to Therapy Focus.

Happy holidays!

Freda Crucitti

Board Chairperson



Christmas Closures

Therapy Focus will be closed for business from **3pm Friday 23rd December, 2011** for the Christmas holidays. We will reopen at **9am Tuesday 3rd January, 2012** to resume business as usual.

For any further information regarding Christmas office closures, please contact Therapy Focus on (08) 9478 9500, or email enquiries@therapyfocus.org.au.



A word from our CEO

Welcome to our special Summer edition of Family Focus. I hope you find it an informative and enjoyable read.

Summer is always special in Australia, especially here in Perth. The warm weather allows us to enjoy the outdoors more and is the signal that Christmas is on its way. I hope you all enjoy your holiday break and share the special time with family and friends. Stay safe and be careful when out in the heat - remember to slip, slop, slap!

As the sun sets on 2011 we toast the many children who have achieved their goals over the course of the year. 2012 presents another exciting year and I'm sure our therapists will be once again working hard to identify goals and put in place

therapy interventions to achieve great outcomes for clients and their families. This is how we help children grow!

Next year will also herald a new era for Therapy Focus, with a new Strategic Plan and innovative strategies to improve our services. Already we are seeing a turnaround in staff retention and as such I'm hoping you will start seeing improvements in the continuity of care for your child.

Enjoy your summer and don't forget to visit Sunny the Sunflower on Facebook and wish our friend a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Take care until 2012.

Matt Burrows

Chief Executive Officer



Living with Autism

A presentation by Brendan Boyle.

With almost 40% of children currently under Therapy Focus services diagnosed with autism or autism related disabilities, therapists Kate Keisler and Ashleigh Taylor invited guest speaker Brendan Boyle to deliver his informative and enlightening presentation, Living with Autism, to families in the West Coast region.

Brendan was diagnosed with high functioning Autism in adulthood, after going through the process of having both his sons diagnosed. As an advocate for people with autism, Brendan is working on developing methods to assist pre-teens and teens with social and bullying issues, and has a book and journal article being published next year.

Brendan's Living with Autism presentation gave an insight into his life growing up, including the day to day struggle of fitting in and feeling

accepted. He discussed his social isolation and the strategies he learnt to make friends.

As an adult with autism, Brendan also spoke about how his diagnosis affects his life today, and addressed the attending parents' concerns about:

- disclosing a diagnosis to their child;
- how to deal with anxiety;
- the reasons for 'flapping' and other sensory behaviour;
- the importance of using black and white reasoning when communicating with people with Autism;
- being explicit when teaching social appropriateness; and
- how to face bullies and night terrors.

The presentation was very well received by the 90 attendees who included parents, clients, teachers, Local Area Coordinators and therapists. Brendan provided great insight into understanding yourself as an individual with Autism, how to connect with a person who has Autism, and how therapists can best support a child with Autism and their family.

'It was great that he answered so many questions that have been bothering us. Sometimes our children can't tell us how they feel so he is their spokesperson' – Parent.

Therapy Focus would like to thank Brendan Boyle for delivering such an inspirational presentation, and for his willingness to share his insight with our West Coast community. We look forward to working with Brendan again in the future.

Copies of Brendan's presentation have been made available on DVD. If you would like a copy, simply contact the Therapy Focus West Coast base on (08) 9403 9500 or email enquiries@therapyfocus.org.au.



Therapy Focus is delighted to welcome Dominic Mendonca as our newest team member of the Central Office Team.

Dominic comes to us from Disability Employment Service, Workability, and will support the Communications Team during a four week work experience placement.

Dominic has skills in graphic design, illustration and animation, and is sure to be an asset to the team.

Congratulating our Grads

Therapy Focus is proud to welcome nine new therapists to the team, after having successfully completed the 2011 Graduate Therapist Program.

Over the course of 2011, under the guidance of therapist mentors, the Graduates took on a full caseload, collaborating with other therapists and honing their skills.

Thank you to the many families who worked with our Graduates over the year. We hope it has been as much a rewarding experience for families as it has been for our Graduates.

To find out more about Therapy Focus' Graduate Program, simply visit the Therapy Focus website at www.therapyfocus.org.au.



I&P Update

Over the duration of Term 4, Therapy Focus' Inclusion & Participation (I&P) Team invited families to participate in multi-activity programs held at three locations across the Perth Metropolitan area.

The multi-activity programs provided children with the opportunity to try a range of different leisure and recreation activities in a supported and inclusive environment.

Activities run as part of the program included arts & crafts, music, cooking and fitness, and were selected in response to an earlier client survey, which highlighted families' interests and preferences.

The I&P Team received great feedback from families, with many children developing their confidence and a range of new skills.

Arts & Crafts

Karen Barden from *State of the Art* joined the I&P Team to help participants design, paint, trace, draw and cut to create their own unique and colourful 3D cartoon portrait.

State of the Art provides art classes and workshops for people of all abilities. For more information email stateoftheart@aapt.net.au.



Music

Deirdre Atkinson-Byrne from *The Music Place* joined the I&P Team to host a range of music and movement activities. Participants had a great time playing with percussion, and taking part in song and dance.

The Music Place offers a variety of music programs for all musical abilities. For more information visit www.themusicplace.com.au.

Cooking

Heath Daly from *The Raw Kitchen Café* joined the I&P Team to run cooking sessions for budding chefs. Participants were taught the power of raw and healthy foods, and the magic they can create! Together they produced delicious chocolate, fudge balls and fruit smoothies.

The Raw Kitchen Cafe offers cooking workshops and information sessions for every foodie. For more information visit www.therawkitchen.com.au.

Fitness

Fitness was fun when Charmaine from Zumba hosted high energy Zumbatomic classes choreographed to the latest music.

Zumba classes for all ages and abilities are available across the Perth Metro area. For more information visit www.zumbainperth.com.au

A big thank you to all the families who attended the multi-activity groups, and the organisations who made the multi-activity program such a success. To find out more about the I&P Program, visit the Therapy Focus website at www.therapyfocus.org.au

Ask Sunny!



Hi Sunny,

What are some tips for enrolling my child in school holiday programs?

This Christmas Holidays a number of great community organisations are hosting inclusive vacation care programs and activities for children of all abilities.

Some tips you should remember when looking for a suitable program or activity include:

1. Choose a local vacation care provider – always ask if the provider has experience with children with special needs.
2. Book early – ideally more than 6 weeks ahead!
3. Ask about the program – Are you eligible for Child Care Benefits? If so go ahead.
4. Fill out the enrolment form. Ensure you inform the enrolment officer of ALL your child's additional needs.
5. The provider will then contact their local Integration Support Service and meet to discuss suitable support, programs and care for your child. This MAY include additional funding for a carer. Therapy Focus may be asked to provide advice.

For further information contact your regional Inclusion Support Service:

- East Metro & Midlands Inclusion Support Agency. (08) 9274 7128
- Child Australia North Metropolitan: (08) 9249 4333
- Communicare Inclusion Support Services: (08) 9251 5777

Alex's DreamDay



To celebrate the International Day of People with a Disability (IDPWD), Therapy Focus joined the Dreamfit Foundation for its first annual dreamDay event at McCallum Park on Saturday 3rd December.

The day celebrated people of all ages and abilities coming together to enjoy a range of recreational activities and entertainment, including sports, art & crafts, rides and special performances.

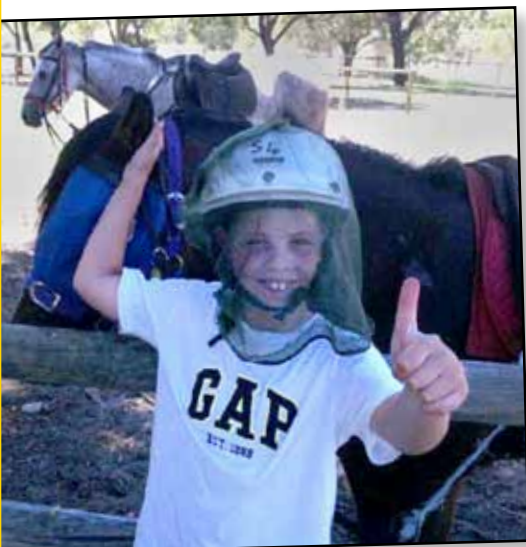
Fifteen year-old Therapy Focus client, Alex, had a great day out with her Mum Fiona, taking part in all the activities on offer.

Alex got creative in the Arts & Crafts tent, had a go at golfing with Golfing WA, but the highlight of the day was taking a ride in a ski biscuit along the Swan River. This was a big step for Alex and her Mum couldn't have been more proud.

"Events like this are just fantastic for Alex. She's had such a great day," said Fiona.

Thank you to everyone who attended the event and visited the Therapy Focus stall - especially to those who said hello to a very sweaty Sunny the Sunflower!

For more information about The Dreamfit Foundation visit www.dreamfit.com.au



It used to take quite a bit of prompting for 10 year-old Josh Rhodes to participate in activities. However since joining Therapy Focus' Inclusion and Participation (I&P) Program, Josh has discovered his social side!

Taking part in both the I&P Multi-sport and Multi-activity programs earlier in the year, Josh not only developed his fine and gross motor skills, but also his confidence and social skills.

Josh gets out & about!

Josh now participates in a wide range of activities and programs where he enjoys socialising and spending time with his friends outside of school hours.

"It's changed, to now being tied up in Josh's social life! He just loves everything " Laughs Josh's Mum, Lynn

On top of his participation in the I&P Program, Josh also takes part in dance classes with Sparkle & Shine, is learning to horse ride at Riding for the Disabled, and plays Cricket through the Cricket Champs program.

There's no slowing down for Josh either, with his name down for Equal Footingball League (Soccer) and Quadbike Riding. Go Josh!

To find out more about any of the programs listed above, visit the Therapy Focus website at www.therapyfocus.org.au.

Would you like assistance accessing programs and activities in your area?

Therapy Focus' Inclusion & Participation (I&P) Team work to build bridges between children with disabilities, and their local communities.

The program aims to provide children with opportunities to get out in the community, develop new skills, explore talents and abilities, build friendships, and most importantly, have fun!

Our I&P Officers provide information and individual support to help families achieve their 'get out there' goals. For further information talk to your Family Link Therapist, or contact Inclusion & Participation Coordinator, Celine Windsor, on (08) 9478 9500 or email celine.windsor@therapyfocus.org.au

Online & Informed

The Therapy Focus website has recently undergone review, with a number of changes made in an effort to ensure families are kept well informed and up to date.

In achieving a level of transparency in all that we do, the website now includes important reports and reviews, which impact our service model and delivery.

Quality Management Framework Reports undertaken by the Disability

Services Commission's independent evaluators have been published on the website, along with Therapy Focus' Financial Statements for the 2010/11 Financial Year.

Also included on the website is Therapy Focus' new three year Strategic Plan, including our newly revised values and strategic objectives.

Simply visit www.therapyfocus.org.au to view the new changes for yourself.

Ask Sunny!



Hi Sunny,

My child is quite disruptive in the classroom. What are some measures I can implement to combat this?

In order to support your child's learning and performance, and that of others, it is important to address challenging behaviours when they first arise.

Challenging behaviours may include prolonged tantrums, property destruction, self-injury, disruptive vocal or motor behaviour, physical and/or verbal aggression.

It is important to remember that every behaviour has a purpose and occurs for a reason.

1. Identify the behaviour you want to focus on
2. Gather information surrounding the behaviour
 - What sets off the behaviour?
 - What happens after the behaviour has occurred?
 - Does the child have difficulty with communication or expressing needs and emotions?
3. Try to understand the function of the behaviour
 - What motivates the behaviour?
4. Take a proactive approach

Proactive prevention strategies, including the use of replacement behaviours and remediate skills are the most effective way to combat disruptive behaviours.

A comprehensive guide including specific examples and tips can be found on the Resources page of the Therapy Focus website at www.therapyfocus.org.au/resources.

A Complete Advantage



Are you currently waitlisted for Therapy Focus services? Have you considered private therapy services in the mean time?

The Complete Advantage (TCA) is a division of Therapy Focus offering competitively priced, fee-for-service therapy, including speech pathology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, psychology and dietetics services.

Adopting the same family-centred approach as Therapy Focus, TCA supports children from infants to 18 years with a wide range of needs.

In consultation with you based on the needs of your child, TCA is flexible

in providing therapy services in the home, at school or child-care, and in our clinics in Bentley and Joondalup.

TCA's multidisciplinary approach towards service provision allows collaboration between TCA therapists and Therapy Focus therapists to ensure your child receives comprehensive and consistent therapy service.

Therapy services provided by The Complete Advantage may attract Medicare or private health insurance rebates. FaHCSIA funding under the Helping Children with Autism package and Better Start initiative can also be accessed if your child is eligible.

Surplus funds generated by TCA go to Therapy Focus' *Help a Child Grow Fund*, which provides equipment and resources to support inclusion and participation of children with special needs in the community.

For more information or to discuss your options, call The Complete Advantage on 1300 135 373, or email enquiries@thecompleteadvantage.com.au.

Helping Children Grow

A recent review of Therapy Focus' Help a Child Grow (HACG) Fund has identified new opportunities for the use of funding and donations.

Having primarily focused on funding equipment in the past, the *Help a Child Grow* Fund now also provides initial funding for resources and activities, which support inclusion and participation of children with special needs.

Eight year-old Luke and nine year-old Elana are two children benefitting from recent changes.

Luke has Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS), a complex medical condition that affects the ability to control appetite, inhibits the development of muscle tone, and affects balance.

Funding through HACG has secured two terms of focused personal training sessions for Luke, which will help improve his confidence, fitness, and overall health.

"The sessions have so far been a great success, motivating Luke and easing pressure on his parents," said Luke's therapist.

Diagnosed with Autism, Elana's participation in something as simple as weekly horse riding lessons funded through HACG, has helped her develop the essential social skills and confidence she once struggled with.

"Horse riding has been so beneficial for Elana. It's the highlight of her week and she loves to tell everyone at school about her achievements" said Elana's Mum, Sally.

For more information about the HACG Fund, or to find out whether your child is eligible, please talk to your therapist.

**Please note eligibility depends on each family's circumstances and access to other support and funding.*



Therapy Focus would like to extend a big thank you to the following individuals and organisations for their recent donations to the Help a Child Grow Fund.

Your generosity helps Therapy Focus brighten the lives of WA children with a disability or learning disadvantage.

- Perth Glory
- Abel McGrath
- RAC
- Acumen Engineering
- Carmohall Pty Ltd
- L. Young

To make a donation, or find out more about the Help a Child Grow Fund, visit the Therapy Focus website at www.therapyfocus.org.au.

Westfield's Giveability



On Sunday the 27th of December, five lucky Therapy Focus clients and their families were treated to a day of festive fun and frivolity as part of Westfield Whitford City's annual Giveability Day.

The excited families had a great day enjoying a McDonald's breakfast, watching the new movie, *Arthur Christmas*, and having photos with Santa.

"The kids had a fantastic time. As if the day wasn't enough, each family also received a \$100 Westfield voucher and amazing goodie bags", said a Mum of one of the families attending.

"A big thank you to Therapy Focus and Westfield for the opportunity. It was a really great reward after a pretty tough year for us".

Family Focus Noticeboard



A new grants program has been launched by National Disability Services (NDS) WA to assist individuals with a permanent disability.

The Community Living and Participation Grants program offers grants of between \$500 and \$10,000 for resources, equipment, activities and projects that improve the general quality of life for people with disability and their families through participation in recreational and social activities.

Applications can be made on behalf of an individual or group, by an un-incorporated community group, or incorporated not for profit organisation.

An Information Package and Application form can be downloaded from www.clpg.org.au. Families interested in applying should discuss the opportunity with their therapist.

For further information call (08) 9208 9830 (Monday to Wednesday), or email grants@nds.org.au.

Strike A Chord's 'Music 4 Life' program provides opportunities for seriously ill or disadvantaged children to benefit from the gift of music.

Music can be a great comfort for children, often providing hope, companionship or an outlet for their emotions.

Strike A Chord also offers children the opportunity to meet famous musicians, bands, play live or even record their own music.

To find out more about Strike A Chord please visit www.strikeachordforchildren.org

Want the know latest news, find out about upcoming events, view photos and stay up to date with everything Therapy Focus?



Like us on Facebook! Visit www.facebook.com/therapyfocus and click like between now and January 2012, and you will go in the draw to win a Family Pass to the Aquarium of Western Australia (AQWA)!



Therapy Focus staff had a great time running through the streets of Fremantle as part of the Variety Santa Fun Run. Even Sunny ran!