

STEPS NEWSLETTER

From the Manager,

Hi all

It's almost June and some chilly weather has arrived in various parts of Queensland.

We have continued working on the research findings from the STEPS Program Leader Network Training Forum last November. In May, Ben presented some of these findings in Melbourne at the World Congress for Neurorehabilitation— see page 8 for details.

Ben returned full-time to the STEPS Program at the start of May- welcome back Ben!

We also bade farewell to Karen, who did a sterling job in the early months of 2012. She especially progressed our work in options for videoconferencing for our Leader Network, including finding a system that will accommodate the variety of computer systems that our leaders have. We will aim to trial this in the next few months, so watch this space!

Happy reading of our June edition.

Aneti

STEPS Program Leader Network National Volunteer Week

The Skills To Enable People and Communities (STEPS) Program celebrates the valuable contribution of its **Volunteer Leaders** throughout all Queensland.

Volunteer STEPS Program Leaders are trained, supported and supervised to lead the STEPS Program in their local communities throughout Queensland, often in partnership with local health or disability service providers.

Since the beginning of the STEPS Program in 2008, over 600 participants (people with a brain injury and their family members/ friends) in 84 areas across Queensland have completed the STEPS Skills Programs in their local area's! 51 of these programs have been led with the assistance of **Volunteer Leaders** in local co-leader partnerships!

Additionally, approximately 220 people meet monthly as part of our 24 ongoing STEPS Network Groups around Queensland This would not be possible without the time and dedication of our amazing team of **Volunteer Leaders**.

In October 2011, the STEPS Program hosted a 2-day STEPS Program Leader Training Forum. The forum was part of the initiatives undertaken to support the growth of the peer-professional workforce of the STEPS Program. Of the 40 delegates who attended, 25 were **Volunteer Peer Leaders**. The forum provided an excellent opportunity to our leaders' for networking and skill development.

STEPS Volunteer Leaders, take a bow! We applaud and acknowledge your valuable contribution to the STEPS Program and to adults with brain injury and their families living in Queensland communities. THANKS!

STEPS

Issue 26

June 2012

Special Points of Interest:

- ★ National Volunteer Week
- ★ Poem by STEPS Leader

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STEPS Skills Program Reports

STEPS Beenleigh

The Beenleigh STEPS Skills Program started on 1 March, with Nadine Lepre (Logan Youth and Family Services), and Jon Giessler and John Enright (Peer Leaders) at the helm. In describing the experiences of this program, John Enright penned the following poem:

A poem by John Enright
(Peer leader)

The God in heaven I do declare
As he looked down with tender
loving care
Thought we need a STEPS Group at
Beenleigh soon
For the area it would certainly be a
boon
And so it quickly came to be
As his sights set upon a woman
named Nadine Lepre
Her the Leader of the Group I will
make
And John Enright he can look after
the tea break
And Jon Giessler a man who has been
there before
With Nadine he will share the floor
Some people now I must find to
attend

Let's see...there are many I can
recommend
Some will attend and go to the finish
And some others their enthusiasm will
diminish
Some I choose may in fact fail to show
But that being human nature will cause
me no woe
So from the entire world these are the
chosen clan
Jamie Irene Lisa Judith David Gwen
Mark Tracey George and Dan
Whatever will be will be
Those words sound familiar to me
However I am aware that for those
who attend be they leaders or Clients
Life following will not be such a
difficult science

STEPS Mt Gravatt



Our Mt. Gravatt group consisted of people from all walks of life. Although our group was small, it was a perfect opportunity to share our personal experiences and ideas and discover new perspectives while supporting each other in our different stages of life. The STEPS program content played a large role in assisting our group understand ourselves better and develop skills to become more independent at home and in the community. The positive outlook of our group members and open environment made group members eager to return each week. Our group was co-led by peer leader Ty, with STEPS Program

Coordinator Karen and ABIOS student Heather. Some highlights of our group included celebrating Vicky's birthday, our weekly fruitcake (courtesy of Ty's mum), and endless chocolate biscuits! Our group's break up activity was 10 pin bowling and a pizza lunch at Domino's where we enjoyed challenging and encouraging our fellow STEPIES.

Ty & Heather

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share our personal
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STEPS Gladstone

The first STEPS Skills Program in Gladstone started on 9 February at the Gladstone Community Health Centre, led by Kelly Murray (Community Health Nurse) and a few of her colleagues. There was a great response to the program in the area, with 7 people attending regularly throughout the 6-week phase. Kelly commented that there was always plenty of discussion

within the group and that those who attended really benefited from sharing their stories. The group shared the challenges of living with a brain injury in a regional/ rural area of Queen-

sland where services and supports can be very sparse. The group met at a local coffee shop for their break-up activity and a great time was had by all! Collectively, the group felt that there is a strong need for an ongoing STEPS Group in Gladstone and have since formed the Gladstone STEPS Network Group (see Network Group section for further details).



STEPS Ipswich

The Ipswich STEPS Skills Program started on 14 February and was led by Doug Stubbs (Peer Leader) and Ben Turner (STEPS Program



Coordinator). Right from the start, the group came together really well and enjoyed the opportunity to share their experiences within the group. Doug inspired many of us when he managed to get a spot on the Jamie Dunn Breakfast Show (98.9FM Brisbane) to talk about brain injury and the STEPS Program. The issue of brain injury awareness was a strong point for the group – together, the group decided that they'd like to work towards doing something during Brain Injury Awareness Week

to promote the cause of brain injury in the community. The group's week 6 activity was scheduled for a round of putt-putt golf, but the rain led to a change of plans. Instead, the group enjoyed lunch and a few games of billiards/pool at the Squealing Pig Hotel. The group has joined with the monthly Ipswich STEPS Network Group, & preparations for Brain Injury Awareness Week are already underway.

STEPS Tarragindi

A STEPS Group was run at NRG Rehabilitation in Tarragindi, by speech pathologists, Sonia Leaf-Milham and Rebekah Dewberry. Eight people attended and I have tried to contact them to get some feedback but was unlucky, so this commentary is unfortunately all from my perspective. I felt like the group got on well together and we

were able to share different sides as all of our journeys have been very different. It was just super to be able to get together with other people who have an understanding of where you are at. The group consisted mostly of people that knew each other from before as they had attended NRG Rehabilitation for some aspects of their rehab

and already knew the leaders. Our group break-up activity was to meet at a Sushi restaurant at Southbank. We all made our own way here and enjoyed a good afternoon together. The STEPS Course is an absolute MUST for everybody that has suffered a brain injury!

- Michelle

STEPS Toowoomba

Toowoomba was the first cab off the rank this year, with our program starting on 1 February. The first week was a bit tricky, as everyone had some problems with parking. This meant the start of our program was a bit disrupted but, by the end of the first morning, the parking problem had turned into a shared adventure for the group, and we were all



determined to not let it beat us! After that, we did all settle in well to the group and appreciated both the

similarities and the differences in our experiences of living with brain injury. With eleven people in our group, this was very interesting. We enjoyed ten-pin bowling for our break-up activity. We have joined the existing Toowoomba Network Group and their fortnightly meetings.

- MaryAnn and Deb

STEPS Network Groups

STEPS Bayside

The Bayside STEPS Network Group continues to meet on 2nd Thursday of each month. We had a planning meeting early in 2012 to look to new ideas/activities for the group, but a general decision was reached to continue 'as is' with the lunch time outings rotating between venues at Cleveland, Wynnum and

Capalaba. The group enjoys the casual, relaxed and social nature of catching-up over lunch (at some fabulous venues in the Bayside area). The group is also working with Casuarina Lodge at Wynnum to assist with a stall at Wynnum Plaza during Brain Injury Awareness Week. Casuarina Lodge have been

a great support to the Bayside STEPS Network Group over the past couple of years, so we think it is an excellent idea to help them with their stall. Collectively, we are hoping to raise awareness (and some funds) support the cause of brain injury.

STEPS Network Groups cont.

STEPS Mt Gravatt

Mt Gravatt has enjoyed having some new members join our group recently, mostly 'graduates' from the Tarragindi program earlier this year (see story on page 3). They have certainly added some new ideas and spark to our group. Over the past few years, our group has always had more males than females...but with our new members, we recently had more females than males at one of our meetings! We- well, the females in our group- were so excited we took a photo on a mobile phone I had with me. Apologies to Don, one of our longstanding members, who I somehow missed in the photo of the group...sorry, Don, I think I misjudged the frame size on my mobile phone camera.



- Areti

STEPS Biloela



The Biloela STEPS Network Group enjoyed a visit from Ben (STEPS Program Co-ordinator) in May to help the group make plans for the future. While the group is only small, there is a strong commitment to keep things going and grow the group over time. The group is spread across a wide area; with participants travelling over 100km to attend each month. The group shared with Ben the challenges of living with a brain injury in the bush, especially the difficulties experienced in accessing services

(that's why having a STEPS group in the area is so important!). However, the benefits of the bush were also discussed including a greater sense of community involvement and a general sense of getting things done together. Angie Anger, who acts as Local Leader of the group, also showed Ben around town and introduced him to several key services in the area. Monthly meeting will continue at Bluecare and to further promote the group in the region.

STEPS Brisbane Central/ Buranda

The Brisbane Central/Buranda STEPS Network Group has continued to meet on 1st Wednesday of each month in 2012. At the beginning of the year, the group did some planning and decided to adopt a schedule of alternating formal group meetings with social outings on a month-to-month basis. The formal meetings are held at the ABIOS offices (Buranda), while the social outings tend to be held at Southbank or Roma Street Parklands. In April, the group had a guest speaker from the Brisbane City Council, who provided details about programs offered by the

council for the general community. Information was also provided about the services offered by council for people with a disability. In May, the group had lunch at Southbank and enjoyed a photography session with a student from Griffith University. In June, Ben (STEPS Program Co-ordinator) facilitated a session about psychological adjustment after brain injury, a topic decided on by the group. It was great to hear everyone's views and experiences about their journey



with life after brain injury. All agreed that adjustment after brain injury feels like an emotional rollercoaster at times, and that the support of family/friends and others (including the STEPS Group) is extremely important!

STEPS Gladstone

The Gladstone STEPS Network Group was formed early in 2012, following the completion of the first STEPS Skills Program in the area. The group is only small in numbers, but they're keen to grow the group and to help others who have experienced brain injury and their families in the region. As many would be aware, Gladstone is a rapidly growing part of Queensland and there is a general feeling that there is a need for more support for people with brain injury

in the region. In May 2012, Ben (STEPS Program Co-ordinator) visited with the group to help make plans for the future. The group decided to meet on the first Monday of each month for morning tea at a local coffee shop. Joyce Mullemeister and Jill Hopson have agreed to help out as volunteer leaders and Kelly Murray from Gladstone Community Health will continue to help with the STEPS Program in the area. There are already plans to run another

STEPS Skills Program in the second half of this year to help grow the group.

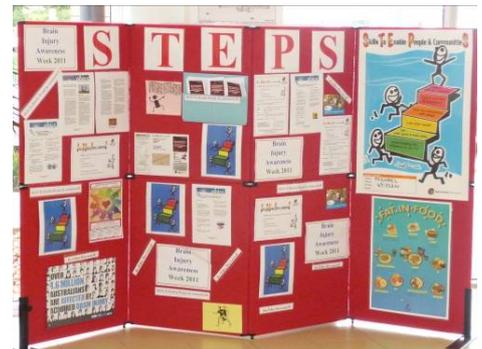


STEPS Yeppoon



The Yeppoon STEPS Network Group was formed in 2012 following the completion of STEPS Skills Programs in 2011 and early 2012. Michael Lee, Jenne George and Marilyn Rooks from Yeppoon Community Health have been the driving force behind the group and have done an excellent job in promoting the program in the area. They even organised for a display to at the local hospital to let people

know about the program. In March 2012, the two groups joined together for a BBQ lunch in the park along with a bit of karaoke for fun. In April, the group met for lunch at the local sailing club. The Yeppoon group are fortunate to be able to enjoy the beautiful sites of the Capricorn Coast region! Ben (STEPS Program Co-ordinator) visited the group in May, where future plans for the group were finalised. The group decided to meet on the last Monday of each month, with the details for group meetings to be decided on a month-to-month basis. While the group would like



to keep things relaxed and social, they also plan to address some topics of interest to group members and hope to be able to invite a guest speaker or two to attend their group meetings. Jeff Lidden and Jo Emery (both carers) have put their hands up to volunteer as leaders for the group; while the team at Yeppoon Community Health will continue to provide assistance and support when needed. The success of the STEPS Program in Yeppoon is a great example of how communities can work together to achieve a positive outcome for all!



STEPS Ipswich

The Ipswich STEPS Network group has been growing in 2012 and continues to keep an active focus in the community. In May, the group enjoyed a round of putt-putt golf and a sausage sizzle. A few people in the group even pulled out the driver



to smash a few balls on the driving range! Some new (and older hidden talents) were definitely on display! In early June, the group met at the Ipswich Humanities Centre to discuss preparations for Brain Injury Awareness Week. The group is very passionate about raising awareness in the community of what brain injury is and the impact that it can have on a person's life (and those around them). The group has set a goal to

have a stall at a local shopping centre during Brain Injury Awareness Week, where they will be able to provide general information to the community and promote the group. The group will also support the "Bang-on-a-Beanie" campaign by selling beanies etc. The plans for the day are already progressing well, so watch this space for an update in the September newsletter!

STEPS Network Groups cont.

Wet STEPS Cairns

This year, we decided to have fishing as a focus for our monthly Network Group, and so "Wet STEPS" was born, in partnership with the local Stroke Outreach Service.

Since March, we have enjoyed fishing off the Stratford jetty, on the Barron River in northern Cairns. We have all really enjoyed the fishing, probably a bit more than we expected to!

Sometimes we chat with each other and enjoy the camaraderie, sometimes we just sing alongside one another and fish, sometimes we check out what everyone else is catching (or not!). We all participate to the level we can. So far, we haven't actually caught a fish we can keep. Tally is 2 puffer fish hooked, one small catfish and a 5cm baby bream...all thrown back.

Jenny nearly pulled in a 40cm something (it could have been a finger-mark?) but her little thin line snapped. Most disappointing, however it seemed to just add to the fun. We can't wait for someone to land that big one we are anticipating as it will be quite a bonding experience, after all this time trying together!

- Anne & Jenny



Open Network Groups

Here is the list of Network Groups are open to new members, places where they meet and the contact person for each of the groups.

Biloela- Ben Turner: Ph 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, 3rd Tuesday of each month, Bluecare Gladstone or as advised

Bundaberg (B.I.F (Brian Injury Friends)- Leanne Curtis: Ph 4155 2303 & Gabby Walker: Ph 0437 406 445 (Areti Kennedy)

Monthly meetings, 4th Wednesday of month, 10am- 12noon at various community locations.

Cairns (Wet STEPS fishing group)- Areti Kennedy: Ph 1300 727 403 or 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, 3rd Wednesday of month, Stratford Jetty, exact times TBA (dependent on tide)

Fraser Coast Hinterland Brain Injury Support Group- Jennie Whitley: Ph 4131 4258 (Areti Kennedy)

Monthly meetings, 2nd Tuesday of month, various community locations

Gladstone – Ben Turner: Ph 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, first Monday of each month, various community locations

Gold Coast- Sumana Lymberry: Ph 0416 172 697 & Ben Turner: 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, last Wednesday of each month, various community venues.

Innisfail- Raylene McSwan: Ph 4063 3742 or 0437 972 587 (Areti Kennedy)

Monthly meetings, 1st Thursday of month at Healthier Great Green Way, 180 Edith St, Innisfail

Ipswich- Ben Turner: Ph 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, 2nd Tuesday of month, 10am-12noon at various community venues

Kingaroy– Bobbie D’Arcy: Ph 4162 9220 (Areti Kennedy)

Monthly meetings, 2nd Friday of month, 10am-12noon, Gloria Jean’s cafe, Kingaroy Shopping World

Mackay– Allison (Commonwealth Respite and Carelink: 1800 052 222 (Ben Turner)

Monthly meetings, first Friday of each month, venue: Commonwealth Respite and Carelink

Maroochydore- Areti Kennedy: Ph 1300 727403 or 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, 4th Monday of month, 10am-12noon, various community locations

Noosaville- Work Rehab: Ph 1300 856 440 or E-mail info@workrehab.com.au (Areti Kennedy)

Monthly meetings, 1st Tuesday of month, 10am- 12noon, Noosa Yacht Club shelter, off Gympie Tce

Toowoomba– Mary-Ann Garrahy: Ph 4030 1709 or 0409 592 863 (Areti Kennedy)

Fortnightly meetings, 2nd Monday of month at Sunset Superbowl, Green Wattle St. 4th Monday of month at various community locations 10:30am- 12:30pm

Townsville- Noel Ball: Ph 0408 151 932, Tina Ferriday: Ph 0407 750 731 (Areti Kennedy)

Monthly meetings, 2nd Wednesday of month, various community locations

Yarraman– Peter McLean: Ph 4163 8780 (Areti Kennedy)

Monthly meetings, various community locations, contact coordinator directly for exact details.

Yeppoon- Michael Lee: Ph 4913 3230 (Ben Turner)

Monthly meetings, various community locations, contact coordinator directly for exact details.

Greater Brisbane

Acacia Ridge– David Firth: Ph 0411 501 641 (Areti Kennedy)

Weekly meetings, Mondays 10am-12noon, Acacia Ridge Community Centre, Hanify St, Acacia Ridge

Bayside– Denice Rundle: Ph 3823 4851 & Ben Turner: Ph 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, 2nd Thursday of each month at various local venues

Brisbane Central– Ben Turner: Ph 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, 1st Wednesday of month, 10am-12noon; venue alternates between ABIOS & a community setting.

Caboolture– Areti Kennedy: Ph 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, 4th Monday of month, 10am– 12noon, at various community locations

Forest Lake- Elaine Trotman: Ph 0438 818 235 & Ben Turner: 3406 2311

Monthly meeting, last Tuesday of the month, 10am- 12noon at various local venues.

Logan Coffee and Chat Group- John Enright: Ph 3388 6056 (Ben Turner)

3rd Wednesday of month, 10am-12noon at Logan Diggers RSL Club, 42-48 Blackwood road, Logan Central

Logan North– John Enright: Ph 3388 6056 (Ben Turner)

Monthly meetings, 1st Monday of month, at various community locations

Mt Gravatt– Ty Hill: Ph 0401 317 643 & Areti Kennedy: Ph 3406 2311

Fortnightly meetings, Wednesdays, 10am -12noon at Perks Café, Town Square Garden City shopping centre; alternating with community social outings at various locations

Newstead- Areti Kennedy: Ph 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, 3rd Wednesday of month, 9-11am, Footprints (Newstead), 105 Commercial Rd, Newstead

Nundah- Areti Kennedy: Ph 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, 3rd Wednesday of month, 1:30- 3:30pm, various community locations

Pine Rivers- Sue Wright: Ph 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, 3rd Wednesday of month, 10am-12noon at Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre

Redcliffe– Cherie Carter: Ph 3284 6839 (Areti Kennedy)

Monthly meetings, 2nd Wednesday of month, 10am-12noon at Redcliffe Leagues Club, cnr Klingner and Ashmore Rds, Redcliffe, or various community locations

STEPS Skills Programs in QLD Map

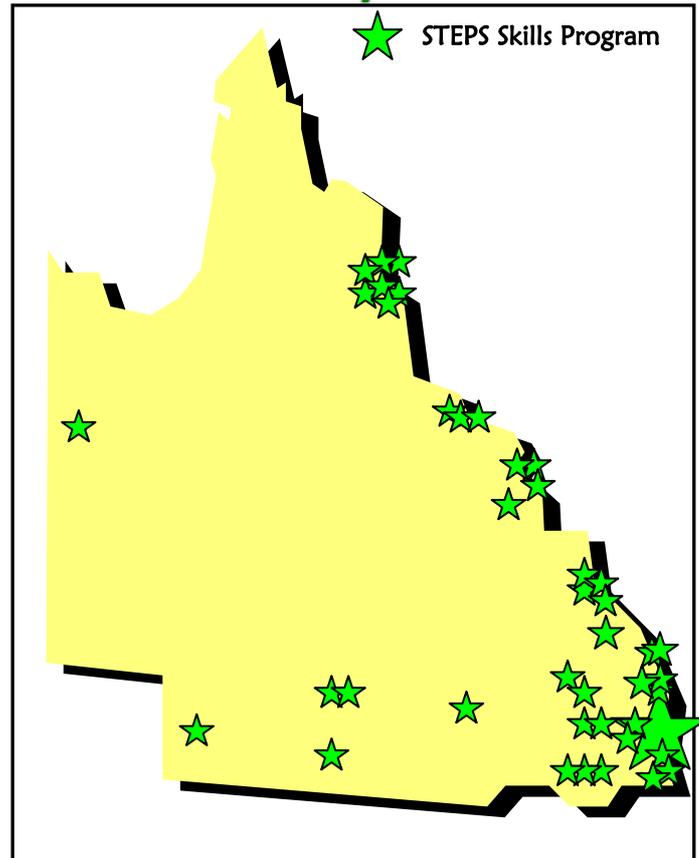
2008 – Brisbane (4) Rockhampton, Far South West Qld, Cunnamulla, Warwick, Maroochydore

2009 - Townsville, Warwick, Cairns, Rockhampton, Gordonvale, Mackay, Brisbane (13)

2010 – Warwick, Rockhampton, Cairns (2), Beaudesert, Mackay, Gold Coast (2), Toowoomba (2), Townsville, Kingaroy, Yarraman, Mt Isa, Brisbane (13)

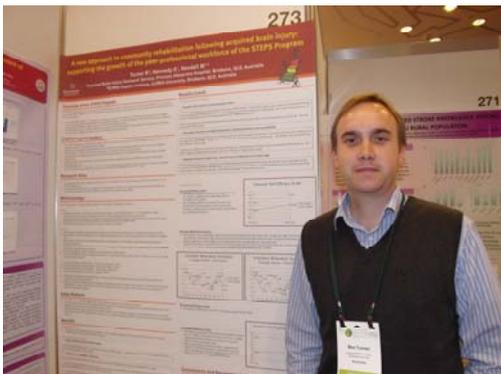
2011 – Biloela, Bundaberg, Cairns (2), Gold Coast (2), Townsville (2), Maroochydore, Maryborough, Rockhampton (2), Townsville, Yeppoon, Biloela, Noosaville, Brisbane (10)

2012- Toowoomba, Gladstone, Yeppoon, Gold Coast, Brisbane (4)



STEPS Program Research

The World Congress for Neurorehabilitation was held in Melbourne from the 16-19 May. Over 1000 health professional from many different countries attended the conference to discuss/share ideas and current advances in the field of neurorehabilitation. Ben provided a poster presentation the findings from the STEPS Program Leader Training Forum in October 2011. The success of the STEPS Program, especially the unique peer-professional partnership approach of the STEPS Program, is something that health professionals find quite novel. There was both national and international interest from services wanting to explore the benefits of adopting a similar approach. The opportunity to present definitely provided a platform to put the STEPS Program on the world stage!



STEPS Program Leader Training

STEPS Program Leader Training is next scheduled for Brisbane at ABIOS offices on Tues 7/Wed 8 August. Contact Ben at STEPS Program if you are interested in attending this training.

We are also working towards Leader Training on the Sunshine Coast later in 2012, so let Areti know if you want us to keep you informed about this.

You can also contact us if you are interested in Leader Training in your local community.

STEPS CONTACT DETAILS

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