

Adolescent and Family Counselling Association Inc

Chair Persons Report 2007-2008 by Meg Benson
At Cowra Conference, County Region Hosted, AGM

Welcome to new members in conference attendance:

Maya and Laura from Rosemount situated in Marrickville as well as John from the Hunter Region. Welcome to the new members who were not able to make it.

2008 Achievements and Experiences:

- **AFCA association** was sponsored with one place at the Creating Synergy Conference held at Wollongong University which was a partnership between Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol and had a focus on systemic principals. Former AFC David Hedger, and conference committee member was the motivator behind this gesture. The delegates were primarily New Zealanders and Australians and included workers from all levels of the helping interface plus employees at the policy making levels pertaining to drug and alcohol and mental health. A conference focus was on the importance of research, demonstrating to us some relevant research projects and results as well as how research is used in our practice, how practice informs research and the role research plays in the media and policy making. We (AFCA) were given a free place, and the result was Megs' name was pulled out of a hat by Grahame Williams, as the winner. It was a professionally enriching conference.
- 1. **There were enquiries** to the executive this year about the developing DoCS facilitated, funding evaluation system called Results Based Accountability from a member via the Regional Reps. This was regarding the suggestion of reconnection with the old historical routine of holding executive meetings held with significant head Office Docs Representatives. Geoff Patton was assigned to us- who is senior in the Docs ranks and who was our former liaison person.
- 2. We ran with this idea and thought that the best action we could take was to recognise and acknowledge the concerns raised about this formative time and therefore to organise the inclusion of the whole of AFCA Members in a seminar atmosphere discussing the DoCS Results Based Accountability planned for the 2008 conference at Cowra.
- 3. Docs expressed the ultimate aim is to illicit from treasury an increased amount of financial benefit that means young people are better off in terms of increased resiliency and safety.
- 4. I propose that we think about the inconvenience of this treasury imposed exercise in such a way that we see it as an opportunity to creatively define our targets. What exactly are we good at achieving? What words will we use to notice the strengths that flow into our client's lives? As Carol Boland taught us, the words we use are influential in possessing the power of being able to make a difference.
- The Executive group fulfilled its annual commitment to holding an AFCA training day which was **Sandplay Therapy Training with an experiential focus** backed up with theory and Sandplay background information. (The attendance from AFCA members was approximately 20 or so members. The training was delivered by Mark Pearson.)

- Grahame Williams from the Hunter Region gave a suggestion in support of a new motion on behalf of the AFCA Executive acting as an organisation who are committed to an annual review of whether any members have reached the stage of being bestowed with two things :
 1. Recognition of reaching 20 years of service working as a NSW Adolescent and Family Counsellor Position based as a NGOs under the umbrella of community organisations. This year for the first time in History, it was, Faye Hanson and Yvonne Mc'Donnell who were awarded the inaugural 20th anniversary of giving service as AFC's and whom both are guiding forces as committed, delightful and knowledgeable practitioners. These ones are awarded the privilege of Lifetime Membership of which they are no longer obliged to pay annual membership fees.
 2. Recognition of reaching over 10 year's service as an Adolescent and Family Counsellor. This was awarded to Jenny Sheridan Latham, Annette Coulter, and Deb Walton

As with last year, on behalf of all AFCA members, I would like to acknowledge the work of Grahame Williams for his work on the AFCA website, the web page has done so much for the association and has cut down on our workload. Thanks Grahame!!

Thanks!! It's been a great two years: the first as Vice Chair and the 2nd year as Chair, I look forward to the passions and governance of the continuing and new AFCA Executive.

Regards,

Meg Benson