

Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre

Annual Report 2009



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To provide programs for a diverse range of people has always been one of the goals of Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre.

During the past year we have continued to embark on programs which bring people from all walks of life into the Centre.

One of the major drawcards has been the establishment of the Sparechair café. This has flourished under the skilful guidance of Michael Christian. People from neighbouring streets now call in for coffee, as do business men and women. Builders from the various sites around Kew have discovered Michael's sausage rolls and soup! The establishment of the café has helped us to meet and develop ties with local businesses. Mothers from Shoestring congregate in the café when picking up their children, as do participants from many of our various classes.



The café does more than provide coffee and food, Michael runs our Intro to Café Work course and this term he has added evening barista training sessions to our suite of programs.

The "Cultures Together" program brought new volunteers to the House. These were people interested in providing their skills as language mentors to people for whom English is a second language. Pairs can be found meeting in the café for language and cultural exchange.

The "Write-Now" classes, book group and walking group are programs which have also brought new people to the House. Bill Humphries Fit for You exercise classes have broadened the range of health and wellbeing classes we have on offer.

Our staff continue to be dedicated, enthusiastic and each staff member is interested in not only their own class or activity, but also the well-being of the whole Centre community.

Robin remains committed and enthusiastic, always coming up with new ideas and sourcing the funds to develop her ideas.

Thank you to all our program funders and supporters. We are particularly indebted to the Boroondara Council, Eastern Metropolitan Adult Community and Further Education, the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program through the Department of Planning and Community Development, The Federal and Victorian Governments through the HACC program.

Thank you to all the staff, volunteers and our committee of management members who remain interested and committed to the Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre.

Prue

I could dazzle you with current jargon and discourses. However I've decided to take a different tack this year. Scratch the surface of KNLC and you find passionate staff and community members connecting, sharing and supporting each other with ideas bouncing everywhere.

Here is just a snapshot of some of the spontaneous things that have happened in the last few months:

....Denise organising a baby and children's market in her own time engaging 40 stall holders through word of mouth... Michael coming in to make coffee and muffins for a parents Saturday morning or doing a function for the Sparechair on a Sunday....Prue taking Robin to a philanthropy workshop... Coralie taking Pam to the craft fair on a Saturday... Parents taking it in turns to feed the chooks at the weekends... Don and John re-organising the Men's shed... Judy driving Lotte home at the end of her ESL class each week... Office staff out the back in the kitchen washing dishes when the café is under siege... Phil making boards for the jigsaws in childcare... Val organizing morning teas... Helen taking the Chinese group on the outer circle bus route on a Sunday because there are free fares that day... Judy taking the ESL class to the Pompeii exhibition on her afternoon off... Café students making coffees for the Bridge group... ESL book group meeting at the Convent Bakery... Lydia dropping in to see her former yoga mates after having moved to Ocean Grove a year ago... Bev making sure everyone in Oasis gets a small present on their birthdays... John and Joy taking Phil for his laser surgery and sitting with him before and after... Lorri and Ian paying for the newspaper for the year and buying tools for the men's shed... A cubby house being donated and delivered on a truck from Port Melbourne... Peter sweeping the car park... Maria selling coat hangers from the Oasis program craft group in the café... Anjum sitting with her mentee in the hallway having coffee... Lesley taking her Japanese cultures together partner to the national gallery... Rick sorting the recycling bins each Thursday and taking café leftovers home for dinner... Anouk staying back to talk to a troubled teenager who walked in off the street at the end of the day... Avril organizing an 80th birthday for Lotte.... A play group rallying around and supporting a mother facing serious illness... Bev making sure there is always someone around to feed the chooks every day of the week... Coralie taking Myrtle for a haircut... Joanna organizing recipe books for Shoestring...

None of this is in accountability requirements, funding agreements, key performance indicators, or job descriptions. Yet it is the heart and soul of this organization and why we all love KNLC so much. KNLC is one of those places that just gets under your skin.

Thanks to everyone who makes it such a wonderful place. The following pages are testimony to the diverse program base that brings our equally diverse community together.

Robin



We have made a net income of \$31,442 this year comparing with a loss of \$3,234 in the last year.

This is a remarkable effort achievement, given that after grants for establishment costs in the prior financial year, the Sparechair Café has relied totally on income generated by sales to sustain it. Thanks for the great efforts made by Michael and Maria the Sparechair Café has broken even.

Our total equity is at \$72,877.77 (2008: \$41,435).

We improved our electronic fund transfer payment procedure to have a better internal control and checking system in place.

Many thanks once again to our core funding bodies for the continued support: Adult Community and Further Education Eastern Metropolitan Region, Department for Planning and Community Development, the Department of Human Services and City of Boroondara.

Mark

Our Team

Committee of Management

Committee of Management
Prue Brown, Coralie White, Lesley Roxon,
Jan Stewart, Mark Gao, Lore Rayner,
Marie Lawson, Sun Ok Lee, Velika Allan,
Jessica Teng, Clare O'Connor, Claire Woolhouse

Management Team

Robin Kenrick, Bev Rae, Denise Mitchell

Office Administration/ Book-keeper

Anouk Hengeveld/Lisa Marquette

English as a Second Language

Avril Blay, Judy Bradtke, Lisa Kendall

Adult Literacy

Avril Blay

Computer Training

Rufina Chan, Jennifer Yeung, Owen Huck
& Anouk Hengeveld

Sparechair Café

Michael Christian, Maria Lauletta

General Classes and Groups

Anne Carson, Kathy Fahey, Lana Krasovskis,
Melissa Francis, Owen Huck, Bill Humphries,
Kheng Lau, Robin Kenrick,
Michael Christian, Jan Stewart,
Avril Blay, Edwina Bolger,

Oasis Team

Bev Rae, Helen Lin, Coralie White,
Melissa Francis, Bryan Dodge, Lisa Kendall,
Avril Blay, Don Anslow, John Pace,
Bill Humphries

Project Work

Avril Blay, Louise Sexton

Shoestring: our Childcare Team

Denise Mitchell, Samantha Mitchell,
Eileen Cabalar, Anne Vulin, Emma Scally

Children's Activities

Mary Van Lieshout, Amanda Florence,
Perri Kenrick, Melissa Francis

Farewell to the following staff members...

Fleur Wedding, Amanda Hannemann,
Andrew Wings, Louise Fogarty,
Mary Van Lieshout, Perri Kenrick,
Lisa Wilson

Our Oasis Program targets adults who are financially disadvantaged and/or socially isolated and is jointly funded by the Australian and Victorian Governments. It provides 32 hours of recreational, educational and social support activities a week. Feedback from some of our program members captures what the program means to them.

When we ask why people want to come here it is mostly about making connections with people and making friends. For example, a new person joined our swimming team and on his first day he reconnected with a good friend who he had not seen for 20 years. Both men were delighted to catch up and now do so on a regular basis. There are other friendships that we may hardly notice but they are equally important. One person takes great care to dress spectacularly every week and lets us know all the news from her place or has a joke ready. She is very excited to be at KNLC.

More and more people say they like to come here to learn. They say they like learning and want to tell other people about what they are learning at Kew. Taking on new challenges such as computers, knitting, swimming laps, reading and writing and woodcarving is a mark of their courage. They state it was hard at school and it is hard having a disability. For some it has taken many years to get to this point and now they are achieving so much with newfound confidence and joy. A highlight for 4 people in the Ability@Work program was to take part in the Good Access = Good Business Project run by the City of Boroondara. This involved going to 3 cafes and reviewing

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each one for accessibility. We attended the celebration of the project in June.

Feeling useful and being able to contribute is now extending to a greater sense of ownership of work at KNLC. A new guy to the outdoor maintenance crew came up to me raking and said "Let me do that for you" and the same man says on Thursday "See you next Tuesday to break up the boxes". Before having such things to talk about, it was mostly just "Hello", "see you next week" "my birthday is August" and "thank you very much".

Last week one of the Ability@Work team stayed behind to give the Oasis lunch room a thorough clean, her idea. Others find work that needs to be done without our suggestions. This sense of ownership is at the heart of the buzz at KNLC.

What is also important for people is the friendly atmosphere here and one person said that it 'gave her hope'. It is not easy to find a place (if you have disability/disadvantage) that feels safe and where you feel respected and appreciated. It is worth mentioning that one person said 'it was really good how the staff were so respectful of each other'.

A new program a men's group called Shed Shift has taken off. Bryan Dodge has done a fabulous job facilitating this group. They decide on a project and help each other. One term they spent making individual string pictures and another combined project was to construct a bench for the café. There is a real need for more of these kinds of peer support

groups for men. Don's Woodwork Group combines the production of toys with learning woodcarving on alternating weeks. Thanks to Don and John who are volunteers loaded with ideas and passion.

The other Oasis programs continue - Art Tasters is full of creative artists and Getting Out on Mondays is usually booked out. On Tuesdays the Outdoor Maintenance crew enjoy keeping the KNLC grounds nice and neat and also link in with the Ability@Work program so we spend time talking about what's been done today and who helped who and what they liked about today. The work is raking, sweeping, pruning, moving stuff and recycling paper and green waste. This group is mostly a different group from the other 2 men's groups but currently they have a woman foreman! Tuesday afternoon's Coralie's Craft group continues to flourish with much chatting as well as craftwork. This is our women's group. Wednesday is outreach to Kinkora (fortnightly) and Carrical (monthly) and Helen's Chinese Speaking Group. Thursday there is swimming or dancercize in the morning followed by Music group and the Oasis Band.

The Oasis Band is a new program and as a member of the band (Ukulele) I can tell you it is great fun and pretty hard work but when it comes together it feels really amazing.

That's a good note to end on.

Bev

This group targets older members of our Chinese speaking community who are socially isolated. The group provides a time to come together and chat about life experiences, find out about other activities and services in the community and do things together.

Since the beginning of this year, I have taught English to group members once a month with the main focus on listening, speaking as well as learning useful daily phrases. To encourage them to speak, I have annotated the phrases with Chinese phonetics. 15 minutes from each week's session is used to revise the phrases learnt and refresh their memories on the possible usages of these phrases. By teaching them English, I try to reduce the apprehension associated with listening and speaking English and hopefully, they will be able to join English classes taught by qualified teachers. This will give them the opportunity to socialize with people from different language and cultural backgrounds.

Throughout the year, there have been many occasions where members have involved themselves in passionate discussions. A good example is the visit to Yun Yang Temple which sparked a lively discussion amongst group members. It revolved around whether those belonging to one religion should visit places of other religions. Some of the members believed that visiting temples is only a social activity and cannot be representative of one's beliefs. However others argue that such actions is a reflection of the lack of the belief in one's religion. Although no agreement was reached, this friendly discussion reflects the wide range of individuals this group caters for and the group members' willingness to put forward individual opinions. The friendly atmosphere in the group is certainly conducive to such activities.

Helen



The place to
be for families
and preschool
children

*'Wonderful
friendships
have developed
over the year,
both between
children, and
between staff
and children.'*

We continue to run four morning sessions (multi age), three afternoon sessions (3-5 years old) and two playgroups with 105 single session places available. All morning and afternoon sessions are full, with children still on the waiting list. The continuous waiting list has been successful this year with vacancies easy to fill. The lunchtime playgroup has grown to include about 8 or 9 families, while the Friday morning playgroup includes 12-22 families on any given day. More than 100 different families have attended playgroup over the year.

Occasional Care

These sessions are held on 4 mornings a week for children from walking age to 4 years old. The majority of children attending are in the 18 months-3 year old age group. Over the year, there have been some wonderful success stories.

Children who had never been left before are now asking to come, even on days that they are not expected. Wonderful friendships have developed over the year, both between children, and between staff and children. Parents often come in asking about certain songs or games that we play because of what their children are singing at home.

This year, more than ever, we are seeing children moving from the morning to the afternoon sessions as they grow older. This means that some children are enjoying their 3rd or even 4th year with us. To be able to form these long lasting relationships is fabulous for everybody.

Children attending in the mornings are able to enjoy a variety of activities from washing dolls, dressing up, and setting up the farm animals or the train set to art and craft and sandpit play. The focus on natural materials is an essential component of the program, with quite a few families now incorporating natural materials in their play at home

Shoestring Plus

These sessions run 3 afternoons a week for those children 3 and over. Children attending include those who have missed out on 3 year old kinder, those who need a bit more than 3 year old kinder and some children who attend 4 year old kinder as well.

The focus activity for the session alternates between cooking and science, with each equally popular with the children. This year, I have involved the parents more by displaying a summary of the experiment and the purpose behind it at each session, as well as the recipe when we cook. This has increased the understanding and interest levels in this unique program feature. At the end of each session, children are given a chance to share some thoughts with their peers. This has become a popular part of each mat time.

Casual Vacancies System

As families go away on holidays, or children are ill, one-off vacancies occur. These have been offered to families in need of extra time, those on the waiting list who would benefit from an occasional session, or those with doctor's appointments. This system ensures that we fully utilise our facilities.

New Regulations

The updated Children's regulations have little immediate impact on our centre with our staff ratios remaining unchanged. After 2012, we will need to ensure that all our staff members have at least a Certificate 3 in Children's services. At this stage, there is only 1 staff member without this qualification. I do anticipate that it will be harder to recruit new staff from the community, as we traditionally do (as there will be few with Cert.3 already completed) so we will need to advertise more widely to fill any staff vacancies.

Children with Allergies

A number of children with allergies attend both morning and afternoon sessions, and one child who is anaphylactic attends in the morning. All staff have undertaken Anaphylactic training this year, and Risk Minimisation plans have been prepared for each child. In addition to this, we have taken further preventative measures (changing the scrap bins, organising backup amongst other staff and adjusting recipes to cater for these allergies).

Playgroups

We run 2 playgroups a week. Both playgroups are run on a casual basis and coordinated by Denise. Because there is no booking or upfront payment required, and everyone is welcomed whenever they come, these play groups are well patronised, with always room for one more. We have been attracting many families who are new to Kew (sometimes new to Melbourne or Australia as well), as well as being revisited by families after a break or with a younger sibling. This blend old and new families together with people of different backgrounds makes our playgroups unique, and ensures that the group remains open and friendly.

Kew Primary Fete and Kew Festival

We attended these local activities and provided free activities for children. This worked well, as parents had time to chat while children completed the activity. We raised our profile in the local community, and had fun at the same time. We will aim to attend these functions again.

Parenting Articles

This year I have written a few relevant articles, either summaries of papers, or independent opinions. By placing these in the corridor outside the childcare area, they have been accessed by more families who attend the centre (including ballet, art and ESL students). I will continue to monitor the access to this service.

Family Morning Tea

We successfully held a Saturday family morning tea early in Term 2 which was attended by 40 children and 40 adults. It was a great opportunity to meet many fathers who are unable to drop in during the week. We plan to hold another next term.

Staffing

Vera resigned at the end of 2008 to pursue her Nursing career. By advertising amongst our community, we were able to find Emma, who is working all day Monday, and Thursday mornings. Fortunately, she has also been able to relieve while Eileen completes her placement. Samantha has received her Diploma, and is now fully qualified, and Eileen is due to finish hers this year. All staff have added to the depth of the program by bringing their unique skills and personalities to the children.

Finally, I would like to thank Samantha for her continued professionalism, support and great ideas and enthusiasm, Eileen for her warmth and caring attitude, Anne for her support (particularly during the science experiments) and to Emma for her enthusiasm and practical support. Also, thanks to Robin for her support and understanding.

Denise

Other Children's Activities

Kids Art

We thank Mary Van Lieshout and welcome Amanda Florence to our children's after school art program. It has been wonderful to see the children making their own discoveries with colour and mark making. The children have enjoyed the creative processes of printmaking, beading, felt making, painting and drawing, developing and exploring new ways of expression.

Music Fun for tiny tots

The sounds of nursery rhymes, tinkling bells, guitar or keyboard can be heard on Wednesday mornings. These tiny tots love to move, clap, stamp and sing to the music. Well known favorites can be heard or songs from around the world. Parents all join in with the fun.

Perri

Ballet Fun for tiny tots

Tiny ballet dancers can be found flitting around the multipurpose room on Thursday mornings. They are in awe as they dance around in a circle with 'a real ballerina'. The sound of music wafts through the building. Parents and grandparents watch the antics of these preschool dancers with great big grins on their faces

Melissa

Each time I let the chooks out of their run upon a morning at KNLC and glance up to the big, grey building to my right that houses a corporate organization not that un-similar to places I've worked in days gone by, I get a feeling of glee that I am no longer 'entrenched' in a corporate working environment. A day at the office at KNLC is like no other job I've ever held in my 17 years in administration. Yes there are the everyday administrative tasks that are quite routine, yet satisfying none the less, but then there's the fun of brainstorming ideas for new courses and marketing for the Sparechair cafe, there's the blowing up of pink balloons for a surprise 80th Birthday for a long-time student, the organising and co-ordinating

'At KNLC one's passions, enthusiasm, spirit and ideas are not restrained by bureaucracy or job descriptions but encouraged and incorporated into the make-up of the place.'

of groups in preserves & jam making and Social Scrabble.

Though I'd have to say highlights for me have entailed opportunities where I have been able to utilise my qualifications and interest in the welfare/disability sector to help people at KNLC outside of the scope of my 'administrative role', all with the support of my manager and

wonderful colleagues. At KNLC one's passions, enthusiasm, spirit and ideas are not restrained by bureaucracy or job descriptions but encouraged and incorporated into the make-up of the place.

Anouk

Access Education: funded by ACFE

Ability@Work

The people enrolled in this course come from the Oasis program. Briefly, the course arose because we felt it was necessary to pull together the people who had been doing a myriad of important jobs on a voluntary basis at the KNLC. Their valuable work needed to be acknowledged. A project was devised with a focal point of a Tuesday meeting where people could communicate with each other, learn new skills & broaden their networks within the KNLC.

On Tuesdays we have a meeting and morning tea at 10am. Students bring their journals and report back on work done, important events during the week and activities outside of KNLC.

Work in the various areas in the House eg: Child Care, the Office or the Café is written on a standard form. These forms or Job Sheets are left outside the Oasis office. On Tuesday we pick the job sheets up, read them out at the meeting and anyone who's interested can put in a bid.

What really is important about this process is that in selecting or bidding for a job, the person who does the job is automatically responsible to the staff person from whence the job came. Finished work is usually returned to the program from where it originated. Any glitches or confusion along the way needs to be sorted out with that staff person e.g. Denise, Anouk or Michael. The result is students have become much more independent and confident

and have got to know other people and programs in the Centre.

In particular, this wonderful team of volunteers have made the lives of our childcare staff much easier and the program richer. From sweeping, cutting up fabric, sizing paper, organising files and various woodworking and maintenance tasks, the scope and usefulness of the high quality work completed is amazing!

Not everyone in the program attends on Tuesdays. If they're involved with outdoor work with Bev during the week or assisting Coralie with the afternoon tea on Tuesday afternoon they are still part of the program. Journals are written up and job sheets are undertaken.

Lisa

English as a Second Language Classes

We've had really buoyant classes this year – good attendance and lots of people coming from all parts of the world.

The course is spread over two mornings. Each session is three and a half hours long. This allows a unit of work to be completed in a term – much crisper than dragging it out over a semester. The ESL Frameworks has been revised and it's so much better. Reading and writing are incorporated as are speaking and listening.

For example, in first term the class completed a writing unit – the learning outcomes are much more applicable to daily life so: reading & writing an email, writing and reading a personal letter, reading and completing a formatted text such as an enrolment form, bank deposit slips, application forms or a tenancy lease.

In second term we have been 'speaking' simple casual conversations and understanding and carrying out a simple transaction about goods and services. Students therefore need to know how to ask a question.

Students have been writing and role playing simple transactions – making a complaint about rubbish bins, ringing the real estate agent about my bond and returning a jacket to Target.

Lisa & Judy

ESL Book Group

The Book Group has been a new addition to the language programs. Students from both ESL 2 & 3 attend. We've been using materials from the Kew library – short stories, novels and non fiction books.

Examples of books we've read include: *Desert Mountain Sea* – 3 stories of women's achievements through adventure *The No 1 Ladies Detective Agency*; *The Ugly American* & *The Ugly Sarkhanese and Les Twentyman* – a short biography

The format of the group varies. Sometimes we read aloud around the room and have

a discussion at the end. Sometimes the story is read for homework. The following week we break into smaller groups and have a discussion based on statements and questions. Sometimes, small groups read aloud and then discuss points of interest from the book.

This is a terrific way for students to enhance their language & the mix of ESL 2 & 3 has worked really well.

Lisa

Introduction to Café Work

One of the key reasons that we set up the Sparechair café was to provide practical hands on work experience for students from diverse backgrounds. In the last 12 months we have provided 22 students the opportunity to gain a thorough understanding of how a café works.

Students have a course work session once a week with Lisa and Michael that includes OHS issues and how to get work in the hospitality industry. Presenting a meal to the café clientele has been a great platform for confidence building and developing skills. These include: costing out & budgeting, planning equipment and ingredients, negotiating a time to use the kitchen, buying and cooking the meal, presentation and evaluation of the project.

Lisa & Michael

Computer Projects

This class runs as part of the Oasis program but students also find their way here from referrals and language and literacy classes. It is aimed at people on low incomes, on disability pensions or living with a mental illness. Twelve students are enrolled this semester and an occasional previous student drops in if there is a spare computer to access email or job search. Over half the students this year have been complete beginners. The course covers basic word processing, using the internet and email. When

confident with these topics, students choose individual projects to consolidate and further develop their skills. Everyone works at their own pace but often help each other out. Alongside the feelings of social inclusion that understanding and using email and the internet can encourage, the class itself is very sociable. It has been fantastic to see some Oasis program members start to see themselves as learners and have access to technology and information sources.

Some student comments:

'My spelling improves on the computer'

'I've learnt to think things out properly on the computer'

'I've never done anything before with a computer- now I know I'm learning, I've improved – when you tell me something, I understand.'

Avril

Reading Writing Toolbox

Literacy needs are often difficult to meet outside of specialist programs. By working flexibly with students we are able to target individual needs and also support learning in other classes. Nine students are enrolled from a variety of backgrounds and include Oasis participants, ESL students and people with a learning disability. Many have had disrupted or incomplete schooling. Take-home tasks are an important feature of the program, encouraging people to become active learners. The focus is on improving skills in reading, writing and spelling. Students have been very pleased with their progress and appreciate the opportunity.

Some student feedback:

'It's been good to finish a book when it's hard to get through a few pages.'

'I know what I want to say, but when I write, sometimes words have e's on – this has helped me.'

'I like to make a story out of things that happen.'

Avril

It is my fifth year teaching in Kew Neighborhood Learning Centre. The teaching and seeing the students smiles when they are able to achieve what they want makes me feel extremely happy. We have between 80 and 100 students attending classes in anyone term.

I have been teaching Basic Computers, Microsoft Word 2007, and Digital Camera & Slide for English speaking students.

At the start of year, all the terminals were upgraded to Window Vista 2007 and I designed a new series of programs. Most of our students are older and/ or new to computers so handouts are designed in clear language with illustrations

After finishing a Basic class students can use the computer independently. At the end of the digital camera and slide course students are now able to handle their camera and work independently at home.

The Chinese computer classes were on eBay, ebanking , Microsoft Word and digital camera. The classes are always full with more students than places. In the Chinese classes the students also learn "Online communication" in which they learn how to use the most popular activities like MSN, Facebook and You-Tube.

Learning computers can change people's lives:

"I have taken up all my husband's work since I learned computers from you. I planned our family holiday, I booked hotel rooms, flight tickets online and transferred photos to computer and put them online. I feel proud of myself. My husband is very happy to have a helping hand too." Philipa

Rufina

I keep saying Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre is my second home. I conduct computer lectures here on most days of the week, for both English and Chinese speakers. The course contents cater for computer learners on different levels. My classes include basic computer (for beginners), personal computer customization and Google's applications (for intermediate) and Microsoft Office Tools (for advance level).

From personal experience, I have realised the learning styles of diverse cultures can vary. My courses are designed according to student's learning styles, allowing the courses to be very effective. This is the reason for the success of the courses.

Teaching computer is no longer a job for me, but a chance to share skills on the computer with a group of friends. It is an enjoyable educational experience. Every week, the classes feel like gatherings, allowing me to gain control and confidence.

Jennifer

Fit for You

The Monday morning exercise class has been running all year with the result that we now have some very strong, fitter, better balanced and more flexible bodies. It has been very rewarding to watch the progress and development in all participants. However, we cannot become complacent! We now have competition in the way of an additional exercise class on Wednesdays who are making rapid progress on "all fronts". Many are even doing press ups. Congratulations to all of you. You should be very proud of your efforts. It has been great fun.

Bill

Yoga

Tuesday morning's yoga class is a group of committed practitioners. Their yoga practice has very much become a part of their lives - their repertoire expanding from a beginner to intermediate level. One student very thoughtfully took it upon herself to wash all the yoga mats for us - many thanks go out to Yvonne. Great to have that Sparechair at the cafe for moments like this.

Friday's group is much smaller, and as such, is more suitable for beginners to attend. The new c.d.player and yoga belt are appreciated.

Lana

Tai Chi for Health

The first half of year 2009 marked the commencement of Tai Chi classes in the Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre. This was welcomed by many enthusiastic students from the beginning. Initially there were two classes but recently they have merged to become one. The Tai Chi routine taught is one of several Tai Chi programs from Dr Paul Lam's 'Tai Chi for Health' series. Students have found the class beneficial for their health and wellbeing and also enjoyed the social interaction involved.

Kheng

Walking Adventures

Monthly a small group has got together to explore Boroondara and surrounding areas on foot. Walks have included: exploring the Yarra trails including boathouse to boathouse, river walk to Southbank and a walk to Ceres Environmental Park.

Another group meets every Tuesday out the front of KNLC for a regular one hour walk. This is a great way for people to get to know others in their local community while getting fit at the same time

Jan's Groups

The Essence of Self groups were based on the book *The Power of Now* by Eckart Tolle, where, in a group setting, issues around anxiety and unease in modern day living were considered and discussed.

Beating the Blues looked at issues surrounding depression and explored possible management strategies from a cognitive behavioural perspective.

All groups were received positively by participants. Special thanks to Jan Stewart from the City of Boroondara for facilitating these groups.



Art Tasters Group

Walk into the Multipurpose Room on a Tuesday morning, and you will see a happy band of people creating art with oils, acrylics, gouache, soft pastels, oil pastels, pencils... There seems no limit to the possibilities; for example after doing pencil drawings of a pot plant, we cut, pasted and added other materials to make some stunning collages. As we work, we learn many techniques, including abstraction, landscape, still life, use of colour and tone - the list goes on. This term Kathy, our teacher, also led each of us through stretching and applying gesso to our own canvasses, and the next step is to paint on them.

You will hear a contented buzz of conversation, laughter, the clink of coffee cups, and many a call of "Kathy, how do I...?", and finally "What? Not 12 o'clock! It can't be! I can't wait until next time!"

So you can see that our taste for art is not just being satisfied - we are hungry for more.

Marie

Creative Writing Class

The Creative Writing Class continues to flourish. Students of varied ages, ethnic and employment backgrounds find common ground in their interest in writing. A student this week said in delight: "What lovely people we are!" Perhaps creative endeavours bring out the best in us - it certainly takes courage to share your personal thoughts and feelings with a group of strangers and elicits acceptance and compassion to see someone struggling to reveal themselves in writing to the group. One of the biggest buzzes of teaching this class is to see people - time and time again - uncover creative capacities they didn't know they had.

Anne

Writing Family History

We have offered Writing Family History for the first time this semester. Many people who come to Creative Writing are actually interested in penning their family history and six enthusiastic people signed up. Some are experienced writers; others are just beginning to find confidence in their written voice. But all have an interest in capturing the essence of their family in the written word and perhaps leaving a legacy for their children and grandchildren. It is such a wonderful group to run - everyone is focused and this seems to add energy and drive to the writing. I continue to be moved by the wonderful, witty, humorous and diverse reminiscences and vivid portraits that are drawn.

Anne

Learn to Knit

After a great start to this course in second term, "Learn to Knit" was offered as a night class in term three. The course was enthusiastically attended by a varied group of community members and warmly supported by KNLC staff. The eight week course introduced "how to" skills as well as for those with some experience, more complex stitch patterns and textures. Each participant was able to confidently begin a project, which they worked on in the later sessions. The course brought together twenty something's to fifty something's providing an evening of learning, laughs and sharing of experiences. The environment was fun and supporting and I look forward to continue the program in the future.

Edwina

Kitchen Garden

It has been all change in the garden. Many previous participants have moved on to other things and new people have come. A group of seven now meets on a monthly basis to plant, prune, weed, harvest and chat. All are on low incomes and/ or living with an illness or disability.

The garden sessions continue to provide a therapeutic and enjoyable activity.

Avril

KNLC Book Group

The KNLC Book Group meets on a regular monthly basis to discuss books that as far as possible are available in multiple copies in the library. The group has been in existence for almost 3 years now, and has at its core a group of women who love to read and catch up with each other on a monthly basis. New members are always welcome.

Jan

My Time Mosaics Group

Wednesday morning and a roller bag that has seen better days is packed with an old shower curtain to spread on the table, an assortment of wipes, glue, tile cutters, assorted brushes and spreaders, lids to use for containers as the increasingly hard to find Weldbond adhesive is eked out, tiles of diverse materials, shapes, sizes and colours, plus an item that will be transformed using most of the above. Two hours are then spent in the company of friends who meet weekly at KNLC.

While 2008 was the Year of the Sparechair Mosaic, 2009 has seen the bringing to fruition of six mosaic plaques for display at the front entrance. These depict just some of the happenings at the extraordinary place that is Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre. For 2010, Denise has made a request for our group to provide some fifteen pavers for the Shoestring outdoor play area, thus ensuring we keep out of mischief for another year.

Lore

Social Bridge Group

Our Bridge Group has enjoyed the hospitality of KNLC for four years. Beginning with a small group of retirees dedicated to Bridge, it has grown somewhat over the years and our weekly meeting has become a happy occasion among friends enjoying a social game of Bridge. Up to 20 people come together each week. We would also like to thank Michael and the Sparechair Café Staff for adding to our pleasure.

June

Cultures Together

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the East Kew Community Bank- Bendigo Bank for their generous grant to fund this fantastic project in 2009.

The purpose of the *Cultures Together Project* at KNLC was to match members of our Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Community with a language mentor; to provide opportunities for conversational English practice; and to develop cross cultural understanding between them and potentially, ongoing friendships.

The *Cultures Together Project* at KNLC has come about in direct response to the expressed needs of our English as Second Language learners over many years to have opportunities to use English outside the classroom context and form friendships with a broader range of people in the community outside their cultural group.

Very few have contact with English language speakers and long to develop an understanding of the Australian culture and “fit in”. Many of this group has felt socially isolated outside of their language class.

To date, approximately 50 plus participants have been involved with the project. We have inducted three groups of mentors at information sessions, looking at the roles and responsibilities of mentors as well as adult learning styles.

Initially, we held a speed dating session for all participants as a novel approach to match the pairs. It was a noisy, animated and fun way to match mentors and mentees. Each pair had three minutes to interact and score compatibility before the bell rang and it was time to move on to the next person.

Pairs can be found meeting in small classrooms or the Sparechair Café at KNLC or going out together to explore Melbourne. One pair has explored cafes and galleries around Melbourne - Heidi, Mon Salvat, walked the Yarra River and

...it was a ‘win-win’ situation for both parties and had become part of their lives- indeed an enriching experience for both.

travelled as far as Hasufrau café in Yarraville!

At the *Cultures Together Project* Lunch held in May, each mentor said a few words about their shared time with their mentee. Each one emphasized how much they were gaining from the experience: the recurring theme was that it was a “win – win” situation for both parties and had become part of their lives- indeed an enriching experience for both.

This short reflective piece from one of our mentors gives you an insight into the effect the project has had on her.

Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common. We need to celebrate it every day. The *Cultures Together* Program run by KNLC is a step in the right direction. In a metropolitan city like Melbourne, it is impossible not to be influenced by the myriad of different nationalities, races, religions and languages. They all contribute something distinctive which makes the culture of this beautiful city so unique.

I have the privilege of being appointed a Mentor for a delightful lady; Donna. We connected at the very first meeting which turned out to be not only emotionally intense but also proved to be a sound foundation for our growing friendship. Our weekly meetings are usually spent in robust discussions on some insightful social issues where Donna never ceases to amaze me.

Donna has also introduced me (strictly carnivorous) to the wonderful world of vegetarian food. She has also devised an ingenious method of naming her cats; present family member is called CC, previous one being BB and next in line already named DD.

Anjum

In June, the Project was featured in an article in the Progress Leader and KNLC received more responses from prospective mentors wanting to become involved in the project.

Recently, everyone involved in the Cultures Together Project has been sent a survey as a means of assessing its success as well as providing an opportunity for participants to suggest ways of improving it in 2010.

All participants and their families have been invited to celebrate the Project at a Twilight Barbeque on the evening of the 10th of November.

It would appear that the impact of the Cultures Together Project will be ongoing judging from the nature of the friendships formed between mentors and mentees. Our goal is that is that the project continues beyond the life of the funding, to become a fixture at KNLC.

Louise

Write Now

Write Now is a program to match students who need extra help with literacy with a volunteer teacher. Pairs meet once a week at KNLC, usually for an hour. Support and learning materials are provided. Email contact has been invaluable for this. As well as skills development, the program also offers an opportunity for cultural exchange, social support and mentoring. Thanks to Balwyn Rotary and City of Boroondara for a community grant to support this project.

Avril



Thanks...

ACFE Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ability @ work team: Peter, Phil, Val, Joanna, Juliana, Janine, Maryann, Antony, Mark, Kevin

ARAFEMI

Balwyn Rotary through the community grants scheme

Cr Phillip Healey

Coralie White

City of Boroondara: Alex Threlfall

Department of Human Services

Department of Planning and Community Development

Don Anslow

East Kew Community Bank – Bendigo Bank

Jellis-Craig

John and Joy Pace

Kew Home of Chinese Inc

Merrilyn Shepherd, Fabric Feeling Group

George Batsakis & Jeff Ades, Building and Maintenance, City of Boroondara

Home & Community Care, Eastern Region DHS

Jo Marchese, Marchese Design

Jolyon, The Cleaning Shop

Kew Uniting Church, Highbury Grove Kew

Lisa Marquette, Bookkeeper

Lisa Wilson, Wilson Business Services

Lorri & Ian Beer for supporting the Oasis program and our Men's Shed

Matt Maudlin, Carrical House

Pam White Boroondara Community Outreach UCCO

Peter Robertson Cleaning Services

ReLink

Supported Residential Services: Grandel, Oakern Lodge Staff and Management at Denham House

Staff and residents of Kinkora Hostel

Staff at Hawthorn Community Mental Health Service

Vivieene Duong and Staff MOSAIC

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