

**December 2014**

## Centre for Families

*Lynne van Olden*



*The West Australian Foundation for Deaf Children (Inc) continues to deal with the issue of the future use of the Curtin Avenue site.*

*Recently the Government announced plans for the potential sale of a number of government owned properties, including plans to sell off 1.3 hectares of the 1.9 hectare Curtin Avenue school site. It is pleasing to note that information accompanying that announcement suggested that the Foundation would remain in the main heritage building. Whilst this information gives the Foundation hope for the future, considerable work still needs to be undertaken to ensure its Centre for Families is accommodated on site. The Foundation continues to work closely with the Government with a view to providing beneficial outcomes for the Foundation and the Deaf Community and the Government of Western Australia.*

We continue to develop strategic partnerships with the deaf community to support children with a hearing loss and their families to improve their education and learning outcomes.

We aim to work together with families for the benefit of their children. The Centre for Families provides peer support and an opportunity for families to access information.

Next year promises to be an exciting year, we will work towards filling the gap for families in their child's education and learning journey. Strengthening our partnerships and programs to support children with a hearing loss across Western Australia by continuing to advocate for modern family centered co-located services to support families in an all embracing model of deaf education, community, health and social support.

## CHILDREN & FAMILIES

*Roz Luce*

It has been a very exciting year for the West Australian Foundation for Deaf Children (WAFDC), Community Engagement Program. This year the Family Network Group (FNG) has had many fun activities and learning opportunities for families and their children with hearing loss. Over 173 children and their parents or carers have participated.

An exciting development has been the establishment of the Parent Mentor Group, which was formed after the Mentor Workshop hosted by the Foundation in April this year. The two day workshop consisted of one day of mentoring skills which was facilitated by Connect Groups, and the other day provided an opportunity for different organisations to showcase the services they offer. We now have nine parents registered as WAFDC Parent Mentors. Our Parent Mentors come from all around Perth and includes one from Manjimup WA. Under my guidance, these parents are able to support parents with a newborn diagnosis at Princess

Margaret Hospital through the Newborn Hearing Screening Program. The Parent Mentors meet once a term to discuss ways they can be valuable participants at FNG events, as well as active advisors and advocates for the Foundation in the wider community.

The **FNG family events** run this year have included:

The Suitcase Circus, NAB AFL Auskick Grid games, the Rock and Water Program and Creative Christmas party. Each of these activities are an opportunity for families to meet and connect with other families in similar circumstances.

The **Suitcase Circus** presented an outstanding performance and hands-on workshop which gave children of all ages and their parent's an opportunity to interact together in a fun and relaxed environment and learn some circus skills.

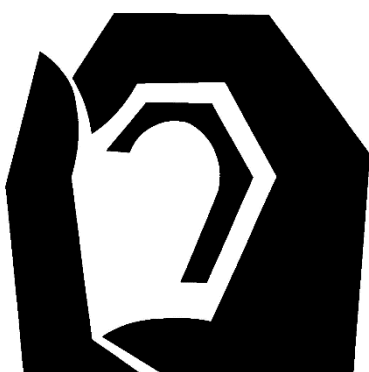
The **Rock & Water Program** was held during the winter holidays. Children between the ages of 7-14 years participated in a fun filled and informative activity based workshop to teach them about choices they have when to be a 'rock' and stand up for yourself with confidence,

boundary awareness and communication skills, and when to choose to be 'water' and let 'things go' by using self-control, anti-bullying strategies and mindfulness.

The deaf community had an opportunity to play in **NAB AFL Auskick Grid games**. Over 56 families met at the NAB AFL grounds in Subiaco, the children had an exciting time playing Auskick at half time in front of a full capacity crowd, and afterwards were presented a trophy in the Dockers club rooms by an AFL player. This was a collaborative event with WA Deaf Council, School of Special Education Needs and the WA Deaf Society.

**Our traditional Christmas Party** was a great success for 51 children and their families learning a new craft. This traditional celebration provided an excellent opportunity for parents to meet other parents and for their children to meet other children with different devices on their ears or using Auslan.

*Thanks to our volunteers for your continued support!*





## SUPPORTING DEAF EDUCATION AND LEARNING

*Lisa Freyne*

Our partnership with the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children, Renwick (RIDBC) continues to flourish. The partnership provides a locally based Masters of Special Education (Hearing Impaired) degree level course through the University of Newcastle. The course is a combination of online and locally presented units. There are currently 18 students enrolled and 5 are expected to graduate at the end of 2014. This year the Foundation is pleased to award scholarships to Patricia Makins, Katie Dean, Caroline Horton.

Our partnership also offers access for staff and parents associated with Deaf education in Western Australia access to Renwick Centre's Continuing Professional Education Program. This year we hosted Dr

Carol Flexer, who presented a two day workshop for professionals titled 'The Listening Brain: From Research to Practice'.

The Foundation continues to look at research projects that contribute to improved education, life skills and learning opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing children and young adults in Western Australia. We supported Dr Jill Duncan in her research project: "Online social capital and literacy skills of adolescents with a hearing loss and their peers: A pilot study.

**For further information contact:**

**RIDBC Renwick Centre, Sydney**

Ph: 02 98720811 E: [claire.farrington@ridbc.org.au](mailto:claire.farrington@ridbc.org.au)

[www.ridbc.org.au/renwick/courses/postgraduate.php](http://www.ridbc.org.au/renwick/courses/postgraduate.php)

## DEAF HISTORY AND HERITAGE GROUP

Our Heritage Volunteer Group has again gained strength this year. We have a steady stream of enthusiastic visitors helping us; past students, teachers and interested community members who meet with Mavis Fischer and Margaret Warden every Monday and Wednesday to collect the stories of deaf education in Western Australia, the group collects and compiles photographs, articles, artefacts, etc. relating to the history of deaf education in WA.

Thank you to our volunteers Mavis, Margaret, John, Rae, Pat, Therese, Dina, Christine, Leonie & Leonie and everyone else who has come along and supported this great project!

In November we hosted a Heritage History morning tea, many past students and visitors came along to meet old friends and share stories with our Heritage Volunteer Group.

***Ruth Mickelson one of our original Heritage volunteers and past teacher celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday with us this year. Happy Birthday Ruth!***



History Heritage morning tea



***Ros Davies - Coordinator***

This year saw a smaller but very dedicated group of eight students continue their Auslan studies at Freshwater Bay Primary School. Once again we met every Monday afternoon in the school library. The students worked hard but also had fun, as all the lessons were activity based. Being in its second year the students are becoming much more proficient with their skills.

They were encouraged to not use their voices during the class ie, just signing. We also limited the use of the interpreter in order to promote direct communication with Therese, our Deaf role model and teacher.

Many different themes were covered during the year. The students can now describe their families, pets, animals, holidays, school day, sports, food likes and dislikes, weather, give and follow instructions and of course play party games, all in Auslan.

*THANK YOU to Freshwater Bay PS and The West Australian Foundation for Deaf Children for once again supporting the Auslan Community School.*



*Eva and Bronte signing Happy Christmas*



Family Network Group Fun 2015

Suitcase Circus

Christmas 2014



Rock and Water



NAB AFL AUSKICK GRID GAMES



## *The West Australian Foundation for Deaf Children*

*are **calling for saving a date** for*



**Thoughts worth sharing!**

**at D.E.A.F. EXPRESS**

Based on the internationally known **T.E.D.** talk concept (**T**echnology **E**ntertainment **D**esign) we are looking for expressions of interest to join us for a day fact and fun.

There will be **3 sessions** lasting approx. 45mins:

**1. Professionals speaking 2. parents/adults speaking 3. children/teenagers speaking.**

Each participant will get 6 minutes on the podium to talk about their organisation, an idea, or experience they have had relating to Deaf or Hard of Hearing that will encourage, inspire and assist the audience.

**D.E.A.F. EXPRESS** is about **D**elivering a topic that is **E**ncouraging, **A**ssisting and **F**actual.

**DEAF EXPRESS is all about good news stories.** This is a neutral information sharing platform. This is a day to promote the positives.

**WHEN: Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2015. 9.30am- 1pm**

**WHERE: West Australian Foundation for Deaf Children  
53 Curtin Avenue, Cottesloe**

Please contact the Community Engagement Coordinator at

[roz.wafdc@optusnet.com.au](mailto:roz.wafdc@optusnet.com.au) or

mobile/text 0423 646 741

This is an interpreted event. Morning tea, refreshments and light lunch included.

