



Message from Brenda Welcome to PCAF Thrive Autumn edition

Dear members

The new name of our newsletter "Thrive" has been inspired by the outcomes we would like to see for all our families from adoption, permanent care, and kinship care.

Our new helpline and major flexible funding begins in April. DHHS will be informing every permanent care family in the state of Victoria of the availability via their carer payment notices. New staff are being employed and we are ready to roll out this exciting service.

We have also been implementing changes to the organisation to ensure that we are accredited as a Child Safe Organisation. The Victorian Parliament passed the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015* to introduce seven child safe standards into law. The standards apply to all organisations involved in child-related work in Victoria. Our Child Safe Policy and Procedures Manual is completed and staff, Board, volunteers and contractors are being trained in the standards.

An outline of the Child Safe Standards and the PCA Families Statement of Commitment to Child Safety is included on page 8. A key statement you should note for any child safe organisation is that they have "zero tolerance to child abuse".

An exciting agenda is being planned for the Education Forum on June 1. You will be able to register for this forum in early April. Both public and catholic primary and secondary school issues will be covered. This is a free event with stalls and advice available.

Finally, Mindfulness in Motion (MiM) has been a huge success with kids and parents. I have to mention some feedback from the children:

What did you learn from MiM?

- *Ways to control my feelings, ways to relax*
- *Being like a rock when I'm angry*
- *How to control my emotions.*

Have you used what you have learnt in MiM at school, home etc?

- *Taking myself to my room when I'm angry*
- *Someone was annoying me at school by chatting too much and I stayed calm*
- *I've used the "rock" in my room when I was feeling down*
- *When I'm ANGRY I use the rock.*

The code used by the group is **Be Strong, Be Calm, Be Kind, Try Hard...** a great motto for all of us!

Kind Regards

Brenda Carmen
CEO

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Notice board

Fundraising committee

You may have seen an email recently advising you about our new Fundraising Committee and asking for your help and involvement.

We are pleased to say that we have had some offers to join - thank you! – but we still need more volunteers to make our vision a reality.

As a valued member of our working group, your enthusiasm and ideas can help us meet our fundraising goals. It has never been more important to support families joined through permanent care and adoption and your help can ensure our sustainability and continuation of services throughout Victoria.

If you or someone you know can help, or you would just like to talk further about what's involved, we would love to hear from you. Please don't hesitate to give us a call on 03 9020 1833 if you have any questions.

Baby/child sign language

Baby/child sign language has three types of benefits:

- Practical:** less fussing and more fun
- Emotional:** creates a closer parental bond
- Cognitive:** boosts brain development.

Sign Language can be used for verbal and non verbal children and enables babies to communicate what they want. They can tell you if they want their teddy bear, when they are hungry, if it is too hot, or if their tummy hurts. Families that sign, report that both parents and child experience less frustration.

Sign language can be used to improve:

- vocabulary
- reading ability
- Increased interest in books and literacy skills
- spelling proficiency
- self-esteem & self-confidence
- Increased memory retention
- stimulate brain development

PCA Families together with our amazing volunteer and mother, Kaisey, will present and teach parents about the benefits and ease of using sign language. This is proposed to be in June.

Please contact Deborah on 9020 1839 or info@pcfamilies.org.au if you would like to attend a session.



What's on

Tuesday April 4
8.00pm – 9.30pm

Journal Club – Collingwood
TOPIC: 'Managing screen time and internet safety'

Tuesday May 2
8.00pm – 9.30pm

Journal Club – Collingwood
TOPIC: A discussion on school refusal with Marianne Wray, Coordinator of the Killara Street Program at Berengarra School"

Thursday May 11
10.00am – 2.00pm

Life Story Work for professionals – Shepparton

Thursday May 11
5.30pm – 9.00pm

Life Story Work for parents and carers – Shepparton

Friday May 12
10.00am – 2.00pm

Life Story Work for parents and carers – Shepparton

Thursday May 18
9.15am – 1.15pm

Life Story Work for professionals – Melb CBD

Sunday May 21
10.00am – 2.00pm

Life Story Work for parents & carers – Melb CBD

Tuesday June 6
8.00pm – 9.30pm

Journal Club – Collingwood

Thursday June 20
9.15am – 1.15pm

Life Story Work for professionals – Melb CBD

Friday June 16
10.30am – 12.00pm

Peer support – Bendigo

Friday June 23
10.30am – 12.00pm

Peer support – Ballarat

Friday June 30
10.30am – 12.00pm

Peer support – Shepparton

Training



Life Story Work for Professionals

Date: Thursday May 11
Time: 10.00—2.00pm
Address: Berry St
110 Wyndham St, Shepparton
Register: <https://www.trybooking.com/PMWE>
Cost: Professionals \$100.00

Date: Thursday May 18
Time: 9.15—1.15pm
PCAF office
5/50 Market St, Melbourne
Register: <https://www.trybooking.com/PHSF>
Cost: Professionals \$100.00

Date: Tuesday June 20
Time: 9.15—1.15pm
PCAF office
5/50 Market St, Melbourne
Register: <https://www.trybooking.com/PMWK>
Cost: Professionals \$100.00



Life Story Work for Parents and Carers

Date: Thursday May 11
Time: 5.30—9.00pm
Address: Berry St
110 Wyndham St, Shepparton
Register: <https://www.trybooking.com/PNCW>
This is a free thanks to Helen Macpherson Smith Trust

Date: Friday May 12
Time: 10.00—2.00pm
Address: Berry St
110 Wyndham St, Shepparton
Register: <https://www.trybooking.com/PMYG>
This is a free thanks to Helen Macpherson Smith Trust

Date: Sunday May 21
Time: 10.00—2.00pm
Address: PCAF office
5/50 Market St, Melbourne
Register: <https://www.trybooking.com/PMYM>
Cost: \$60.00
\$30.00 (concession card holders)

Develop another therapeutic tool to use with your families and children. Learn how to begin a journey with your child towards helping them understand the past and present while providing resources to move on into the future. Discover how to enhance your child's reflection and problem-solving skills.

At this training, you will learn about:

- Current research and thinking on *Life Story Work* and the role it can take in family life
- The opportunity to explore, in a practical way, how to create and use life stories
- An invaluable 'toolbox' of suggested strategies and activities, and
- Shared learning, reflection and problem-solving skills.

Children of families created through Adoption, Permanent Care, Foster Care and Kinship Care often require additional guidance from the adults in their lives to ensure they have opportunities to record their history. They may also need help reflecting upon the impact of this narrative on their life. *Life Story Work* is a researched and highly regarded mechanism for providing structure and purpose to children and families engaged in this activity.

Youth Programs

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

**TERM 3, 2 groups
ages 5-9 & 10-14**

mindfulness
in motion



The *Mindfulness in Motion Kids Program* is designed specifically to assist young peoples' personal growth. Classes blend skill development, personal observation and experiential learning in an environment that is fun, supportive and engaging for young people.

Classes focus on acquiring:

- Resilience
- Focus
- Teamwork
- Assertiveness
- Emotional regulation
- Self-reflection
- Body awareness

We would like expressions of interest from children who have not previously attended 'mindfulness in motion'.

The classes will run weekly during Term 3 on Tuesday evening from 5.20—6.15pm

Time: 5:20pm to 6:15pm

Date: Term 3

Age groups: 5-9 years old
10-14 years old

Address: Mindfulness in Motion, 6 Oakover Road, Preston

To register your interest:

Please telephone Deborah Hunt at PCA Families on 9020 1839 or email Deborah@pcfamilies.org.au

Your Instructors:

Guy Rhynsburger is the senior instructor at Mindfulness in Motions, with over 20 year's martial arts experience. Guy has been working with young people from a variety of backgrounds teaching life skills for well over 15 years.

Alan James is a Kung Fu Black Belt and an experienced Youth Worker with more than 10 years' experience.



Peer support



We have many forms of support groups and playgroups scattered around Melbourne and regional Victoria, including Collingwood, Northcote, Bendigo, Ballarat, Shepparton and Horsham. They gather for shared learning where participants listen and talk about some of the challenges of raising children and share insights into different ways of supporting our children as well as support and build friendships with other parents.

Our support groups are friendly and welcoming and are open to all adoptive parents and permanent carers with an opportunity to meet and share stories. PCA Families can also assist if you want to set up a support group in your own neighborhood.



Peer Support with Pennelopy Tan

Pennelopy Tan, will be meeting with you to discuss advocacy, flexi funding and referral to services, ie psychology, support etc. Parents, carers and preschoolers all welcome.

Bendigo

Date: Friday June 16,
Time: 10.30am – 12.00pm.
Venue: Beechworth Bakery, 158 High St, Bendigo

Shepparton

Date: Friday June 30
Time: 10.30am – 12.00pm
Venue: Baking Dough Bakery, 251—253 Maude St, Shepparton

Ballarat

Date: Friday June 23 from 10.30 – 12.00pm
Time: 10.30am – 12.00pm.
Venue: Victoria Park Playground, opp. Loreto
1600 Sturt Street, Ballarat

Journal Club – Collingwood

Journal Club is a monthly facilitated discussion and support group where participants discuss an article relevant to parenting in home-based care and adoption. It allows confidential conversations around the challenges of parenting and is facilitated by skilled volunteers with lived experience in raising children through home-based care and adoption.

Date: Tuesday April 4 from 8.00 – 9.30pm
Venue: Collingwood Library, 11 Stanton Street, Abbotsford
Topic: 'Managing screen time and internet safety'

Save the date— Tuesday May 2, 8.00pm

Topic: "A discussion on school refusal with Marianne Wray, Coordinator of the Killara Street Program at Berengarra School"

Education Forum for Carers

There is a lot happening in education, and this free event is aimed at all carers across Victoria.

The forum aims to inform all carers of new initiatives, programs and support, provide facilitated discussion on a range of education related topics as well as an opportunity for carers to share experiences, information and to network.

Date Thursday June 1, 2017

Time 9.30am registration, 10.00 am to 3.30pm

Venue The Victoria Room
Queen Victoria Women's Centre
210 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne CBD

Registration details will be available early April

Free half day Training: Prevent, Understand & Respond: Effective Youth AOD Practices for Carers.

We're inviting Foster Carers, Kinship Carers and related case managers.
Sessions will be held in **Dandenong & Sunshine**

Participants will learn about building resources for young people to reduce the risk of problematic substance use, why young people use drugs, how they are using them and how to reduce harms while engaging in constructive conversations about drug use.

Training dates available:

Sunshine

Visy Cares Hub, 80b Harvester Rd

Monday 1st May

Day Session: 10am – 1pm

Monday 8th May

Evening Session: 5:30pm – 8:30pm

Dandenong

YSAS Dandenong, 155 Lonsdale St

Tuesday 9th May

Evening Session: 5:30pm – 8:30pm

Thursday 11th May

Day Session: 10am – 1pm

Learning outcomes

- Building resilience and applying strategies to safeguard young people to reduce their risk of developing problematic substance use
- Understanding the function of substance use
- Understanding effective limit setting and consequences
- Understanding drugs and their effects/Patterns of adolescent drug use/trends in OoHC
- Engaging young people in constructive conversations about drug use
- Working with stages of change
- Accessing the Youth AOD service system.

Our trainers

The course will be delivered by senior practitioners and trainers from the Youth Support + Advocacy Service . These trainers have over 8 years of direct care experience supporting adolescents at risk of or using substances and their families/ carers through a variety of mediums

About YSAS

The Youth Support + Advocacy Service (YSAS) is Australia's largest, youth-specific community service organisation. Operating since 1998 as Victoria's flagship Youth AOD service, YSAS employs over 300 skilled staff across 19 sites in metropolitan and regional Victoria.

For enquires contact:

rbruce@ysas.org.au

Ombudsman investigates financial support for kinship carers

The Victorian Ombudsman has commenced an 'own motion' investigation into the financial support provided to kinship carers by the Department of Health and Human Services in Victoria.

Kinship carers assume care of children, who are in need of protection, in an out-of-home care (OOHC) setting. Kinship carers can be relatives or any other suitable person in a child's social network.

Kinship care is the preferred OOHC placement for children. If a child or young person is removed from the care of their parent, consideration is to be first given to the child being placed with an appropriate family member or other appropriate person significant to the child, before any other placement option is considered.

Australian researchers have reported that kinship care is the fastest growing form of OOHC. Reasons for this growth include recognition of kinship care as having many advantages within the formal structures of child protection, such as the preservation of family, promotion of cultural identity and reduced separation trauma.

In 2014-15, Victoria had the highest number of children enter out-of-home-care in Australia (3,545) and the state also has the highest level of kinship care placements, amounting to 54.96 per cent of all out-of-home-care placements.

The Victorian Ombudsman is seeking input, information and advice to assist the investigation, which can be made in writing to kinshipinvestigation@ombudsman.vic.gov.au or by telephone to 9613 6222 until **28 April 2017**.

Further information: Tel 03 9613 6222 | Regional 1800 806 314 | ombudvic@ombudsman.vic.gov.au | Follow @VicOmbudsman

Flexi funding

As of April 1, 2017, PCA Families will have a dedicated helpline to assist permanent care parents and carers with queries on resources and available funding. Parents can call the Helpline around a variety of issues including :

- ◆ medical
- ◆ education
- ◆ respite
- ◆ therapies
- ◆ transport and
- ◆ cultural connection.

The funds may also be used to develop wrap around services to ensure full support is provided.

We will endeavour to respond to your call within 24 hours.

9.00am—5.00pm Monday to Friday

T: 03 9020 1833

E: info@pcfamilies.org.au

Child Safe organisation

PCA Families is a child safe organisation and has a policy and procedures manual which will be available via our website shortly. Organisations are required to promote the Child Safe Standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children.

Outlined below are the Child Safe Standards 1 to 7 for your information.

Child safe standard 1:

Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety

Child Safe Standard 1 requires organisations to plan, implement and review strategies that will embed a culture of child safety. Standard 1 provides part of the overarching framework for all the Standards, alongside Standard 2 which requires a policy or commitment to child safety.

Child safe standard 2:

A child safety policy or a statement of commitment to child safety

Child Safe Standard 2 requires organisations to develop and publicly communicate a Statement of Commitment to child safety or an organisation's child safe policy to comply with Ministerial Order 870.

Child safe standard 3:

Developing a child safety code of conduct

A Code of Conduct is a highly effective strategy to help keep children safe from harm. A Code of Conduct lists behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable. It identifies professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

Child safe standard 4:

Staff selection, supervision and management practices for a child safe environment

Strong human resource practices promote child safe environments and reduce the risk of child abuse. Child Safe Standard 4 requires organisations to use policies and procedures for recruitment, supervision, training and managing performance that support a child safe environment.

Child safe standard 5:

Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

Professionals who work with children play a vital role in protecting children from abuse by responding and reporting any incidents, disclosures or suspicions. These professionals are often best placed to identify signs and behaviours that may indicate that a child has been subject to abuse, or that a community member or a staff member may be a perpetrator of abuse. Standard 5 applies to all employees, contractors and service providers' responsibilities in responding and reporting suspected abuse.

Child safe standard 6:

Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

Child safe standard 6 requires organisations to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate risk management strategies to ensure child safe environments.

Child safe standard 7:

Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation

Child safe standard 7 requires organisations to develop strategies to encourage participation and deliver appropriate education about:

- developing children's capacity in communication, leadership skills and participation;
- standards of behaviour as well as building cultural understanding and developing healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- resilience; *and*
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

PCA Families is a child safe organisation with zero tolerance of child abuse

Thrive is a quarterly newsletter produced by Permanent Care and Adoptive Families

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Care and
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