

Inner Sydney VOICE

AUTUMN 2014

Property Crime Decline

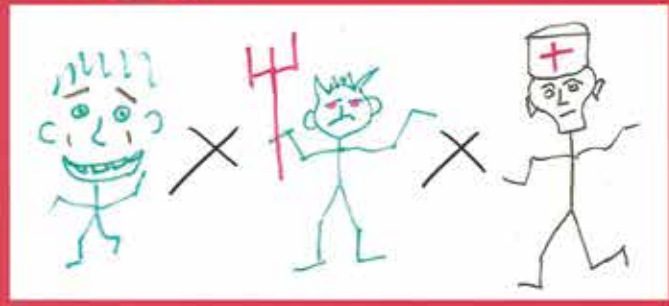
**Community Safety and
Overcoming Fear**

**House Prices, Ownership
and Affordability**

**Social, Public and Affordable
Housing Inquiry**

**Ageing and Disability: Block
to Unit funding Challenges**

SMILE a day to keep the demons and doctors away



My dream is to achieve a holistic self where I can incorporate

(e.g. fears, dominating my freedom of expression)



my hopes, fears, passions and interests.

Without one aspect of myself dominating the other.....

MY WORLD

to be a peaceful place with no arguments or fighting. Life is filled with SPRING colours so everyone is happy with life.

EVERYONE HAS FREEDOM



After my illness I collapsed. I felt so much better afterwards, in terms of emotion etc. hopefully I'll recover myself and become more involved in my society.

.. Janelle F ..



My name is Chris Taylor. My wellbeing comes from the freedom of being able to **RUN** on a daily basis. To **RUN** in the fresh air through wonderful bush. This is a great privilege. I love to try new **RUN**s, always changing the route, looking for the perfect **RUN**. Sometimes I like to **RUN** with people and sometimes I like to **RUN** on my own. I like to **RUN** early in the morning. I **RUN** to celebrate being alive. Good and bad days, rain or shine. **RUN. RUN. RUN** !!! It can be lots of fun. **RUN** in the rain, **RUN** in the sun. Start small and go long. Listen to your favourite song. It will make you very strong. **RUN** here and **RUN** there. Feel the wind in your hair.

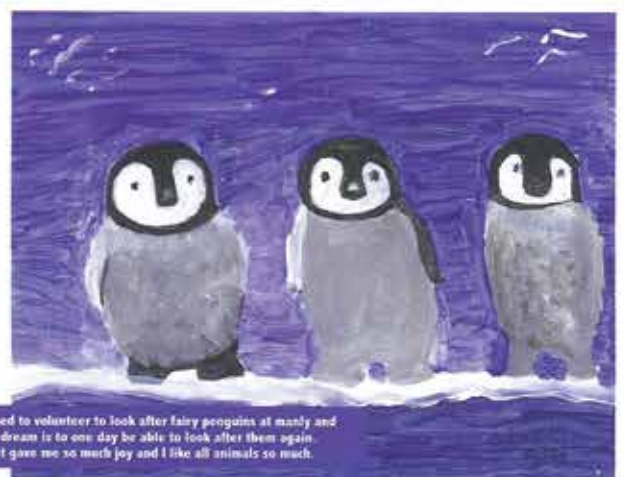
.. Chris T ..



TO DIVE WITH SHARKS TO DIVE WITH SHARKS IN THE DEEP OCEAN

Bipolar can be a confusing, scary and unpredictable thing to deal with but I have learned through experiences with my sister that you just need to be persistent and show them that you care.

.. Alex L ..



I used to volunteer to look after fairy penguins at manly and my dream is to one day be able to look after them again. As it gave me so much joy and I like all animals so much.

Images from Deck of Dreams (www.mingarden.me) - one of the components of City of Sydney Narratives Project (<http://cosnp.info>)



INNER SYDNEY REGIONAL COUNCIL

FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

About

Inner Sydney Voice is the journal of the Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development Inc; a non-profit organisation committed to the idea of information as a tool for community development. The organisation defines Inner Sydney as being the local government areas of Botany Bay, Leichhardt, Randwick, City of Sydney, Waverley and Woollahra.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional custodians of the lands across the areas we service, particularly the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, traditional custodians of the land on which our office is located. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present.

Editors

Geoff Turnbull, Charmaine Jones

Contributors

Garner Clancey, Olga Camacho Duarte, Andrew Haylen, Craig Johnson, Charmaine Jones, Enis Jusufspahic, Dr Rohan Lulham, Chris Martin, Michael Shreenan, Ross Smith, David White & Colleen

Design and Cover

Erin Snelgrove

Membership and Subscription Coordinator

Saskia Cheney

Printing

Prografica

Website

www.innersydneyvoice.org.au

Publisher

Inner Sydney Regional Council for
Social Development Inc
Rear 770 Elizabeth Street Waterloo NSW 2017

ABN 86 770 127 254

Phone 9698 7690

Fax 9318 0852

Email admin@innersydneyrcsd.org.au

Facebook www.facebook.com/innersydneyrcsd

Twitter @innersydneyrcsd

Website www.innersydneyrcsd.org.au

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A helping hand for mental health

Stories from a new resource kit highlight what a small group of people can achieve in supporting people with mental health issues in the inner city.

EDITED BY CHARMAINE JONES

In the early 2000s the Northcott Public Housing Estate in Surry Hills had a reputation as a dumping ground for people with mental health and drug and alcohol issues. The community saw a need for cross-collaboration between agencies and themselves. A collective group of like minded organisations and individuals created a forum which not only viewed best practice around mental health recovery, but provided a voice, not only to mental health consumers, but to their neighbours, friends, families and carers.

In 2006 Douglas Holmes, Consumer Participation Officer for the Inner City Health Program lead the ground work for St Vincent's Hospital becoming a signatory to the Northcott World Health Organisation accreditation as a Safe Community and the same year Douglas chaired the inaugural Inner City Mental Health Recovery Working Group.

The group developed ways of raising awareness and reducing stigma in relation to mental health. This approach is directed at promoting good mental health, preventing mental ill health and ensuring early intervention when mental health problems occur. It involved looking beyond prevention or management of illness, to the relationship between mental wellbeing and physical health, and people's connections with the community.

The group still meets monthly and consists of tenants, mental health consumers, and representatives from different service and government agencies, representatives from Housing NSW, St Vincent's Mental Health team, St Vincents Community Health team, City of Sydney, Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMS), Neami, Mercy Arms, The Factory Community Centre, Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development, the Alex Greenwich's electoral office, Surry Hills Public Tenant Association and South Sydney Community Aid.

Each year, the group has developed events and projects to improve the lives of mental health consumers and the community as a whole. Activities have included Mental Health First Aid courses, the Looking Forward Looking Back Mental Health forums, Yo-Yo au Go-Go (Recovery is full of ups and downs, a yo-yo-ing day which saw 300 people turn-out in support of mental health recovery) and 'Keep Your Marbles' day as a Mental Health month promotional event.

Whilst the group itself is completely un-funded and none of the participants come to the table with specific funds, having such a diverse group of people around the table results in a breadth and depth of knowledge, skills and resources that would be otherwise impossible to find.

In 2012, The Inner City Mental Health Working Group received a NSW Mental Health Matters award. The awards are designed to recognise the achievements of individuals and organisations who have worked to improve understanding, awareness, service provision and the general mental health of our community, over the past 12 months. The group has a Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ICMHRWG

The Cadre Project

In 2011 St Vincent's Hospital Inner City Health Program was successful in applying for funding from the Lord Mayor Clover Moore MP Salary Trust to develop the Inner City Cadre Project on behalf of the Inner City Mental Health Recovery Working Group. The Inner City Health Program partnered with Mind Australia, a Federal Government funded not for profit organisation with the aim of supporting people's mental health recovery in a community context to train and roll the Cadre project out in Sydney.

The Cadre Project had its origins in Indonesia following an invitation in 2007 by Dr Yessi, Director of Provincial Health for the province of Aceh, to Anthony Stratford, Senior Training & Development Officer, Mind Australia, to conduct training in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. Banda Aceh is the only province in Indonesia with a community mental health program. Stratford's role was to train villagers or mental health cadres that are attached to each of the provinces' 382 primary health care centres or puskesmas.

The cadre's role, in some ways is similar to Neighbourhood Watch, was to support and watch out for people who have returned home from hospital or who are becoming unwell and need to see a professional in the primary health care centre.

The project consists of a mental health support program that trains and supports communities (including individuals with mental health problems and disorders and their carers) to help care for each other. To date Public Housing community in Surry Hills, Woolloomooloo, Glebe, Ultimo, Waterloo, Potts Point and Redfern have participated in the program. (for details on the program see box).

The City of Sydney Narrative Resource

The aim of the City of Sydney Narratives Project was to encourage people affected by mental health issues, alcohol or drug dependency, people with social disadvantage, young people at risk and homeless people across the Inner City to gain the skills to tell their stories. As well as contributing to the Deck of Dreams, people who accessed the Inner City Health Program were also able to learn digital media, video making and web publishing skills.

This project was also funded by the Clover Moore Trust Fund with the support of St Vincent's Hospital and the Inner City Mental Health Recovery Working Group.

The City of Sydney Narratives Box and online resource at cosnp.info presents this material to tell the story of the Inner City Mental Health Recovery Working Group, the Cadre Project and the project participants. The resource contains stories and films, images from the Deck of Dreams, quotes and information about how people have collaborated across the City. It reflects over seven years of successful partnering and creative excellence.



The Deck of Dreams

Jen Lee from the Day to Day Living Program at the Wayside Chapel had a dream. “Imagine a world where the focus is not a person’s illness or history, but a person’s dreams and purpose”.

The Deck of Dreams has now become a wonderful reality, with the artworks beautifully produced into a deck of cards (see image above) to be kept or passed on, spreading positivity and lightness around a subject that is too often treated as deeply sombre and depressing.

Of the Deck, Jen says “You will share in 52 people’s dreams and learn about their experiences. The more people that share their mental health experiences, the more lives could be saved”. And with one in five Australians experiencing mental health issues in their lifetime and suicide being one of the leading causes of premature death amongst this group (SANE 2008), Jen’s vision is to connect people to the part of them that wants to live.

If the Deck of Dreams’ purpose was to inspire dream creation, there is no doubt it has been successful. It has become so successful; Jen is already being approached to implement the project interstate. ■

The article has been edited from stories in the City of Sydney Narratives Project by Charmaine Jones, Executive Officer ISRC.

The materials in the box can be viewed online at <http://cosnp.info>. You can see some examples from the Deck of Dreams on the inside cover of this ISV; printed cards can be purchased from Jen at www.mindgarden.me.

UNDERSTANDING THE CADRE PROJECT

A cadre can be understood as a small group of people specially trained for a particular purpose. The most enduring feature of a cadre is that they either live in or have a special relationship within the community that they operate.

The aims of the *Inner City Cadre Project* include:

- To establish an inner city cadre network
- Educate and support cadres as community members to reduce stigma linked with mental health issues
- Assist people with mental health problems and disorders
- Benefit Housing NSW communities that include consumers, carers, neighbours and service providers
- Develop coping and support strategies for mental health consumers and their supporters, carers and neighbours
- Contribute to positive change in the community

The Role of a Cadre

The role of a cadre can be best summed up as operating to effect positive mental health and community outcomes. A cadre member can best be understood as someone who:

- Looks out for people in distress to get them help
- Sorts out problems and helps neighbours
- Cares for someone who has a mental illness
- Understands and can communicate how to maintain good mental health
- Is a community leader or spokesperson
- Provides support for people with a mental health issues
- Understands and helps to facilitate the concept of recovery to their neighbour

It is important to distinguish what is not part of the scope of cadre’s activities as well as to be clear about what constitutes a cadre’s area of responsibility.

The challenge for the cadre is to be aware of community issues or problems, to act as a resource and a reference point for individuals with mental health problems and have an understanding of the agencies or services that might be able to address them. Facilitating solutions or linking supports best sums up a cadre’s role. At the same time cadres are not responsible for anyone’s problems or for resolving them.

While the consumer movement and the recovery framework has informed the philosophy of the Cadre Project since its inception it is important to stress that cadre members do not need to have had a “lived experience” of mental health issues or function as a support worker. Some things that would lie outside cadre’s boundary lines might include the following:

- Paid work
- De facto mental health work
- Offers medication counselling or treatment
- Provides a crisis intervention service or support

WANT TO HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD?

We are always looking for new voices - opinion pieces, investigative articles, profiles of community organisations, interviews and more. If you have an idea or suggestion then contact us and discuss it with one of the editors.

Contributions are welcome from individuals, community organisations and others about the inner Sydney, eastern suburbs or broader political and social landscapes.

Email isv@innersydneyrcsd.org.au

Phone (02) 9690 1781

Cover image - *Summer on the Green in Waterloo helps bring the community together*

