



Telephone (03) 9076 4713
E-mail: gaappf@alfred.org.au
Website: <http://www.ispaf.org>
Office and mail address:
C/- Waiora Clinic
Level 2, 435 Malvern Road, South Yarra 3141

September 2012

The AGM was well attended and the vote to change our name to Inner South Family and Friends was unanimous. We are indebted to Judith's daughter Claire who not only helped her put together our new website but has also amended our logo for us. No new nominations were received for the committee but all nine members from last year were prepared to continue on so we are fortunate indeed. The Annual Report was circulated via email but if anyone would like a printed copy we can post one to you. Barbara Hocking spoke with the benefit of her exceptional knowledge of the mental health system as it has evolved over the last twenty years. Diane Hunt, one of our committee members, made the attached summary of points raised. Barbara emphasised that it is the personal stories which command attention when groups such as ours are lobbying for mental health services. Please give it some thought as we hope to continue our lobbying efforts in 2012/13. Personal histories need to be respectful and de-personalised but as a group it would be really helpful to develop a representative portfolio of the sorts of situations we face and what has and hasn't helped.

Diary Dates

- 9 October **Research Update** - Dr Stuart Lee will discuss two projects involving carers which he conducted for MAPSrc this year
- 20 October **Film Afternoon** notice attached Note the date change. Please RSVP promptly by email or t/p
- 13 November **Dr Simon Stafrace** - Director, Alfred Psychiatry
- 11 December **End of year dinner** - Prahran Mission - 6.30pm for 7pm
RSVP on 9076 4713

**Meetings are back at the Betty Day
Centre 67 Argyle Street, St Kilda
7.15 pm for 7.30pm start.**

Centrelink Guidelines

Judy Carroll, for many years the chairperson of our group, responded very positively to the draft Centrelink guidelines put together by the SRMHNCN and circulated with our last newsletter: "I just had to write and say how good the suggestions were...for many years we have heard carers complain how geared the forms are to 'physical' injuries and how little understanding government departments have of the incredible strain mental illness has on us as carers...I hope lots of carers read this..." Judy pointed out that it wasn't until her son became wheelchair bound that he was able to get any council help. It is still not easy but, for some of our members, perseverance has paid off and has made a very big difference

Mind Melbourne Inner South (03) 8640 5681

Mind has moved to a central enquiry, referral and intake system in our region in order to streamline access to support. This single number and their email address:

airs-innersouth@mindaustralia.org.au

are the contact points for Care Co-ordination (individual support packages), Family and Carer Services (formerly Respite Services), Personalised Support Services (PHaMs, 1:1 Supports) and Residential Services (Edith Parly and Treloarwarren Houses).

FEEDBACK

We would really like your feedback please. Some members of our group would prefer to receive all communication via email so we are surveying everyone to gain their individual preference before re-shaping our mailing list to suit them. **Please try to find time to respond** using the enclosed stamped and addressed envelope as this is our only means of discovering whether you wish to keep in contact with our group and still have the same physical and email addresses.



Please try to find the time to respond to this survey....we are trying to ensure that our database is current and that all members are receiving information they find helpful by their preferred mailing method/s.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

Name/s:.....

Address:

.....

Telephone:.....

Email:.....

HOW WOULD YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE INFORMATION?

- I/we are satisfied with the current volume and mixture of information **via email and post**
- We would prefer to receive the same volume of communication but **only via email**
- We would like to receive a posted copy of the ISFAF newsletter and any other Special ISFAF related notices **via post** but no other information
- We want **communication by email** limited to ISFAF notices and newsletter
- I no longer wish to receive information - please take me off the ISFAF list altogether

WHAT IS MOST HELPFUL TO YOU ABOUT THE SUPPORT GROUP?

.....

WHAT TOPICS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE COVERED AT OUR MEETINGS IN 2013?

.....

WOULD YOU HAVE TIME TO JOIN US IN LOBBYING FOR EITHER

IMPROVED MH SERVICES

OR

HOUSING FOR THE MENTALLY UNWELL

Please try to find time to complete and return our survey – a stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed for that purpose: Inner South Family and Friends, C/- Waiora Clinic, 2nd floor, 435 Malvern Road, South Yarra 3141 or email: gaappf@alfred.org.au

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU - HELP US TO REMAIN RELEVANT

Inner South Parents and Friends AGM 14th August 2012 - Guest speaker Barbara Hocking OAM - Diane Hunt's notes

Barbara stated she would like to address the meeting informally and would reflect on her 23 years at Sane, the changes she has seen in the Mental Health System and what she had observed during that time.

- . early days she would visit psychiatric wards, has seen changes in the way state wards run.
- . significant changes re medication and treatments
- . stigma was high and families blamed for the illness now families not blamed but stigma still exists more change and understanding needed of psychiatric illness
- . there is not enough support for families, especially in the rural areas
- . improvements needed with more psychological treatment, a safe place to live and to acknowledge the important role of the family/carers
- . commonwealth coming on board to offer programs eg. partners in recovery and phams

NOW:

- . we have a carer consultant which is great - but tokenistic at 20 hours
- . more printed info available
- . better access to programs
- . improvement in recovery
- . more 'time poor' carers in workforce but they benefit from info and support on internet and helpline
- . sees it as important to have a range of different support groups
- . people with drug and alcohol problems make massive demands on hospitals therefore many more services needed to meet the need of MI

NDSS discussed

- . how will people with MI be assisted by the scheme
- . how will disability be defined

Demographic of people living with a psychiatric illness -

- . 49% made an attempt to end lives
- . nearly all experience loneliness and isolation
- . nearly all experience significant side effects of medication
- . 66% of MI still smoking while only 16% of general public, very disappointing that Quit does not have a specific program for the MI
- . the aged living with MI require extra help and care

People living with a psychiatric illness need "a home, a job, a life worth living" Safe secure and supported ACCOMMODATION. They need more than system management

Barbara closed her address with the following:

"Hold on to the fact things have got better but still not good enough.

Ask ourselves what is the best we can do with what we've got?

Don't underestimate the impact of personal stories.

As a strong group we should use the power of our carers voice to advocate for changes to improve the lives of people living with a mental illness".