

Newsletter

March 2021



HELPING CHILDREN & FAMILIES Association Inc (HCFA)

This time last year, HCFA was about to cease visiting families for a period in which we all went into lockdown. Thankfully, this was eventually over and our families and volunteers regained confidence to include each other in their social bubbles. We have had several referrals and other enquiries in the first quarter along with a new volunteer starting to visit a family. We remain very proud of our activities, grateful to our supporters, and inspired by the small things we do that make a difference in the lives of local families and children.

ACTIVITY

With the requirements to cook sausages at Bunning's needing more volunteers than we have available, HCFA approached the ARMIDALE DUMARESQ LIONS CLUB to ask if we could help them. They responded by making a generous donation to HCFA which will help to pay some of our budgetary expenses. They also invited our coordinator, Susan McPhee to speak at a recent meeting. Susan comments:

"I've known about Lions from my childhood when we had one or more Lions Club Christmas cake tins in use storing our crayons. Even so, I didn't know much about what this local group does. It was very enlightening to learn about the various fundraising activities undertaken by the members, which provides money they can then use in supporting various community projects - 29 local, national and international causes are named

on their website, with half being based in Armidale Regional Council area. I spent a pleasant evening with the club, shared the stories of our volunteers and families, and would be tempted to join them if I had a little less going on in my own life!"



Armidale Dumaresq Lions Club members
<https://armidaledumaresq.nsw.lions.org.au/>

VOLUNTEERS

The only paid employee of HCFA is the person who coordinates the activities of our volunteers, so it goes without saying that VOLUNTEERS form the backbone and caring arms of our organization. A few people have stepped back to care for family members and it has been an encouragement to have some new inquiries. *We have a faithful core of home visiting volunteers who have been supporting families with HCFA for a number of years: Thanks Lone, Christine, Sue, Ruth, Gaylia and a special welcome to Neek who has recently joined us! If you know anyone who would be suitable for the role, we are still seeking volunteers for home visiting and help with our website.*

An increasing number of families have one or more children on the autism spectrum. Our volunteers benefitted from a seminar presented by Kate Thomas, the contact for

Armidale Autism Spectrum Support Group (Carers NSW). Kate has supported many family carers and autistic individuals for over 30 years. Her experience provided many stories she was able to share to increase our knowledge and insight. Three volunteers were able to attend the Early Years Conference held by Armidale Family Support Service. We hope they will soon have an opportunity to share with the other volunteers.

Thank you to Lone whose letter was published in the Uralla Wordsworth (p.6)
https://www.urallowordsworth.com.au/uploads/1/2/3/7/123751325/22nd_march_2021_web.pdf

The **ARMIDALE FAMILIES GUIDE** (second edition) is **STILL AVAILABLE**. AFG contains information for local families about where the playgrounds are, what services and supports are out there, and child-friendly things to see and do. Please contact the HCFA coordinator Susan McPhee on 0467 580 016 to access your copy or email coordinator@hcfa.org.au



FAMILIES

Families in need of some help come and go. Some return and some stay with us for a little while longer. They are the reason for our big HCFA family. A family that self-referred in December have recently been matched with a volunteer. Two other families referred since then are waiting to learn if there is a volunteer available for them.

Our help is varied and is responsive to the need of the family. Our **BROCHURES** are available for you, your friends or for your organisation.

FINANCES

We continue to get by through the kindness of some regular supporters and the fundraising of the team. It's all well used and keeps the busy service operating. If you can contribute in some way, in cash or in kind, it's all much valued. Have some loose change to buy a raffle ticket? Want to make a donation? Do you have a fund raising idea or initiative that might be of value to the Helping Children and Families Volunteer Home Visiting service? Please get in touch.

HCFA will be drawing the winner of a RAFFLE FOR A \$200 petrol voucher on April 1st at the Armidale Business Centre. The voucher will be awarded with the call of the win
Congratulations to raffle winner Sue Stiltie! :h
30th

NEEDING A HAND? HAVE A HAND TO LEND?
IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD -
SPEND 2 HOURS A WEEK WITH A FAMILY WITH CHILDREN UNDER 6 YEARS

