

Chatterbox

Newsletter of The Helping Children and Families Association (HCFA), Armidale

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HCFA provides a home visiting program for families with young children in the Armidale area where a trained volunteer visits and provides support for up to 2 hours a week.

Enquiries welcome.

From the Editor

Welcome to Newsletter No.1. We plan to start with three issues a year and hope you will contribute to the regular sections. Also, letters to the Editor are welcome, especially fund raising ideas. See contact information above. Here is our Executive, from left to right-Peter Galbraith President; Marg Wolfer Vice President; Cathie Lamont Coordinator; Judy Walsh Secretary; Sue Duff Assistant Secretary. >>>> Our aim with the Newsletter is to provide information, especially about ourselves; a forum for communication; and some light entertainment. Happy reading!



Good news.

We've started the year positively, with two new families, four new volunteers trained in February, a new volunteer for the office, and a fundraising barbecue at Bunnings on Saturday 11 January, which made the fantastic profit of \$640.45. A team of enthusiastic volunteers was guided by Judy who put us into teams of four and manageable time slots. We have been offered another barbecue by Bunnings on Sunday 6 April. Helpers welcome.

At the well attended lunch for volunteers on March 3, we were very pleased to welcome Dr Marie Delaney, a paediatrician (children's doctor). She is our key sponsor, and the reason we exist. How can we express how wonderful is her support? Thank you Marie! New dates for diaries of volunteers are training sessions on March 24, *Active Listening for Emotional Situations*; and May 12, *Multicultural Awareness*.

Volunteer Profile (This volunteer joined HCFA early 2012)

What prompted you to volunteer for HCFA?

Every community has families with serious problems, some even in crisis, as we know from the newspapers. For years I'd been asking myself and others why don't existing Government family services tap into the skills of community volunteers, especially as these services are overwhelmed and understaffed. In 2011 I read an article in the local paper about HCFA, with a photo of the coordinator at the time, Bryley Barrett with a couple of smiling children. Immediately I thought here is a group doing exactly what I've been advocating, and straight away I rang the provided contact number, and my contribution started from there.

What is your workforce background?

I first had a job in administration, but retrained in my 30s doing a Post Graduate Diploma in Education and became involved in the education of teachers for our Primary Schools, at Armidale Teachers College, and when it closed, at UNE's Faculty of Education.

What are the encouraging and enjoyable things about your work with HCFA?

The way families, especially parents, are so appreciative is most encouraging, and the children get to know you and you can become like a surrogate granny or aunty.

(All our current volunteers are women.) Because you respond to the family's needs at the time, you feel you really are helping them, even if it's just for basic things like shopping, playing with the toddler, or watching the baby while Mum has a snooze or a shower.

What advice have you for prospective volunteers?

Just take the lead from the family you've been allocated and help where they want it, or ask if they'd like you to do a particular task to assist, for example, feed the toddler while Mum changes baby. Sometimes the most helpful thing is talking over a cuppa. If you notice a problem outside your ability to help you can ask the coordinator who can put the family onto the appropriate service. Often the family grows out of needing you, but there are many more who can use your assistance, and the coordinator will re-allocate you.

Budget Recipe--Sweet Corn Fritters

Sweet Corn has recently been in season and cheap in the fresh vegetable section, but tinned corn kernels can be used instead.

Cooking time 15 minutes. Serves 3-4 persons



Ingredients 3/4 cup plain flour; 1 teaspoon baking powder; 1/2 teaspoon salt; 2 teaspoons worcestershire sauce (a little pepper can be used);
1 egg; 1/2 cup milk;
sweet corn from 2 cobs (or large tin corn kernels);
1 tablespoon oil.

Directions:

1. Remove corn kernels from cobs with a knife (or drain moisture off kernels in tin).
2. Sift flour, baking powder, salt into a bowl.
3. Add egg to milk, mixing to combine. Add worcestershire sauce (optional).
4. Add this egg mixture to dry ingredients. Stir in sweetcorn.
5. Mix until combined. If mixture too dry to combine well, add a little milk.
6. Heat oil in a non stick frying pan.
7. Drop corn mixture by the tablespoon into hot oil in pan.
8. Cook until golden on one side then turn and cook the other side.
9. Remove from pan and drain on absorbent paper. Do another batch if necessary.

Serve hot. Add a salad if you wish and/or serve with a favourite relish.

Enjoy!

Yesterday is history; Tomorrow is a mystery; Today is the present. Taoist saying.

Puzzle time

You are riding a horse. In front is a fire engine and a helicopter is following you. To your left a sports car is driving.

QUESTION: How can you arrange for all to stop without crashes or you communicating with them?

ANSWER: See later.



New Volunteers and Members

Enquiries about volunteering and membership are welcome. Get in touch with us through one of the contacts listed at the top of this Newsletter.

Ask Grandma

Dear Grandma,

When the end of any day comes I can hardly move in our family room for toys all over the floor. Not only this, there are bits of paper and scissors and drawing materials like pens and crayons on all tables. I'm so relieved I've not got twins--one preschooler makes enough mess! Please help me.

Constant Tidier.

Dear Constant,

It can be overwhelming, can't it? One strategy that works is to have just one lot of toys or one activity, like drawing, out at once. This means first establishing some new rules. To introduce these try explaining the problem first. "This really is a mess! I can hardly move, and I might tread on poor dolly, or break a toy. Let's put these away first and then you can have the lego. Now, where do we start? I need your help." Preschoolers love doing what you're doing, and also love to hear your voice, so explain as you go - "Where will we put this? And this red car goes in this box doesn't it? Look how clean the floor looks now! Thanks for your help. Now you can have the lego." You might get some resistance at the start, but if you make it a positive experience they'll soon get the idea, and might even soon start offering to help in other ways. We live in hope. Stick with it! Grandma



Handy household hint-Saving electricity costs

Dryers, heating, cooling, hot water systems, and ovens all use a lot of electricity, but there are ways to cut electricity bills. Here are some suggestions:

- Rinse dirty dishes in cold water with a dishwashing brush to help.
- Wash clothes in cold or warm water.
- Fill the electric jug/kettle only as much as you need at the time.
- Turn off all power points when not in use, and switch off unnecessary lights.
- Have shorter showers (this helps water costs also).
- Check with your electricity provider to find if they offer cheaper rates at a certain time of day and run dishwashers, washing and dryer machines then.
- When it's cold weather or hot weather, close curtains appropriately. This saves heating and cooling costs.

Every day might not be good, but there is good in every day. Anon

Family health and hygiene

Although we all know how important is family hygiene, it is difficult to remember about hand washing.

An easy way to help us remember to wash our hands when preparing food is to have a soap pump dispenser on the kitchen sink. Again, making it easy helps when getting children to wash hands after toilet use. One idea is to find a way that they can reach the tap and soap themselves, such as a kiddie step or a sturdy small box. Experts advise that 10 seconds thorough washing should be the aim.



One can become worn out with repeating “Have you washed your hands?” Believe it or not, it eventually becomes second nature to the child, especially if parents model this behaviour.

Play idea for toddlers

Soon it will be autumn when some trees lose their colourful leaves. Already this is happening in Armidale because of the dry times.

These leaves can be used for play and creative activity. If you collect pretty coloured specimens while walking outside with your toddler, there are things you can do with the specimens when you go inside again. Some suggestions:-

- talk of the different colours and shapes
- match the colours and shapes
- with paper and pen, texta, or pencil, trace around the leaves
- make a pattern or collage by glueing leaves to a piece of paper



You or your toddler might think of other activities such as putting the leaves into a container, or into the back of a toy car, or the tricycle tray. The possibilities are endless.

Courses available for families

Centacare (6738 7200) and Anglicare (6772 9753) run useful short courses and HCFA volunteers might be able to supervise children in the next room while parents attend. Contact us and check. Most courses are free.

Examples are *Hey Dad! Parenting Now*; *Exploring Challenging Behaviour*; *Anger Management*; *Better relationships*; *Surviving Your Adolescent*.

Puzzle answer

You ask the driver of the merry-go-round to stop it. Surprised?



Change your thoughts and you change the world.
Norman V. Peale

