

-Options Communication Therapy

and Training Centre Pty Ltd.

Newsletter January 2009

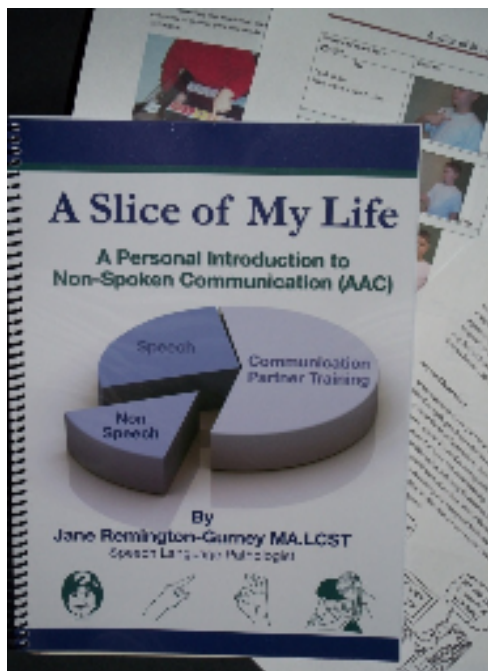
New name, new therapist,

new book, new look to clinic

and a New Year!

Welcome to a few new things at Options. The first is our new name which reflects the move to training so please have a look in this newsletter to see when workshops are being planned. If you are already a client of Options then be sure to look out for the free workshop that is being offered.

Welcome back Rebecca. Just when I was preparing to advertise and interview for a speech therapist to work with me at Petrie I received an email from Rebecca Preston asking me if there was a position here. Some of you will remember Rebecca from her work at Options in 2003-4 before she decided to leave to pursue a career as a professional Triathlete. Everyone is more than delighted that she is returning to work four days a week. One of these days will be located on the Sunshine Coast. **Please let us know if you would rather be seen locally on the Sunshine Coast rather than travel to Petrie.**



Over the years I have been asked why I have not written a book about the ways available to help people with complex communication needs. My decision to write a book came at the time when I was deciding to have more of a training component to Options core business. The six workshops which I now conduct needed manuals and handouts so it seemed logical to write a manual or book that was relevant to each workshop. The first two books will be released mid January and I hope that you will enjoy them. The books are titled '**A Slice of My Life – An Introduction to Augmentative and Alternative Communication**' and '**A Slice of My Life – Facilitated Communication Training**'. It seemed fitting to use the words A Slice of My Life, as the work I do has been a huge part of my professional, family and personal life. Just like a cake, there have been aspects that have taken a huge slice, some which gave indigestion, some which were yummy ... and all of which hold key 'ingredients'. This book is available for less than the cost of a speech therapy session...\$45 plus postage and handling from Options.

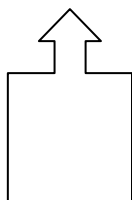
New Look to the Clinic! In November my son and I moved a lot of furniture around at the Petrie clinic to give the children an air conditioned room, Jenni more space and privacy and a less sensory-intense computer area for those people who use the computer in their program. Everyone has loved the changes and commented that the rooms are friendlier and 'calmer'.

Workshop News... You are aware that I am exceptionally proud of the work we do at Options and the high caliber of staff I employ. Keeping up to date with our professional development is instrumental in maintaining a leading edge and getting great results. This year **Lee-Anne** will be attending the workshop by Shiela Frick and Colleen Hacker. The workshop is called “**Listening with the Whole Body**”. I first heard Shiela speak when I was invited to attend a meeting in Boston to discuss therapy interventions with people who have autism. This woman and her colleagues have tremendous gifts to share from the occupational –music therapy, and communication perspectives. You can read more about this workshop online at www.sensorytools.net. Rebecca will be attending the Introductory **HANDLE** workshop presented by Penny Jacobsen in February. Penny has been very generous with the information she shares and I hope that many of you will take the opportunity to hear more about HANDLE through the free information workshops which she organises. You can read more about HANDLE on line at www.handle.org or refer to information in the book by Judith Bluestone entitled *Fabric of Autism*. You can also contact Penny directly for information on penny_jacobsen@yahoo.com.au. In February and March I will be updating my Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment. I am hoping that this will be a great opportunity to learn new tools to help people achieve their goals.

Options’ Workshops for 2009

There will be a subsidised workshop for two family members for each client who attends Options CTTC. The workshop will be the first in the workshop series “Introduction to Augmentative Communication”. To register please refer to the workshop registration forms online or attached with this newsletter.

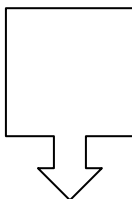
Northside



Introduction to AAC Workshop: for Immediate family members of Option’s clients. Saturday March 28th Pathways, North Lakes - 10am – 4pm. This workshop is free to two immediate family members of Options clients to help us all be on the ‘same page’ with knowledge. Tea/coffee/biscuits/fruit provided. BYO Lunch or use the shopping centre food court. Limit of 30 people for this date.

Facilitated Communication Basic Workshops - 9.30am -3.30pm on the following dates: Wednesday March 4th, Saturday April 4th

Southside



Facilitated Communication Basic Workshops. 9.30am -3.30pm on the following dates at Wynnum Leagues Club, Friday March 27th

Write Me A Story: Using written language and drawings to enhance social understanding of language. Presenters will be Jane and Lee-Anne. Venue: Wynnum Leagues Club April 29th.



Sunshine/Cooloola Coast

The following workshops are being planned for this region but I am waiting to hear back from prospective venues.

Introduction to AAC - Monday April 27th

Facilitated Communication Basic - April 28th



Gold Coast

Hosted by Tweed Valley Early Childhood Intervention Service Inc. Contact Judith or Diane for more information on 07 5536 1320/ 07 5506 7558

Introduction to AAC. Friday May 1st

Facilitated Communication Basic Thursday April 30th

After April.....

Teach Me To Talk: Strategies for enhancing spoken language development in children and adults. June. Venue to be announced

Communication Board Design and Write Me A Story. Workshops tentatively hosted by Disability Sector Support Network. Venues to be announced later.

An Advanced FCT course will be announced in a couple of months.

Intern at Options Jan-Feb 2009.

Some of you may meet Branko Funda during January and February at the Petrie Clinic. Branko is training to be an Instructor in Facilitated Communication Training. He will be working through his competencies so that he may assess people who may be candidates for FCT. We all wish you the best of luck Branko!

Congratulations to Hayley Miller for being awarded the Student of the Year Award (Attitude) from Taigum Primary School Prep Year. Well done Hayley. Hayley is able to use sign language to complement her speech and is now exploring communication devices such as the Dynavox and Palmtop.

Clients Talking About....



My name is Luke Farrell and I'm 15 years old. I've come to Options for about 8 or 9 years. In Adelaide about 2 weeks ago I came 1st in the Intermediate Triathlon. I competed in the 16-19 age group and with handicaps I won by forty seconds. I have tried out for the Australian Team and came 5th over all. On Friday, 18th December in Perth I will go for selections for the Australian Team for World Junior Championships. And I've got a video camera for myself. I can make a movie for biography. Next year I will go to TAFE and I feel beaut about working with Rebecca again.

And from Luke's mum...

Luke is competing in a series of selection races for inclusion in the Australian Junior Team for the World Sprint Championships held on the Gold Coast next Year. He is and will be competing in the 16 - 19 year age category. In his first race of the Australia series in Adelaide he was first in his age group by over 2 minutes; he was 3rd in the Under-20 age group and 6th overall the age grouping including the elite. It was the South Australian Sprint Championships.

From a proud mum.... My son Ben had his Year 7 Graduation last Friday. Ben is High Functioning Autistic with ADHD and ODD. He received the Math award (no surprises there) but he also received the Global Award (along with about 9 other children in the school). The Global Award was for Consistent excellent behaviour and conscientious effort with schoolwork in 2008. We were all very surprised, including Ben. This is particularly surprising as at his previous school the year before his teacher had told me 'he was the worst child he had taught in 37 years'. He also received a medallion with the Certificate which he is extremely proud of. This year has had many ups and downs as they tend to but Ben has really matured and

calmed particularly by late Term 3. We had a change of medication this year, change of school and this combined with his desire to be 'normal' and have friends has resulted in a great end to the year. As he was in a new school he struggled with many of the children for the beginning of the year and was quite often involved in some pretty big issues which at one stage resulted in 7 children being suspended due to their continual 'pack' bullying of Ben. The Principal has been very supportive and understanding. Whilst they have taken into account Ben's disabilities they have also tried to help him overcome some of these issues with strategies you (Jane) would be pleased with. In the school magazine 2 children actually list Ben as their "Best Friend" (again a first). Ben's teacher struggled for many months with Ben and many of the other children. At one stage she took 6 days off for stress and I wasn't sure she would come back, but she did. Camp was in Term 4 and Ben was almost sent home on the first day, luckily his AVT, Tracy visited that night and gave Ben a good talking to. She also talked to the staff involved and reminded them of strategies they could be using. The next 2 days went well. His teacher came back after camp and told me how his unpredictable behaviour (he ran off into the bush at one stage) had freaked her out completely. She had thought going to a camp he was familiar with (he had gone there in Year 6) would help but felt it made it worse. I informed her that "oh, no believe me it would have been much worse if it had been an unfamiliar environment". I then explained that this type of behaviour is quite common with Ben and it is why we limit our holidays, outings etc because I have to be up to it as well. I explained that we had been doing this for 12 years. Whilst his teacher had always been supportive I never felt she truly 'got it' and at times I'm sure she felt Ben was doing things deliberately. After camp she became even better to deal with and I think has grasped a new understanding of ASD which should help with any children who come into her class in the future. She now understands the need for planning and preparing these kids for changes, which I think is a great step and one a lot of teachers don't get. Basically this background is to let you know how much he is progressing and to thank you as you were part of the team that has made this happen. There were many, many days when we thought we weren't making any progress or that progress took a very long time and sometimes not at all. We have taken small forward steps and big steps backwards and wondered why we are doing what we are. But he is now motivated and I think, armed with a lot of knowledge that previously he hasn't seen the point in using (a lot of this from his sessions with you and other professionals we have accessed over the years). Hopefully these will be used in those situations where he is stressed or unsure and he may just think back and use some of them. Whilst I realise we will continue to have these ups and downs and steps forward and back I can finally see some substantial successes and he is taking on SOME of the responsibility for his own behaviour (which I wasn't sure was ever going to happen).

And from an interstate mother... Hi, I am a mother of a ten year old special needs boy. I would just like to say what a brilliant program The Listening Program is. We have had great success with using this program. Jaydon has now just completed the 32 week program and I am absolutely thrilled with the outcome. I cannot believe how easy it was getting Jaydon to sit down and listen. He loved it. There was a time at the beginning where it was as though he was asking for the program. This was on one of his days off. I think listening to the music seemed to soothe Jaydon. There were improvements right from the start but I guess I didn't really believe these until we had our annual appointments with Jane. Once we saw Jane I sat back realised that there were so many improvements that I had taken for granted. Jaydon is now definitely talking more, he is communicating a lot more, his attention span has improved greatly, he has a quicker response time meaning that he is able to follow instructions for certain tasks and he loves to sing. Overall I think Jaydon is a much calmer, happier and tolerant child. Thank you, Jane, for introducing us to The Listening Program. It has been a fantastic year.

And from me! In 2008, the worse year of my life, I read that "If you allow a glass of murky storm water to stand, eventually the dirt will settle and you are left with clear water". Someone or something repeatedly had my glass of storm water shaken, not stirred in 2008! It was a good year to develop my awareness of how important it is to breathe and observe and to intervene when the moment is right. I also learned that it is essential to keep your own energy levels sufficiently high or else you are no good to anyone! So here's wishing for a New Year blessed in self-awareness, patience, tolerance and lots of clear water☺

From a mother responding to my comment that it was a dreadful year for me ☺ Thanks Jane, Jenni and Lee-Anne for your help this year. Jane, sounds like you have had an annus horribilus to borrow a term, but can I thank you. I want to thank you for your persistence in this industry where I know you have had a tough time for believing in our kids. And I want to thank you for mentoring the likes of Lee-Anne who is absolutely marvelous. I send you this bit of Christmas cheer because this morning Riley, Matthew and I had a conversation. Riley told us how he likes Holdens rather than Fords and that Ferrari's are his favourite type of car and that Porche's are for girls (they are dads favourite). My non verbal boy had a great time picking on dad and making us all have a good laugh. We could not have had that conversation were it not for you and your teams' hard work and dedication. I hope you feel better soon, but whilst it all can look really bad when the big picture isn't too rosy, remember there are some very happy Mullanes in this world who think you are all tops.

And from another mum.....

Chew, chew, chew your food. Everything you eat.

Chew it and chew it and chew it and chew it.

Your rice and fish and meat (sing to Row Row Row your Boat).

2008 National Disability Award Winners Personal Achievement Award – Anne McDonald

Anne was born with cerebral palsy and at the age of three was admitted to the St Nicholas Hospital state institution, unable to walk, talk or feed herself. Eventually Anne learnt to communicate by pointing to letters on an alphabet board and at 18 years old went to court to win her freedom from St Nicholas.

She has since written a bestselling book, graduated from university with a Humanities degree and dedicated her life to advocating for the rights of people who can not talk.

Information Regarding Fees for 2009.

There are some necessary changes to the fee structure. Agencies and funding bodies please take note of these changes. All work done by therapists irrespective of the type of work (travel, report writing, teleconferences etc) will be invoiced at the same hourly session rate.

1. New clients will need to pay a non-refundable booking fee which will be deducted from their Initial consultation fee at the time of the scheduled first consultation.
2. Failure to attend a scheduled appointment will be charged at the standard session rate.
3. Cancellations without 12 hrs notice will be charged at 50% of the appointment session fee.
4. Sunday, fortnightly appointments with Jane at Petrie will be available for Term 1. Payment for the five sessions needs to be paid prior to the first session and is non-refundable.

If you would like, Jenni will send an email or text to you with a reminder of your next appointment but we do ask that you refer to your invoice as this is where Jenni writes a reminder for your next appointment.

Funding for Sessions

I just want to remind people that there are some options for funding or assistance for funding of therapy sessions. There is the Enhanced Primary Care Plan www.uqsport.uq.edu.au/downloads/clinics/Medicare%20EPC%20Allied%20Health%20referral.pdf

There are also two schemes through FASCHIA www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/disabilities/services-help_child_autism.htm

In the case of the early intervention funding of \$12,000, Lee-Anne, Rebecca and myself would dearly like to be service providers or be attached in a consortium to a lead agency; however, the current scheme is not accommodating this easily. I have written to all current lead agencies expressing our interest. If you have concerns please direct them to FaHSCIA.

INTERESTING!!!! Want to see something interesting on U tube? Have a look at

<http://au.youtube.com/watch?v=0awjPUkBXOU&feature=channel> & <http://au.youtube.com/watch?v=5s5EvhHy7eQ>

**For Sale... A Level One Listening Program - 90% unused - \$450.00
Options for details**

Contact Jane or Jenni at



“A Slice of My Life” retails at \$45 and is available by contacting optionsctc@iprimus.com.au

Order Form

Name _____

Postal Address _____

Telephone _____

I wish to order _____ copies of
 'A Slice of My Life' – A personal Introduction to
 Non-Spoken Communication @ \$45 each.

Number of copies @ \$45 inclusive of GST	Postage and handling Australia per copy \$5	Postage outside Australia per copy \$15	Total

Payment details:

Cheques made payable to 'Options Communication
 Therapy and Training Centre' and posted to:
P.O. Box 568, Kallangur, Queensland, 4505, Australia

Credit Card Payments:

Credit card Number: _____

Expiry: _____

I authorise \$ _____ to be deducted from my

Visa Mastercard

(NB: a surcharge of \$2 for credit card payments applies)

Total amount payable: \$ _____

Signed: _____