



www.acedisability.org.au

The ACE Community now has a new resource available to assist in serving the needs of students with disabilities that access ACE. The website contains information, news, stories and links with a focus on disability and adult community education in Victoria. The unique website has been designed to be accessible to people with disabilities that use various types of adaptive software, for example: JAWS 5.0 is a type of screen reading software used by students who are blind. Our site has many design features that make it very user friendly and hosts a free noticeboard facility that can be used to publicise events, training, classes, resources or staff. Conditions apply to use the Noticeboard, see registration for details.

The website will be regularly updated and contain important information and support options for ACE providers or students with disabilities. We urge you to log on and view the website. We would love to hear feedback on any topics that you want included/ covered in more detail or anything else you would like added. The site was established to assist ACE providers and the wider community to access much needed information, enjoy!



From left: Rick Jamieson-DEAC, Bronwyn Hughes ACFE, Judith Price- ACE Disability Network.



ACE Disability Network members & representatives from various organisations at the launch.

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FREE INFORMATION PACK NOW AVAILABLE

ACE providers and people with disabilities are able to receive a copy of the ACE DisAbility Network information pack by phoning or emailing on: 9916 5832 or 9916 5829

The email address is: toni.bentley@yooralla.com.au or louise.oswald@yooralla.com.au

The pack explains the services and information provided by the Network and contains a CD listing disability resources, 3 great posters and more.

Barriers to participation ?

By Louise Oswald

For many agencies access to facilities and services is generally considered purely in physical terms; however there also exists a large social component to access. A range of barriers preventing a person from accessing services and facilities can result in denied access to a range of social opportunities and the ability to make choices, including educational and vocational decisions that impact on lifestyle issues such as economic success.

Identifying and addressing **physical barriers** is often not as complex as people may first think and in most cases need not require expensive solutions but a creative shift in thinking.

The greatest challenge to addressing the barriers that prevent people with a disability from accessing services and facilities and ensuring true access is identifying and challenging the attitudes and misconceptions that erect the barriers to inclusion.

To improve access to services and facilities for people with disabilities the Disability Discrimination Act along with the new Disability Standards in Education require agencies to develop and implement Disability Action Plans.

In order to develop an effective Action Plan it is imperative that you plan access. Access does not happen of its own accord. You cannot ensure that your organisation is accessible unless you plan it to be. Good access is good business, it's good for morale and it is also the law.

For further information regarding access awareness and planning contact Louise Oswald at the ACE DisAbility Network on (03) 9916 5832 or louise.oswald@yooralla.com.au

EDUCATION STANDARDS

- ❑ The Education Standards of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) are now law.
- ❑ All organisations providing education programs must aim to offer a person with a disability the same educational opportunities as everyone else.
- ❑ The requirements of the DDA include the creation and implementation of a Disability Action Plan by all educational organisations.
- ❑ ACFE has funded a statewide project being led by the **Equity Research Centre**. The project includes a series of professional development workshops. Registered ACE Providers will receive some funding from ACFE for completion of the workshops. Neighbourhood Houses who are not registered ACE providers are welcome to attend as space allows.

- These workshops will assist organisations to develop their understanding of the DDA Educational Standards and their strategies for implementation including the creation of Disability Action Plans.

The workshops will be run from early March through to June 2006.

The ACE DisAbility Network is enthusiastic in its support of the work being undertaken by the **Equity Research Centre** in partnership with the Disability Discrimination Legal Service and is working in collaboration, raising awareness of access issues and planning access, crucial to the creation of an effective Disability Action Plan.

For workshop details and locations contact Bettyanne Foster on 03 9417 5355 or email: bettyannefoster@equityresearch.org.au

Glen Park Community Centre- Making a Difference



(Mission Statement)

To offer a friendly, supportive and welcoming environment for all people in our community and to promote personal growth through social, recreational and learning opportunities which are accessible to all.

Glen Park's mission statement encapsulates their spirited commitment to inclusion. Set against the leafy backdrop of the Mount Dandenong ranges, Glen Park Community Centre is a vibrant hub of learning and social activity, reflecting the diversity of its community. Their energetic manager, Robyn Murray, presented Glen Park's passionate commitment to community development and inclusion to us. Robyn believes that 'communities thrive when people feel valued and have a sense of belonging' and she wholeheartedly strives to embrace this philosophy using a practical and grounded approach to management of the centre.

One great example of the way in which the centre's inclusive and collaborative approach has produced real outcomes, is its *community café project*. In 2002 the centre established a partnership with CVGT (a local not-for-profit employment and training service) to run a community café. Achieving great success with the local community, as evidenced by the increased demand in clientele, has seen the expansion of the café to incorporate two further partnerships —with EACH (Eastern Access Community Health) and ECHO (a local employment referral service) allowing it to open five days a week.

Café participants consist of the locally unemployed and people with an acquired brain injury. They are involved with all aspects of running the café, from menu planning, budgeting for the shopping, cooking, serving and cleaning up. Working in the café has not only increased participant's self-esteem and confidence through interacting with other people but they have developed their hospitality skills that have led, in some cases, to paid employment. For many participants, they simply experience the feeling of being valued in the local community. As for the community benefits, well these present themselves in the welcoming and friendly reception one experiences in both the centre and café. Delicious low cost food is available and there is no pressure on time spent there. The café now has its own regulars with friendships being formed and, as one customer saying: "it's a relaxing place to come where I don't feel judged."

For more information on the Glen Park Community Centre, its café or courses, contact their staff on 9294 7525 or drop in at 30 Glen Park Road, Bayswater.

PARTNERSHIPS CREATE POSSIBILITIES

The Network is pleased to announce that it has begun work on four exciting pilot partnership projects across the state. The pilot projects aim to enhance the educational pathways of people with disabilities by linking disability providers with their local neighbourhood houses. The emphasis will be around promoting and supporting an inclusive learning environment with staff being provided with professional development and resources by the Network. Participating neighbourhood houses and learning centres include: Creswick, Mount Beauty, Camperdown and Shepparton ACE. By working in partnership with key stakeholders and their wider communities it is anticipated that the resource capabilities and organisational potential of those ACE providers will be enhanced or new resources obtained.

For more details on the projects please contact the ACE DisAbility Network on 9916 5829 or 9916 5832

Disability Toolkit

With the support of the TAFE Disability Network the Equity Resource Centre has produced a leading practice guide to supporting students with a disability in vocational and training. While the document is VET focussed it contains information that is equally relevant and applicable to the ACE sector including a list of resources related to specific disabilities, tips on curriculum development, enrolment, participation and a section explaining the Disability Standards for Education. The kit is available via the Equity Research Centre website as a PDF document on: <http://www.equityresearch.org.au/disabilitytoolkit.htm> or via email to admin@equityresearch.org.au. Their telephone number is: 9417 5355. The Toolkit is available at no cost.