

Health and Wellbeing

The Official Newsletter of the Dr Edward Koch Foundation

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ROTARY CORPORATE DUCK RACE

The Esplanade Lagoon was the scene for the Rotary Corporate Duck Race, which was held as part of Festival Cairns on the 16 September 2007. It was an event organized by the Rotary Club of Cairns Mulgrave and the Dr Edward Koch Foundation, held in conjunction with the Rotary Individual Duck Race, and followed on from the success of the inaugural event held last year. Dulcie Bird, Executive Officer of the Foundation and Peter Sexton from Rotary Cairns Mulgrave worked tirelessly during the preceding weeks to ensure that the event was a successful fundraiser for various charities including Harald's House. One hundred bobbing ducks raced across the lagoon to the finishing line,

somewhat slowly due to a lull in the wind. Of note was the Qld Police Duck, which sported a police ribbon. Will this be a new trend? There are plans underway from staunch Corporate Duck owners who want their ducks to be highly visible! Grabbing attention was the Rotary Duck who walked among the crowd and was a popular figure with the children. Dulcie and Gayle Plunkett, Club President took time out to be photographed with the dashing duck. The Race proceeds will be distributed to local charities, including projects funded by the Foundation. The Foundation and the Rotary Club would like to thank all of our sponsors and in particular our major sponsors for their generosity.

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David McCoy Homes



The Green Ducks Ready to Start



The Rotary Duck with Dulcie and Gayle



The Police Duck

OFFICE IMPROVEMENTS

Space is always at a premium in the Koch offices, and as the workforce has grown, we arrived at a point when action was really necessary. The work of the StandBy team demands a high level of confidentiality, which is impossible to achieve in an open plan office, and so the gallery has recently been a hive of activity with the builders partitioning off an extra two offices. One is now the domain of the Executive Director, while the other will be used as a meeting room. Shek has now moved the StandBy project into Dulcie's former office. The outside walls of the new rooms will be used as hanging space for paintings, so very little wall space will be lost. Everyone has benefited as the main office now has more space, and consequently working conditions are much improved for all staff.

It is with a great feeling of relief from all who work in the office that we welcome the addition of a new photocopier. The previous one was a source of much frustration for all who ever had to use it, and the office should have a much calmer air about it with the cessation of the much-dreaded paper jam.

SUICIDE PREVENTION CONFERENCE 2008

The Foundation is holding a Suicide Prevention Conference in Cairns on 24 and 25 July 2008 to provide information and support for health professionals and others engaged in suicide prevention, counseling, and suicide bereavement support. Planning is well underway and information flyers will soon be ready for distribution. For more information, phone Dulcie on 07 403 10145.

RESIGNATION OF DIRECTOR DR ROSS SPARK

It was with sadness that we farewelled one of our Founding Directors in September. Dr Ross Spark was a key person in helping establish the Foundation and achieving significant goals despite many challenges over the past 12 years. Ross has been invited by AusAID to be their Health Advisor for the Vietnam program based in the Australian Embassy in Hanoi for one year with the possibility of this being further extended.

As he will be absent from Cairns for quite a period of time, he decided to resign as a Director of the Dr Edward Koch Foundation. Hopefully, he will rejoin us when he returns from overseas.

The Directors would like to pay tribute to Ross for his work and support over the years, helping make the Foundation a reality and with all of its successful projects throughout the years.



Dr Ross Spark

CREW 2007

CREW 2007 is well underway, with many activities already carried out by participants of the Program. The Foundation is extremely happy that we have been able to broaden activities to include 'at risk' youth. Thanks are extended to Anglicare North Queensland who is helping us with the youth segment of the program and our other partners which include Oz Care and the Drug Court.

A special thanks is extended to the Trust Company Pty Ltd who have donated \$20,000 from the Fred P Archer Charitable Trust to ensure the success of the program. Dulcie traveled to Townsville to be presented with this cheque. She was one of many recipients who received funding for their various charitable organizations.



Dulcie at Trust Fund Function

KOCH FOR KIDS FESTIVAL

Preparations are under way for the next Koch for Kids Festival which is to be held at Freshwater School on Saturday 27th October.

This year we have a new coordinator, Geoffrey Larkin who has come to the Foundation as a new volunteer. Geoffrey, although born and raised in NSW has spent a considerable part of his working life in PNG in shipping management. He worked in Moresby, Kieta, Rabaul and Lae, and although eventually returning to Sydney with the same company, missed the warmth of tropical living. Cairns was the choice for his new life, and we are pleased that he is able to volunteer his time to take on the role of Koch for Kids Coordinator.

This is a free day for families with children who have disabilities or special needs. Those who have not registered to participate in the day's activities can call the Foundation on 40 310145.



Geoff Larkin

Major Sponsors (to date)

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Lifeline Cairns Region	\$300
Qld Medical Laboratory	\$300

STANDBY LAUNCH

The tragic cost of suicide was brought home to listeners at the launch of the Cairns Region Standby Suicide Bereavement Response Service at the Sofitel Reef Casino in Cairns on 16th July.

In launching the service and welcoming those present, Dulcie Bird, the Executive Officer of the Dr Edward Koch Foundation described the work of its FNQ Suicide Prevention Taskforce in reducing suicide and self-harm and how the Foundation's decade of community work in the region had made this an ideal site for a StandBy Response Program trial.

Dulcie spoke of how United Synergies, the originators of the StandBy Response Program established their initial service on the Sunshine Coast in 2002, by gathering local agencies and support groups together to support people bereaved by suicide. Believing it to be an exportable model, they chose four sites including Cairns to trial the StandBy Program, with funding obtained from the Department of Health and Ageing.

Dr Shek Graham, the Cairns Region Standby Program Coordinator described how the service provides a 24 hour, 7 day a week response service to those bereaved by suicide, noting it was not unusual for a second suicide to occur in the wake of the first. Dr Graham's team offers counselling and support to Far North Queensland residents in an arc from Cardwell in the south, west to Chillagoe and north to Hopevale.

The death of a family member or friend by suicide is deeply traumatic for the bereaved and their pain and loss endures for many years. The audience of over 100 guests listened silently while Mike Lacey spoke of his grief, still evident more than 12 years after losing his son to suicide. Senator Warren Entsch, who officially launched the program, spoke of his memories of the suicide of a school friend and the loss to the community that his death represented.

The Cairns Region Standby Suicide Bereavement Support Service has established formal links with the Queensland Ambulance Service a landmark event in Far North Queensland. This is the first time that such an agreement has been signed by these services and a non-government funded community organisation. Assistant Commissioner, Barry Malone put pen to paper in signing the Memorandum of Understanding, which recognises the role of the Cairns Region StandBy Response Team in suicide deaths.



Dulcie Bird and Barry Malone

UPDATE ON STANDBY

The response since the launch of StandBy has shown the great need for the service in the region served. Calls have come from all areas, from as far away as Hughenden which is officially not part of StandBy's catchment area, and about fifty per cent of responses have been face to face interviews. Program Coordinator, Shek has paid follow up visits initiated by the Pathways Workshops to Cooktown, Wujal Wujal and Hopevale, meeting with the elders. Plans have been put in place for what the community should do in the event of a suicide or incidences of suicidal behaviour. These are in the form of simple to follow flow charts and have been placed in police stations, clinics and community areas.

Shek also helped facilitate a grief workshop at the Mareeba Strong Indigenous Women's Support Group. She worked in conjunction with Tanya King from Mareeba Information and Support Centre. About twenty people, mainly women, attended the workshop, which was judged by those attending to be a very worthwhile event.

RAFFLE

Don't forget to buy your tickets in the Cathay Pacific Raffle for two return business tickets to Hong Kong. As they say you have to be in it to win! For the price of a \$2 ticket, you could be the lucky winner and the raffle is to be drawn at the beginning of December, so what better way to spend the Christmas holidays than planning an indulgent trip to the island of shopping.



EVENTS AND HOLIDAYS

The drama and stress of organising a wedding at her home added to the high work load of our Executive Officer in August. Builders were in the house until just before the big day (would they really finish in time?), a pergola that didn't turn up until the very last moment, and a set of lost car keys on the morning all added to the excitement. But of course all came right on the day, and Tanya Bird was a beautiful bride when she married Scott Snelling under the pergola. They were surrounded by friends and family, it was a joyous occasion, and the bride's mother was very relieved when all the arrangements ran like clockwork.



Tanya and Scott Snelling

There seems to be a general exodus for overseas holidays from the Foundation's office at this time of year.

Shek, who is a keen diver, is making the first stop of her journey in Palau, before traveling onto Santa Fe to do a photography course. She will then be driving up via the Grand Canyon to Yellow Knife to view the Northern Lights, before returning via Hawaii for another spot of diving.

Catherine (the writer of this newsletter) went off to compensate for having one of those milestone birthdays by spending what she hopes to be an indulgent holiday on a boat drifting leisurely down a canal in Burgundy before going south to Provence. Maneuvering through the locks may prove to be interesting, but the incentive to do it efficiently is the promise of the next canal-side restaurant.

Rex, a regular volunteer, is to take a holiday in South-East Asia, a favourite destination of his. This year he will be going to Laos, Cambodia and Thailand, which will include an adventure trip down the Mekong River.

NEW STAFF

Geoffrey is not the only new member of the Koch staff since the last newsletter. Vanessa comes to us from a defence background, both in active service in the navy and latterly, in administration of defence housing in the Northern Territory. Her husband is also in the Navy, and currently based in Cairns, so a busy life with two small boys means that a part-time job with the Foundation is more manageable. Her office organisational skills are just what we need, and she is currently filling in as Program Coordinator for the StandBy Project as Shek is on leave.



Vanessa Sexton

OUR WEB SITES

www.kochfoundation.org.au

www.suicidepreventionfnq.org.au



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WITH THANKS

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