

MELTON

Help for violence victims

Ami Humpage

HELPING mothers and their children, who have experienced violence or abuse, to bond is the aim of a new program in Melbourne's west.

Caroline Chisholm Society partnered with the University of Melbourne and Melton Council to bring Canadian family violence expert Angelique Jenney to Taylors Hill last week to train more than 20 family support workers to deliver

PROGRAM HELPS TRAUMATISED MUMS AND CHILDREN BOND

the *Mothers In Mind* program.

Mothers In Mind is a mother and child group designed to meet the parenting needs of mothers who have experienced family violence, childhood abuse or sexual assault and have children under the age of four.

The program is based on the belief that when you have experienced hurtful events in your life, thinking

positively about yourself as a mother is the first step to becoming the parent you want to be.

Caroline Chisholm Society chief executive Helen Cooney said workers on the ground saw, through home visits, the growing extent of trauma in the west as women become more prepared to discuss their histories of family violence.

"And they want help," Ms

Cooney said. She said in the west there was a lot of cultural diversity and increasingly high rates of family violence, and *Mothers In Mind* could go a long way towards breaking the cycle.

"Many mothers with traumatic histories will be helped by the program, but there is a clear focus on supporting mothers who have histories of family violence.

"It's about building good

relationships between mums and their children and supporting both of them."

Ms Cooney said to be able to get someone like Ms Jenney to the west to help train workers, was a real coup.

"Often visitors of this kind are swallowed up in the city, so to get her here and training us in the west is a real coup and something we really appreciate."

Staff from Tweddle, VACCA, SASHS, Good Shepherd, Melton Council, Caroline Chisholm Society and McAuley Community Services for Women all participated in the training session.

Ms Cooney said it was hoped two 10-week *Mothers In Mind* groups would be up and running in Melbourne's west, including one group in Melton, later this year. Mothers who need help right now should call Women's Health West on 9689 9588.

SUNSHINE

Drug and alcohol support group grateful for grant

A VOLUNTEER-RUN group which offers support for families affected by a loved one's drug or alcohol addiction is the deserving winner of a Leader Local Grant.

The Family Drug Help - Sunshine Peer Support Group received the most votes from readers to receive the \$1000 from *Brimbank Leader*.

The group's facilitator Leanne Peterson said the grant would enable members to purchase a TV and DVD equipment to aid their learning activities, in addition to educational books and DVDs.

Ms Peterson said the group would like to "convey a huge thank you" to everyone who voted for them and the other Leader Local Grant finalists.

Ms Peterson said the Family Drug Help - Sunshine Peer Support Group started in 2007, and this year faced a huge increase in demand.

Last year, eight families were referred to the group - this year there is at least 28.

She said alcohol, ice and cannabis were among the most frequent drugs used by members' relatives or partners.

The support group is independently run by volunteers, who raise money for



John Wynde and Leanne Peterson run a drug help support group and have won a \$1000 Leader Local Grant. Picture: HAMISH BLAIR

rent, resources, guest speakers, library items and other meeting expenses.

Family Drug Help, a Self Help Addiction Resource Centre program, oversees the running of the group, provides training for facilitators and other support.

"Our group is totally open - the only qualification is that you are affected by a loved one's drug or alcohol use," Ms Peterson said.

She said a key objective of the group was to ensure that family members looked after themselves and others

as well as their loved one. The group meets twice a month at the Duke Street Community House in Sunshine.

Family members need to be referred, either by calling Family Drug Help on 1300 660 068 or the support

group co-ordinator on 9573 1784.

As part of Leader Local Grants, a Toyota HiAce was also given to Chelsea Primary School for its outdoor learning garden project, thanks to the Toyota Foundation.

fast lane

Food gift card

Brimbank Shopping Centre in **Deer Park** will showcase an indulgent food experience when it presents a Spend & Collect Fresh Food Gift Card promotion until Saturday. The Fresh Food Mall outside Aldi will be beaming with a market atmosphere with barrels, food karts, giveaways and cooking station. Details:brimbankshopping.com.au or like the centre on Facebook.

Grants program

Calwell Federal Labor MP Maria Vamvakinou, has invited community groups to submit expressions of interest in a new small grants program for capital projects. The 'Stronger Communities Program' will make grants of \$5000 to \$20,000 for not-for-profit organisations to support more community participation. Details: maria.vamvakinou.mp@aph.gov.au or 9367 5216.

Facebook, Twitter

Stay up to date with what's happening in your neighbourhood by liking us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter.

The experts in Asbestos Compensation

Since the 1950's, Slater and Gordon have acted for thousands of Asbestos victims in Australia.

If you have an Asbestos related disease, we can guide you through the claims process to help you get the best outcome possible.

We have more Asbestos specialists in Victoria than any other law firm. And with our extensive database, we can assist you to identify how and where you may have been exposed.

We have more than 80 years' experience in Personal Injury Law and we've got an office right near you.

Slater Gordon
Lawyers

GET IN TOUCH
1800 555 615

slatnergordon.com.au/asbestos

No Win - No Fee* is available for Asbestos related claims.

*Conditions apply.
Does not include other party costs.

V1 - BMVE01201MA

BRIMBANK LEADER, Tuesday, August 25, 2015 03