

THIS FOURTH  
ISSUE OF THE  
RIBS  
NEWSLETTER  
FOCUSES ON:

A CHANGING  
WORLD—NEW  
IDEAS AND  
NEW  
SOLUTIONS.

INSIDE YOU'LL  
FIND STORIES  
ABOUT MULTI-  
CULTURAL  
INITIATIVES,  
NEW IDEAS  
FOR  
SUPPORTING  
YOUNG  
PEOPLE BY  
MENTORING,  
AND  
FEEDBACK  
FROM THE  
NATIONAL  
MINDMATTERS  
FORUM  
ATTENDEES.

## Priority One Forum

This newsletter focuses on “A changing world—new ideas and new solutions” and has stories on a range of topics related to promotion of health and wellbeing.

I recently attended the Priority One Forum on Mental Health Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention at Logan Convention Centre, and was excited to hear about some of the amazing, innovative activities of schools, non-government organisations, health services, and individuals to promote health.

Of particular interest was a presentation by Sam Anywar of Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT) about the whole of school approach to supporting the health and wellbeing of refugee students. Sam reported that this group experience particular difficulties in integrating into Australian schools, due to issues such as:

- History of torture and trauma (decreased feelings of safety, difficulty developing trusting relationships)
- Non English Speaking Background therefore communication difficulties, and learning difficulties in classroom situations
- Cultural differences to Australian youth

QPASTT are able to provide advice and support to schools who have students from a refugee background in order to encourage full participation, and to ensure a supportive environment for the student and their family.

The forum also discussed the Queensland Plan for Mental Health 2007-2017 and the emphasis on mental health promotion, prevention of mental illness, and early intervention activities as Priority One during this decade. The RIBS Project's aims fit well with this focus.

Olivia Fisher

RIBS Project Coordinator

South East Alliance of General Practice (Brisbane)



## For more information:

Copies of the presentations from the Priority One Forum will be sent to delegates and will become part of the SEA-GP (Brisbane) library —Please contact Olivia on 3390 2466 for more information

## Mentoring at Alexandra Hills State High School



BoysTown's 'Mentor One' is a program which has been offered to students at Alexandra Hills State High School for several years. It is primarily targeted towards students 'at risk' or even 'at risk, of being at risk...' Involved students may have been recommended to participate in the program by a member of staff, by a friend in their peer group, their parents or by their own initiation.

*"I heard about mentoring by a friend who does it and I thought that she had become more confident while doing this. I wish to have more confidence and self-esteem in everything I do. Friends told me that I should talk to people so I came along one day and I enjoyed talking to someone that was not a friend, teacher or parent."*

Zoie (Mentee)

The purpose of the program to provide an encouraging, neutral,

stable adult for students to establish a relationship with. Students can choose to discuss problems with their mentors and brainstorm potential problem solving strategies, they can use the conversation to have 'time out' or they can use the time to learn how to talk and interact with someone else in a purely positive way.

*"Mentoring provides kids with a caring, non-judgmental adult on a regular basis, and so gives the young person the constancy of a positive role model and sounding board for problems big and small – and goals big and small. It is a great opportunity for positive growth."*

Sandra Pearse  
(Supervisor)

Mentors are trained by BoysTown and receive Tafe accreditation in mentoring. The mentors volunteer and are selfless in their involvement in the

program. The mentors challenge the students – they do not hesitate in giving their mentees a strong nudge to 'step up' when required. Mentors vary in age, professional background and reasons for wanting to be a part of Mentor One; there are however, a few attributes they have in common - there is a commitment to want to make a difference in the world of a young person's life and they want to help encourage a resilient young person who has the confidence to tackle any of life's adversities in a healthy way.

*"Being a mentor in the Mentor One program gives me a sense of fulfillment in that I feel like I am giving assistance to a young person in negotiating the complex pathway of life. Hindsight is a wonderful thing and as a young person I made some*



*decisions which weren't considered best practice. As a teenager, I would have benefited greatly from having an independent person to bounce ideas off. I feel like that I am now providing that service to my mentee, and hope that it is making a positive contribution to his life."*  
Adam Reid (Mentor)

Mentors meet with their mentees once a week for 70 minutes. During this session, we see conversations happening whilst engaging in other motivating activities; perhaps a weekly chess challenge, mask making,

scrap booking, battleships or cooking classes to name just a few.

Mentees feel incredibly valued that an individual can take such an interest in them.

*"I think mentoring has helped in the past two years because you have someone to talk to about your private life and when you're feeling down. Helps you solve problems and when you talk to a mentor it doesn't feel like you're getting judged."* Robert (Mentee)

*"Mentor One gives me someone I can trust to talk to. I can trust this person won't go and tell everyone what I have told them."*  
Troy (Mentee)

The Mentor One program at Alexandra Hills State High School is a positive example of what is happening to build resilience in our students. Its success is because of the fantastic support and passion of the BoysTown Mentor One team, the belief in the program by the school's Principal, Deputies and staff; and their flexibility and understanding in allowing the students to participate.

***"Mentees feel incredibly valued that an individual can take such an interest in them."***

Ms Michelle Lockwood  
Teacher & Mentor One  
Coordinator



Get Active and Healthy by booking in to one or more free recreational activities, healthy habits workshops, gardening workshops and cooking classes being held as part of the Eat Well Be Active campaign in the Redlands this Spring and Summer.

## Eat Well Be Active in the Redlands!

All Redland residents are invited to attend, with people with a disability or a Health Care Card being given priority if available places become limited.

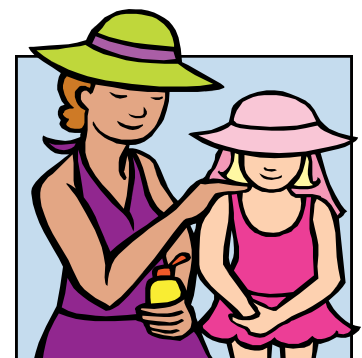
Activities start on 21 September, but you can still book in after the starting date.

For more information, please go to



[www.redland.qld.gov.au](http://www.redland.qld.gov.au)

Or call 3829 8489 to book into an activity



**As always—when you're out and about this Spring and Summer, remember your hat and sunscreen!**

# Wynnum North State High School



Harmony Week Highlights

*“Key targets for this group are improved sense of self and sense of place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students”*

Wynnum North State High School services a community that is diverse in its composition, with many nationalities represented within the student population. This was most evident at our Harmony Week celebrations when Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Filipino, Maori, Polynesian and Australian culture groups presented aspects of their culture in song, dance and ceremony. The school population structure is certainly very different to what it was in the sixties when the school was opened and in the seventies when the school population peaked at over 1150 students. The growth of the Port of Brisbane has led to many people of varied cultural backgrounds settling in this area and our student population now reflects this.

Clientele changes such as these pose a new range of challenges as we aim to maintain a safe and supportive environment in which all students can achieve their potential. Improved

self-esteem, personal goal-setting and conflict resolution skills prepare students for dealing with a range of challenges. Our school has formed an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Party to improve academic and health outcomes for the 52 members of our student population that identifies as such. The working party has representation of students, teachers, parents, elders and community. Key targets for this group are improved sense of self and sense of place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

There are a number of initiatives planned to improve student resilience, build healthy relationships, and develop facilities that

opportunity for Polynesian students to get together and share the numerous cultures that originate in the South-Sea Islands. The Hula dancing demonstration from members of this group was a highlight of the Harmony Week activities.

There are many challenges for young people at this time and the people who dedicate themselves to support their education are equally worthy of care. In an attempt to improve staff feelings of worth, a staff wellness coordinator has been appointed and will become a leader of initiatives to improve staff mental health through physical and social activity programs.



encourage the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to feel welcome in our school. These include a plan to develop a designated area of cultural significance including yarning circles, and physical and mental health screening of students as part of their focused support program.

There is great excitement in our school community as we prepare to open a new school at Brisbane Bayside State College in 2010. The challenges that we are addressing now will open up new opportunities to improve the quality of education experience for all of our community members in 2010 and beyond.

The school has also established a Polynesian Phanau which provides an

Steve Wilson  
Deputy Principal



## MindMatters National Forum

In June 2009 the RIBS Project sponsored 4 representatives from partner schools to attend the MindMatters Forum in Sydney.

A number of great ideas have been brought back, so expect more stories to come!

Karen Coningham, Deputy Principal from Wellington Point State High school reported she was particularly impressed by a presentation by Dr Rhonda Galbally, and provided this summary:

“Doctor Rhonda Galbally AO spoke on the

importance of Community in building resilience in people’s lives. She identified three potential mental health risk factors as being; a sense of hopelessness, feelings of not belonging to anything, no sense of control over their situation.

Three settings of importance for people can be: Family, Workplaces and Community groups. Dr Galbally said that while families can be dysfunctional, research shows you can still be resilient regardless of the type of family you come from because at least there’s a sense of belonging. A comment that particularly stood out about Workplaces was that your risk factors for illness double if you’re not the boss.

The strength of Community groups is that they encourage participation. It doesn’t matter what the group is for, what does matter is that they do something together. This builds that

sense of belonging, a sense of control as participants have a voice in well run groups and there is a hope of achieving solid outcomes.

Dr Galbally then posed the question, whether or not schools reflect Community groups. To what degree do students feel they belong to our schools? Do they find a sense of hope of achieving something positive? Do they feel they have a say and can participate?

It’s certainly a question for us all to reflect on and consider how we can develop this sense of community in our own schools and the vital importance it might have for our young people in building resilience.”

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## Wellington Point State High School

Our Year 8s at Wellington Point State High School are just completing a unit on protecting themselves from Cyber Bullying. It’s important that students and their families understand what Cyber Bullying is and what they can do to take precautions against becoming a target of it. It’s also important that students understand what they shouldn’t be involved in if they don’t want to be accused of Cyber Bullying.

Our school based Police Officer Nathan Vaughan has given out some useful tips and information and has been available to students and families who want more information. We have also accessed a great deal of information and some free material from ACMA – the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

Some of our staff attended an excellent free one day program that ACMA held. Look up their website for more information.

[www.acma.gov.au](http://www.acma.gov.au)

Our Youth Support Coordinator, Jo Clarke has been working with Nathan on producing a postcard that can be completed if someone is being cyber bullied.

Karen Coningham  
Deputy Principal



# Resiliency in Bayside Schools Project

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**From the City to the Sea**



## Supporting the Physical Health of the Community

While we're all focusing on promoting mental health and wellbeing, it's important to remember physical health is an essential component of our overall wellbeing, and has a strong impact on mental health.

SEA-GP (Brisbane) strives to be a leader in health promotion. Each year we promote the physical health of our members by facilitating the 10000 steps challenge!

This year we have 20 teams of 8 people walking to Sydney (by a bit of a roundabout route) to the location of the Australian General Practice Networks Forum.

We're currently in Week 7 and just passed Wagga Wagga!

We're heading towards Canberra this week, then Sydney!

All teams who complete the challenge receive a prize and there are awards for first team to the finish, and most individual steps.



For more information about the SEAGP challenge, and to keep up with the progress of our teams, please go to the SEAGP website at:

[www.seagp.org.au](http://www.seagp.org.au)

Or to coordinate your own challenge go to:

[www.10000steps.org.au](http://www.10000steps.org.au)

**Happy Stepping to all our teams—walking is a great way to increase cardiovascular fitness, and supports mental health and wellbeing**