

# Families Supporting Families Annual Report 2015

## FSF Coordinators Report

Bronwyn Thoroughgood is our coordinator. For the first half of the year Bronwyn used her expertise as an educator, life coach and leader to coordinate the running of FSF. During that time she provided the committee members with personal and professional support which enabled us to fulfill our duties successfully. Bronwyn held a strategic planning meeting in January and as a committee we collaborated and planned the entire year. This gave all committee members direction and purpose.

In May this year Bronwyn became unwell and temporarily stepped down from her position. I took on the role from this time as Acting Coordinator. All committee members showed resilience during adversity and pulled together as a team to get the job done, they are to be commended for their efforts. A standout event during my time in this role was coordinating two sailing events with Sailors with Disabilities. Nadine Mackay captained the "Winds of Joy" project with 7 children and 7 parents sailing on a 54ft yacht from Newcastle Harbour and I captained the "Winds of Care" project, taking 15 parents out on the high seas. This proved to be a huge success and may be on the agenda for next year. Thank you to all committee members and FSF members who contributed and helped to make fulfilling this role a pleasure.

Kind Regards, Maree Gallop.

## FSF Treasurers Report

Total assets at 01/07/2014 \$28,379.00

Total assets at 01/07/2015 \$27,245.69

We had operating expenses of \$16,980.75

Major expenses included:- Carer's Cafés, Web page development, Carer's dinner, Insurance

There were also small amounts for our running cost e.g. Auditor's fees, Incorporation fees, expo registration, postage, printing and stationery.

We received income including \$4900 from NIB, \$4290 from Clubs NSW, \$2150 from Bemont 16ft Sailing Club, \$550.00 in membership, \$549.44 in interest, and \$250.00 from Carers NSW.

Elizabeth Cornally, FSF Treasurer.

## FSF Secretary Report

The role of secretary was filled by Christina Jason for the first half of the year. During that time Christina diligently attended monthly committee meetings and kept the minutes up to date. She attended to emails, memberships and correspondence regularly and distributed relevant information. Christina unfortunately had to step down from the role due to work and family commitments.

We were unable to find a volunteer to take on the role of secretary for the remainder of the year. Liz Cornally, Nadine Mackay and myself have worked together to ensure the job has been attended to. Thank you to Liz and Nadine for doing the lion's share of work.

Kind Regards, Maree Gallop.

## Grant's Officer Report

This was a very busy year for FSF as we organised a number of special events in addition to the regular Carers Café Plus Program which this year was generously supported by nib foundation. The first event of the year was a 1 day Workshop with Sue Larkey (Feb 5<sup>th</sup>) which I organised along with Maree Gallop. This was a very successful day with 75 participants and very positive feedback from attendees. This workshop was funded by the Newcastle ClubGrants Scheme (the Adamstown Club and The Newcastle Leagues Club). We are very grateful for their assistance. I would also like to thank the other organisations who supported this event: Tomago Aluminium, nib foundation, Wests, SmallTalk Speech Therapy.

Throughout the year we held 4 school holiday activities which were generously funded by Belmont 16 Foot Sailing Club (through the Lake Macquarie Club Grants Scheme) and I would like to thank them for their support.

Thank you to Jennifer Barrett for running the first of these activities which was a Bowling event at Superstrike Warners Bay (April 16th) which 21 children attended. Everyone had a great time bowling and there was lots of positive feedback from children and parents.

I organised and ran the following holiday activities:

Performability Dance Session (June 29th) with 22 children participating.

Sports Party at Hunter Sports Centre (July 5th) with 30 participants

Rosie's School of Rock Drumming Workshop (Sept 28th) with 27 participants

Feedback from everyone was very positive with a response rate of over 90% at each event. All the carers who completed the evaluation form rated their overall experience as excellent or good and stated that they would be interested in attending similar FSF events in the future. Thank you to Maree Gallop, Nadine Mackay and Liz Cornally. These events wouldn't have been possible without their assistance.

At the Strategic Planning Meeting (Jan 14th) it was decided that the committee needed to concentrate our efforts on running the many events mentioned above. This meant reducing the number of new grants applied for in 2015 but a small number of applications were submitted that focussed on funding the core business of FSF – Carers Café, Carers Café Plus and Carers Dinner.

A Community Grant application to the nib foundation was successful, with \$5,000 being awarded to fund the Carers Café Program in 2016. We are very grateful to the nib foundation for their continued support of our organisation and look forward to working with them again in 2016.

I applied for the Carer's Week Grant of \$250 from Carers NSW and this application was successful. This money will go towards the cost of the Carer's Dinner.

A nomination was submitted for FSF in the NSW/ACT Regional Achievement and Community Awards, which unfortunately was unsuccessful.

In February I submitted an application to join the Together Program run by Carers NSW. This gave us access to funds of up to \$1,500 as a sustainability grant to assist FSF to meet some of our running costs (which are rarely covered by grants from funding bodies). These funds were used for printing costs and to cover insurance costs for the 2015/2016 financial year (paid in advance). FSF has been allocated funds of up to \$500 for this financial year (funds allocated to each group have been reduced due to the increased number of groups now in the program). As part of the Together Program I have participated in a couple of Tele-meetings with other support group members. Unfortunately we will be unable to send a representative to the Together Program Forum on Nov 12<sup>th</sup> in Parramatta due to a clash with the FSF AGM.

I have communicated regularly throughout the year with funding bodies to update them on the progress of projects. The evaluation forms completed after an event are analysed and as each project is completed a final report is produced which summarises the outcome of this analysis and details how the funds were used.

I have enjoyed working with the other committee members this year and meeting members at the Carers Cafés, workshops and social events.

Thank you, Eilis Corrigan.

### **Community Connections Report**

This year has seen our Carer's Café and Carer's Café Plus events grow from strength to strength. Our Carer's Café (coffee mornings) were a huge hit with regular and sustained participation from members. We visited The Locale, The Edwards, Sal's by the Lake, The Long Bench, Love Tree Café and Awaba House. The feedback in our guest book was heartwarming and encouraging. Thank you!

Our first Carer's Café *Plus* event was international speaker and author Sue Larkey. With the help of sponsors, FSF made it possible for parents and guests to attend in Newcastle at an affordable cost. Some pro-active teachers joined in with one school declaring a pupil free day so that all staff could attend.

The aim of Carer's Café *Plus* is to connect and learn. We achieved this by facilitating workshops and guided discussions. Craig Moore, psychologist, enlightened us about the pros and cons of technology on childhood development. Bronwyn Thoroughgood, life coach and teacher, inspired and motivated us to become more empowered. Mental health is my passion, so I presented in October for mental health month and thoroughly enjoyed this year's theme, "Value Your Mind." There was much discussion and sharing of practical tips to promote mental well-being. Our final Carer's Café *Plus* for the year will follow our AGM and promises to be inspirational.

Part of my role is to evaluate our Carer's Café *Plus*. Feedback is collected via evaluation forms which are collated and reported on. These reports are made available to the public via our e-newsletter. The results were excellent and reflect success in our endeavour to provide quality, relevant information in a safe and comfortable environment. We know that 98% of people will return to FSF for future events. FSF does make a significant contribution to local families in the disability community.

Thank you to all who participated in Carer's Cafés this year. It's been a pleasure and a privilege to meet and share experiences and stories with you.

Regards, Maree Gallop

### **Media Officer Report**

2014-2015 has been a particularly busy year for the FSF Committee. The Media Officer role has been an energetic one! My tasks have included the development and editing of the bi-monthly newsletter, updates on Facebook, plus additional secretarial tasks as a fill-in requirement. These roles and responsibilities have formed my voluntary contribution to FSF.

To our members and committee.. I wish to say THANK YOU for your input and participation in the way of our newsletter submissions as well as our Facebook page and website. I really appreciate it.

I ask that you continue connecting with FSF via social media and email. Please feel free to send any newsletter submissions or suggestions through to our FSF inbox ([familiessupportingfamilies@live.com.au](mailto:familiessupportingfamilies@live.com.au)).

Regards, Nadine Mackay

### **Social Officer Report**

It has been a pleasure to be on the Committee of Families Supporting Families and organising social nights for our parents and carers during the year.

We have had a dinner every term and it is such a great opportunity for people to get together and talk about their children or talk about how they are feeling and knowing that others will understand and listen.

Our main event for the year is the Carers Dinner which is occurring on Friday 23 October at Valentine Bowling Club. We have thirty people attending and as we have all witnessed in previous years it is a very relaxed and enjoyable evening. The night is again for parents and carers but this event sees the men come along too, which to me is so important.

Regards, Jennifer

### **Fundraising Report**

The fundraising officer is responsible for organising fundraising events on the direction of the FSF committee. These may include such things as the Entertainment Books and Claytons Dinner. Contribute to the direction of the organisation through committee meetings. Put forward ideas for fundraising.

Regards, Maree W