

EYE CONTACT

BWA serving its Members for 75 years

Newsletter for Members of B W A proudly

Sponsored by Tenants and Friends



November/December 2013

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Welcome to the last Eye Contact for 2013. It is hard to believe that another year has scooted by so quickly, but it is really only perception that the time passes any faster than it did in years gone by. In this edition, you will get to read the news and updates for the upcoming few months and I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and happy Festive Season.

Board Report

The 2012/13 financial year has been an exciting year of growth of member services, upgrade of Cameron Avenue complex facilities for residents and Social Centre participants. The Board over the past five years has concentrated on establishing a sustainable economic foundation ensuring that current services and any future development will be of an ongoing nature rather than one off projects.

Member Services – Financial Support

The Board has in the last financial year increased the financial support to members (SPWF) and increased budget for home maintenance and equipment support. This area of support is what Blind Welfare is known for and is essential core service for those who rely on Centrelink income.

Social Centre Activity

The number of participants in Social Centre activities and programs supported by volunteers such as shopping etc. have been increasing and thus presenting the Board and staff with new challenges in the area of being able to provide transport to BWA members. The Board has asked the staff to come up with a proposal for vehicle requirements to match members' needs who are not as agile as they used to be to hop up into the bus and back out again. The Board was very pleased with the outcome when we upgraded the Marney Pearce Lounge and the take up of members utilising the facility. The upgraded pergola and BBQ in the courtyard has finished the overall plan for the complex and all that is required now is the ongoing maintenance and sustainability of the Independent Living Units. In regards to the BBQ, after researching the options and consulting with Occupational Therapists to ensure what was provided was safe and able to be used independently by totally blind and vision impaired members, it was a bit more expensive than your everyday home BBQ but BWA has a duty of care to our members which cannot be ignored based on economics.

Management of BWA

The Board is very pleased with the day to day running of the organisation and the high level of compliance that the organisation has achieved under our funding grants. For this, we must thank Rosemary and her team. Running an organisation such as Blind Welfare in regards to compliance, policies and procedures is no different than running organisations, such as Anglicare or Masonic Homes. This compliance and governance of the organisation will only increase as the Government has set standards that compared to ten years ago, have increased fourfold in complexity and reporting. This will be the big challenge

over the next five years for BWA to maintain its rating with its limited resources. I also must take this opportunity to thank Rosemary and her team for successfully being granted additional funds this year of over \$50,000.00.

Governance Training for the Board

As I have mentioned in the Eye Contact, the required responsibilities for Board members is increasing, not only under the Australian Charities and Non for Profit Commission, but also under the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the Aged Care Act where the Board can no longer absolve themselves of their responsibilities and transfer them to management and staff. During the next 12 months the Board will need to review its services and expenditure in line with compliance of the Disability Standards and Funding Programs. The Board is committed to expanding the services on an equitable basis to all members of BWA and we have asked the Staff to seek funding to offer member services other than Social Centre activities on the southern side of Adelaide. And finally I'd like to thank all volunteers for their dedication to our members and the organisation along with Rosemary, Deidre, Rebecca, Jackie, Christine and Marj. I'd also like to thank members for their participation as well as my fellow Board members.

Mr Tony Whiteley retired after serving on the BWA Board for 6 years and Ms Julie Sutherland has also stepped down after serving 4 years. We acknowledge and thank them both for their participation and contributions and welcome to the Board, Sarah Savage and Jed Alexander. The new Board structure is as follows: Tony Starkey (President), Patricia Fryer (Vice President), Leonore Scott (Secretary), Sarah Savage and Jed Alexander.

TONY STARKEY

President

Manager's Report

Warm greetings to you all! I am definitely back in reality after a most enjoyable break and holiday. Blind Welfare managed very well without me for almost 6 weeks thanks to our wonderful hard working team, Deidre, Christine, Marj, Jackie and Trudy. The team was well supported by our generous and talented Volunteers and of course Leonore Scott, BWA Board Secretary and volunteer. Thank you one and all!

Marj (BWA Member Services Assistant) will have some news for you in this edition. Christine is currently on leave; she will be back at work soon, about the time you receive this Eye Contact, with hopefully, happy tales to tell of her time in the USA. You will also find in this edition a schedule of activities planned for November through to closing for the Christmas break **Friday 20th December from 12.30pm**. Marj has provided a full schedule including commencement activity times for the New Year, January 2014. You will find all these dates and listed activities within the November and December activity calendar of this Eye Contact. Blind Welfare has been acutely aware of the call for greater services in the more southern regions of metropolitan Adelaide. This has been a long-term

challenge for the Organisation and is currently part of BWA's Strategic Plan to explore this potential and needs of our members. The current partnership with the Royal Society for The Blind, Recreation and Leisure Program was put in place over 7 years ago to support and engage BWA members that cannot access activities at the Social Centre here in Gilles Plains.

We have put together a survey to ask our more southern residents and members what their needs are. From this information and data that we collect, we hope to determine if 1. There is a need for services and 2. What these services are. Expect to get a call from Trudy, who will ask you to respond to the survey questions. If you do live in one of the south-eastern suburbs and do not hear from us please let us know. Your input is extremely important to us and we will not be able to make the best decisions without your input. So please, when Trudy calls, take the time to answer a total of 10 questions. Shouldn't take more than 5 minutes, it will also give you an opportunity to make comment if you wish. We hope to gather and collate all this information and have a report for you in the New Year. We will inform through our website www.blindwelfare.org.au and the next edition of Eye Contact, February 2014.

More good news: Blind Welfare has 7 desk top computers to give away to interested members. Each computer has keyboard, mouse and monitor. All have Windows XP and Microsoft Office. These computers are all in good working order and would be ideal for someone learning or getting started. As there may be more than 7 members who would like one of these computers we are asking all interested Members to contact us. You can either send us an email, info@blindwelfare.org.au or, call Blind Welfare on 8 3 6 7 6 0 8 8. All names will go into a draw and 7 member's names will be drawn. Members will be responsible to physically collect the computer from Blind Welfare at 1 Cameron Avenue Gilles Plains before close of business Thursday 19th December 2013. You will also need to sign a disclaimer when you or a nominated person is picking up for you. Draw will take place on Thursday 5th December and all winners will be advised by phone that same day. Got to be in it to win it!

Saturday 19th October BWA held its AGM at The Pilgrim Centre, Flinders Street, Adelaide. As well as Board, staff and volunteers, 21 members attended. Those in attendance had the pleasure of being introduced to Jed Alexander and Sarah Savage the new Board members. Both Jed and Sarah bring knowledge, experience and expertise to the Board. Tony Starkey was re-elected as President. It really seems ridiculous to be wishing you all the very best for Christmas and the New Year when November has just started but as this is the last Eye Contact for 2013 I may not get another opportunity. Once again I would like to encourage all our members to keep in touch and let us know your comments, needs or observations. You will read in Jackie's report that we are seriously exploring Social Media for Blind Welfare, having a Blind Welfare Face Book page. What do YOU think? I would really appreciate your comments on that or any other matter

you may wish to raise. As always we will be busy especially over the next couple of months. Don't forget the Members Christmas Party, **Thursday 12 December at the Highlander Hotel**, just up the road from BWA. Get in early if you require transport and as always we will do our best to provide transport for all who request it.

Until next time, best wishes to all!

Rosemary Murdock

Manager

Volunteer Officer's Report

It's hard to believe that it's nearly the end of the year and we are all looking forward to Christmas!! Christmas functions are all finalised and a schedule is in this Eye Contact. I have been looking at the possibility of BWA going on Facebook and the Board have agreed in principle. The staff will now be looking at the time and resources we have available to make sure we can maintain the tasks to keep the page current. I attended a free three hour course at Northern Volunteering funded by Office for Volunteers on Social Media for not-for-profit. The RSB have a Facebook page and I have spoken to the staff member who handles this. I asked her some questions about the viability of it and she said that it has definitely proved to be an advantage to them especially to reach their younger clients. The fact that Facebook is instantaneous means it can be kept up to date very easily as long as staff are able to maintain the time needed to achieve this. Of course our website has been our way of communicating so far and if you haven't taken a look at it recently I suggest you do. The website will continue to be kept active and with Facebook we can refer people to look at the website for more information, that's our aim! Rosemary and I will be attending a further training program on Facebook so we enter into it knowing all the pros and cons. Your feedback is welcome so please don't hesitate to let us know your thoughts.

The training on adaptive software for our volunteers has now been completed and we recently had a barbecue to celebrate this. The Marney Pearce Lounge is gradually attracting more members and three of the people who attended the course are regular visitors. We now have six volunteers who can help in the Marney Pearce Lounge so if you would like to have some assistance in there, please give us a week's notice so we can arrange a volunteer. We have now finalized the production of the new DL brochures for Volunteer Services and Member Services and these will be printed shortly, we are only awaiting the funding body to advise us of the new logo. I think the volunteer brochure looks very good and with two photographs featuring members and volunteers, plus one of a volunteer driver, it does make it appealing to anyone that may be looking to become a volunteer. The Member Services brochure is similar to the volunteer brochure and in due course these brochures will be on the website as well.

I attended a Social Justice Day at Loreto College at Marryatville which is the culmination of the college encouraging their senior students to be involved in

fundraising, volunteering and other types of community service throughout their time at school. There were several Charity Organisations attending this event. The students would only be available during school holidays, which is when we generally have a break from activities, but it is an opportunity to promote BWA and maybe future volunteers after leaving school or attending university. I am continually looking for volunteers so if you know of anyone that might be interested let me know and I will see if I can use my persuasive powers. We always need drivers, as we seem to have more and more requests for medical appointments and personal shopping. We currently have 66 registered volunteers and ten still being processed. This figure fluctuates with attrition being caused by volunteers obtaining paid work or in some cases moving interstate. As you can imagine some people attend an interview and then their circumstances change and are unable to assist us. As always a big THANK YOU to all our volunteers who keep on doing what they are doing and more. It can be quite a challenge to try to keep ahead of all that is going on and our volunteers are all very patient with me!

JACKIE McEWEN

Volunteer Officer

Member Services Assistant

Hello from Marj! I am writing for Christine this edition as Christine, our Member Services Officer, is on leave. Below is a brief run down on what's on at BWA over the next couple of months. To begin, I would like to tell you about the YIN Personal Safety Course held at BWA Gilles Plains recently. This course was held on Monday September 30th, Fridays October 4th & 11th for 3 hours each session with Lecturer Sharon Stewart. This course was very well received and run especially for BWA members living in the Port Adelaide/Enfield Council area. Christine applied to our Local Council, Port Adelaide/ Enfield, and was successful in securing funding to deliver this important training. During the course, the members were taught assertiveness and basic self-defence training. It was part of a comprehensive effort to prevent acts of interpersonal violence and boundary violations.

Day 1: Sharon gave emphasis on communication strategies such as verbal de-escalation, assertive communication and boundary-setting skills. The idea was to increase self-confidence and skills and develop the Member's sense of personal power.

Day 2: Sharon taught the members simulations of physical and non-physical boundary violations committed by people we know or those that are strangers.

Day 3: Sharon followed a strategy to encourage the members to expand self-awareness with verbal and non-verbal communication and introduced basic physical self-defence techniques. We received excellent feedback from members saying it improved their sense of empowerment and self-confidence.

Weekly Social Centre Activities

Monday

Tai Chi 10am

Singing Group (fortnightly) 11.15am

Social Group 1pm

Tuesday

Audio Description Movies 9.30am

Wednesday

Craft & lunch 10am

Thursday

Social Group 10am

Writers Group (fortnightly) 10.30am

Friday

Craft & Lunch 10am

Bingo (fortnightly) 12noon

Tenant & Friends first Friday of the month 7pm for 7.30pm start

Saturday

Travel Club (second Saturday each month)

Coming up in the months of **November** and **December** are exciting programs.

Special Events:

Thursday 14th November Devonshire Morning Tea at BWA at 10am

Monday 18th November Social Group "The Troubadours Singers" at 1pm

Thursday 21st November Melbas Chocolate Factory & Lobethal Bakery at 10am

Monday 25th November Social Group "The Matinee Singers" at 1pm

Thursday 28th November Social Group "Mystery" entertainment at 10 am

Monday 2nd December Social Group "Modbury Singers" at 1pm

Thursday 5th December "Darryl & Lyn Entertainers" at 10am

Monday 9th December our very own BWA Choir at 1pm

Monday 16th December "Sound of Music Entertainers" at 1pm

VERY important events:

Thursday 12th December Member's Christmas Luncheon at the Highlander, Gilles Plains at 12.30pm. Christmas Carols by BWA Choir

Thursday 19th December Volunteers Christmas Party Luncheon at the Highlander, Gilles Plains at 12.30pm

Friday 20th December BWA Activity Centre and Administration Office closed from 12:30 pm

Monday 6th January 2014 Administration office reopens

Monday 20th January 2014 personal shopping and medical appointments recommence. Please remember to book appointments at least **1 week** before. This is important as we need to coordinate a volunteer and a vehicle. Remembering that a lot of BWA volunteers are not available for the month of January. The sooner you book the more likely we can assist!

Monday 3rd February 2014 Activity Centre re opens for regular weekly activities

Last but not least a special mention about the Writers Group. Writers' Group sessions are held fortnightly at BWA on Thursday mornings at 10.30am-11.30pm. We are a relatively small group where we pool resources and share knowledge.

These positive, collective and supportive sessions lead the authors who are keen to have their work recognised. These sessions are a great opportunity of examining ways to structure our meetings for fellow participants so they can learn new ideas and also to be encouraged to keep on writing through discussion and feedback. At this moment we have an autobiography writer, fantasy writer, blog and short story writer. One lady that is poet and lyric writer provides input by correspondence. What the group is hoping that once a month we could encourage other writers and poets, to come along to our meetings and give the group much needed advice. One writer is having her book edited to prepare it for publishing, another sends in poems to enter competitions, one is applying for a grant next year to hopefully get a mentor to help publish her fantasy book and one author is training to write blogs.

This poem, Butterfly, is from a very talented young lady Michelle Thredgold. I do hope you enjoy it as much as I did.

BUTTERFLY

In your cocoon you wake, unfolding like a flower from a caterpillar to a butterfly, a moment of splendour.

Little eaglet, open your eyes, try your wings little bird,

Little puppy, don't be afraid to take your first step.

Little butterfly, come forth and show the world your beauty. Little eaglet spread your wings and soar on high. Little puppy, there's a world waiting for you, God's creatures all, waiting ... waiting.

I stand at the edge, in my cocoon. MY wings are new and strange. Can I take that walking step to conquer, spread my wings to fly?

Little butterfly, come forth and show the world your beauty. Little eaglet spread your wings and soar on high. Little puppy, take courage, there's a world waiting for you, Cinderella, step out of your rags.

Copyright by Michelle Thredgold

In case I don't see you, wishing you and yours the very best for the holiday season and all the very best for 2014

Marj Johanson

Assistant Welfare Members Officer

BWA/RSB RECREATION AND LEISURE UPDATE NOVEMBER 2013

RECREATION AND LEISURE EAST & WEST UPDATE

Hi everyone, spring is here which means the days are warmer and longer! If you would like to get out and about, here are some groups that may be of interest to you: **Aqua Aerobics** – is seeking new members. If you are an active person who would like to participate in a low impact activity and socialise with other like-minded people, then this is a group for you! The class takes place once a week, on a Tuesday and Wednesday, for ten week blocks at RSB Gilles Plains

Gym Group – is seeking new members. If you are an active person who would like to get fit and socialise with other like-minded people, then this is a group for

you! The class takes place once a week, on a Monday and Wednesday, for ten week blocks at RSB Gilles Plains. **Theatre Group** – is seeking new members. If you enjoy going to the Theatre and would like to see an audio described performance, the South Australian State Theatre Company perform seven a year at the Adelaide Festival Theatre on a Tuesday evening or Saturday Matinee. Tickets are only \$20 each and you can meet the cast before the performance. . If you would like to join these groups or require information, please contact Emily on (08) 8 4 1 7 5 5 5

Recreation and Leisure Update

Hi all just wanted to provide you all with some useful information about a couple of changes to Recreation and Leisure operations.

RSB Noarlunga Office move

The RSB office at Noarlunga has now moved to 69 Beach Road Christies Beach SA 5165. The telephone number for the office has also changed, to (08) 8 4 1 7 5 6 6 0 and can be reached during the hours of 8.30am & 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

Recreation and Leisure Officer – North

A new Recreation and Leisure Officer has been appointed to the Smithfield office. Mrs Charish Samorowski is her name and can be contacted on (08) 8 2 5 4 3 0 1 1 for any queries on Recreation and Leisure services in the North.

Recreation and Leisure Officer – East/West

Emily Finnie has now left for maternity leave, all enquiries regarding Recreation and Leisure can now be directed to the North on (08) 8 2 5 4 3 0 1 1 or South on (08) 8 4 1 7 5 6 6 0.

Tenants and Friends

Well it's Pageant time, Santa has come to town and the shops have been stocked with goodies for weeks, so it must be that time of year again. Our Barbecue and Christmas concert will be held on Saturday 7th December, and we hope to see a great turnout to start the Christmas festivities at BWA. The Committee will be supplying a tasty two-course dinner, with supper later in the evening. Tickets are \$15pp and are available at the Social Centre.

We have a great raffle with many prizes and we thank all those who have donated to this. Tickets are 50c each and will be available in the Social Centre and on the night. Entertainment will be by Helena and her group and it is always a fun evening. There will be drinks for sale on the night.

Our AGM has been held and the Committee consists of Maureen Clothier, Leonore Scott, Irene Thomson, John Bastiaans, Carla Mognato, Heather Couzner, Wyn Glasse and Steve McPhie.

We hope more people will attend the Friday night concerts next year.

MAUREEN CLOTHIER

President Tenants and Friends Social Club





Trip To China

In early May, I along with three others from Adelaide, Maureen Clothier, Glen Jamieson and my daughter Jean flew over to China for a 12 Day Tour. It had been a dream of mine to visit that country and thankfully it came to fruition. We were very fortunate to stay in 4 Star Hotels and we had all our meals provided. Admittedly, lunch and dinners were basically the same the whole time, banquets, but enjoyable none the less. The sights we got to see and visit were very interesting and I have never seen so many people, and cars on the roads were something else, but the whole time we were there, did not witness one crash or see anyone knocked off their little motor bikes, minus helmets. The footpaths were deemed either for pedestrians and any other mode of transport and there never seemed any impatience, such a lovely race.

The Venice of China was amazing and the residents view from their front entrance was the canal, which had motor vessels plying the waterway. The open market was something to behold, fresh fish (as it was sort of still alive) gasping for a breath of sorts in tubs filled with water, and the butcher's stall had fresh meat hanging or lying around and the flies must have thought they were at the best Chinese Banquet ever! One of the highlights of the trip was climbing up to the first lookout on the Great Wall of China. The steps were of varying depths and widths, and rather difficult to negotiate with my short legs, but coming down was much more taxing as I held onto the rail from the top to the very bottom, and my legs felt like jelly and I fought to stay standing, but well worth the effort. The Copy Markets were great fun and my daughter found her calling when it came to getting a bargain. I could continue on but it would take up a couple of pages, so this is just a taste of my wonderful trip to China.

By Leonore Scott

Come and try-Piano David Lee (Pianist- Piano Teacher)

Interested in learning the piano and more about the world of music?

David Lee is offering free piano lessons to all for the first 6 lessons. The perfect way to come and try piano! David is vision impaired and holds a Bachelor of Piano performance and Pedagogy (tutoring/teaching) from the University of Adelaide. Introduction to piano lessons will be conducted every Tuesday afternoon at the BWA Activity Centre, Gilles Plains. Each lesson will be taught one on one for 30 minutes. David is also willing to speak with you individually to discuss what would best suit your needs. These lessons are open to family, friends and anyone that might be interested; all you need to do is pick up the phone!

Contact David on **0 4 3 1 6 1 7 1 6 0** or call Blind Welfare on **8 3 6 7 6 0 8 8**

BWA Travel Club Program for 2013

2nd Saturday of each month

Please keep in mind that bookings close at 8pm on the Tuesday prior to the trip.

Buses leave Cameron Ave, Gilles Plains at 9am and for those interested in joining in the Travel Club outings, it may be possible to arrange to be picked up from a specific location. Charges for trips \$32 includes - meals and admissions, charges to parks, museums and entertainment that is listed on the program. Discount of \$4 for meeting at pick up points. Annual Travel Club Subscription is \$10, payable at the February AGM or as soon as possible if joining later. All travellers must be a member, volunteer or an Associated Member (\$10 per year) of the Blind Welfare Association. Members are encouraged to pay in advance and in the event of you being unable to attend that trip the amount will be credited to your next trip. For Information or wanting to attend a trip or cancel please contact Catherine Bottcher Treasurer and Transport on **8 3 9 5 1 0 0 5**, Chris Mountstephen Secretary on **8 3 7 1 2 9 2 8** or mobile **0 4 3 8 2 9 2 8 3 7** or Blind Welfare during office hours 9am to 4.30 pm on **8 3 6 7 6 0 8 8**. This information is subject to change but correct as of November 2013.

Saturday 14th December to be advised

NOTE: In the event of the temperature being forecast at 35°C or more on the Friday night's 6pm News Bulletin, the trip will be cancelled. There will be no further notification. If interested, please contact Chris Brown in the BWA Office on **8 3 6 7 6 0 8 8**.

Editor's Comments

If there is anything you'd like put into the next copy due out in February 2014 please forward on to info@blindwelfare.org.au alternatively contact the Office and talk to one of the staff.



Dear Member of BWA.

It is once again nearing the end of the year and Blind Welfare Association would like to invite you to Christmas lunch. This year's lunch is to be held at the Highlander Hotel, 647 North East Rd, Gilles Plains on Thursday 12th December at 12.30pm.

Menu

Main

Roast Turkey Breast
Served with roast potatoes, stuffing & cranberry sauce

Fish & Chips
grilled, battered or crumbed

Thai Green Curry
Served with jasmine rice

Traditional Beef Lasagne
Served with rich creamy sauce & chips

Beef Schnitzel
With chips and your choice of sauce

Dessert

Christmas Pudding
Served with brandy sauce and vanilla ice cream

Chocolate cup
With mango gelati, lime coulis and a chocolate wafer

Entertainment by our very own BWA Choir

Please RSVP to Chris or Marj by Friday 29th November on 83676088. Limited transport will be available for members within a 10km radius of the social centre so please book early. Associate Members welcome at a cost of \$20.00.