



Laurel Times

Welcome to our latest edition of Laurel Times.

Since our last update, all of the team at Laurel Place have been hard at work engaging with our communities across four different areas, Gympie, Sunshine Coast, Murgon and now Moreton Bay.

From all of us at Laurel Place I would like to thank the Hibiscus quilters for their continued support and generosity. It is often these gestures of kindness that make all the difference in people's lives!



LAUREL PLACE NOW OPEN IN MORAYFIELD Counselling for adult survivors in Moreton Bay area

Laurel Place is excited to report that we have a new office based at Morayfield! We are fortunate to have received additional funding from Department of Communities, Child Safety, and Disability Services to extend our adult counselling service into the Moreton Bay Region.

We have welcomed two experienced counsellors to the Laurel Place team, Miranda and Cynthia, who will provide services from our Morayfield office.

We are very pleased to be able to fill a service delivery gap in this region and ensure that specialised support is available to adult clients (over the age of 15 years) who have been impacted by sexual assault.

Laurel Place Moreton is open Tuesday to Fridays 9am - 5pm, and clients are able to self-refer by phoning **5499 2096**.

Pictured right: Warm and welcoming counselling rooms provide a safe space to talk in the Morayfield office.



A sense of dignity when it's needed the most...

Laurel Place, Sunshine Coast, is once again, providing a drop-off point for the Share the Dignity campaign collecting feminine hygiene products throughout August.

Share the Dignity is a not-for-profit registered charity providing homeless and at-risk women with sanitary products to allow them a sense of dignity when they need it the most.

It's SO EASY to make a BIG DIFFERENCE! Buy an extra packet of pads or tampons at the supermarket and drop into the donation bin at Laurel Place. To find out more go to www.sharethedignity.com.au.



Gympie office

NEWS

Raising awareness through community participation

As Laurel Place Gympie crosses the mid-year point of 2016, it's "full steam ahead" not only with our counselling programs, but also in our involvement with the community. Here's a few highlights:

April: Little Kids Day Out'

An annual event open to all that combines fun and a wide range of psycho-educational activities to encourage learning and promoting the importance of parents and caregivers in the development of healthy and safe family relationships and home environments.

May: Deadly Young Persons Program

Laurel Place Gympie again had the honour of being invited to participate in the Deadly Young Persons Program, a school-based program for Indigenous youth facilitated by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers.

May: Domestic and Family Violence Awareness March, sponsored by Refocus and followed by open-air display stalls in the park.



Photo courtesy of REFOCUS

Group show of support after the D&FV Awareness March

May: 'No to Domestic Violence' Luncheon sponsored by Community Action & Community Place.



Photo courtesy of REFOCUS

Enjoying the D&FV Month Luncheon with the REFOCUS

July: NAIDOC Family Fun Day Celebration

It was Laurel Place Gympie's privilege and honour to participate in this day of recognition and celebration of Australia's Traditional Indigenous Landowners. A magnificent occasion filled with a vast array of activities including traditional dancing, story-telling, song groups, yarning circles, arts & crafts, display stalls and plentiful refreshments.



Photo courtesy of CASI

Enjoying the Gympie community NAIDOC celebrations

Transitions

With the passage of the first half of the year, Laurel Place Gympie farewelled our locum counsellor, Deirdre, with our sincere appreciation for her many contributions to our Children and Families Program.

As we embark upon the second half of 2016, we give a huge and whole-hearted 'Welcome Back!' to our administrative support assistant, Marg, who's absence has been keenly felt by Service Users and staff alike.

Laurel Place Murgon

Like its sister offices, Laurel Place, Murgon is going strong on all fronts and is honoured by the acceptance and warm receptivity of the members of the South Burnett communities.

Spearheaded by our Indigenous Community Liaison worker, our relationship with the community and collaborative partnerships with South Burnett service providers continue to grow and strengthen. Laurel Place Murgon is especially privileged to have been accepted into the Cherbourg Local Level Alliance.

March saw Laurel Place Murgon say farewell to Children & Families counsellor, Sandy, with a big thank you for her contributions. And in June we welcomed a new member to the team, counsellor Yvonne, who brings with her an array of experience.

The Yarnin' Circle



Biddy Adams.
Liaison & Support Worker -
Indigenous Program



Above: Auntie Leonie Smith dropped by our service display at North Coast Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Community Health's yearly Well Persons Health Check Day at the Suncoast Auditorium, Woombye.

Below: Laurel Place staff joined the Cherbourg community in their annual March Against Domestic & Family Violence. Pictured here at the school after the march.



Laurel Place Inc acknowledges the Gubbi Gubbi people as the traditional custodians of the land on which our offices are located in Maroochydore, Morayfield and Gympie, and the Wakka Wakka people as the traditional custodians of the land on which Laurel Place is located in Murgon.

BREATHE

You are worth that extra breath

Tips for using breathing exercises to relax / reduce anxiety:

Standing or sitting comfortably -

- Shoulders over your hips
- Ears over your shoulders
- The underside of your jaw/chin parallel to the ground
- Lengthen the neck by imagining a string tied to the top of your head and connect to the ceiling.

In order to breathe correctly, the breath must never be forced – so relax and soften as much as possible into; the pelvic floor; the belly; the chest and shoulders; the throat and neck; the jaw and the face.

The best breath to nourish your body is by using the diaphragm.

Keeping your posture tall, relaxed upper body, breathe and gently expand the belly as you breathe

in slowly through the nose, moving the navel away from the spine. You can place your hands over your belly to assist in keeping your awareness on the diaphragm.

As you breathe out, gently draw the belly in towards the spine.

Continue to practice this movement until it feels comfortable then extend the breath to include your inhale breath from the belly to the chest.

This is a full breath. You should feel as though the breath fills up the entire upper body as you inhale. Try not to tense the shoulders or the throat.

As you exhale, imagine pouring your breath out from the chest first, then the belly as everything contracts to help you empty out.

And remember - you are worth that extra breath.

RESILIENCE



Nature is always giving us examples of why we should never give up



A great big
THANK YOU to the
Hibiscus Quilters - pictured
here with their latest
donation of beautiful
handmade quilts for
our clients.



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

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It's halfway through the year already, where has the time gone?

In response to our recent name change I am seeing 'Laurel Place' being taken up and adopted across the sector, and with it bringing a strong sense of identity for who we are and the services we provide.

I welcome the addition of our new office at Morayfield that services the greater Moreton Bay area and provides specialist support to clients 15 years and over. I'd like to welcome the new staff and thank the efforts of our current staff that have had been pivotal in creating this service. I'd also like to thank our funding body the 'Department of Communities - Child Safety and Disability Services', for having faith in us being able to deliver a much needed service for the community.

I am sure that we will exceed expectations.

The Maroochydore, Gympie and Murgon offices are also moving at a fast pace and I thank all the staff for their ongoing dedication and commitment.

As a member of the board for this organisation I see it as part of our responsibility to advocate on behalf of the community, and this has resulted in us having contact with several of our government representatives. It was pleasing for me to hear that in the near future we will be visited at Laurel Place Maroochydore by state government members, Ros Bates MP and Fiona Simpson MP. I look forward to their visit and appreciate any politician who can take the time to get to know us a little better. The Board is committed to exploring all opportunities to better meet the needs of our communities.



By Jane Stuart - Student Counsellor Gympie.

On the 15th of June I attended the Gympie Regional Gallery to view an exhibition of art created by some amazing Cherbourg artists. The exhibition was thoughtfully called CONNEXION and was aimed at bringing

the artists together again. Their story began 25 years ago, when Aunty Olga Miller travelled up to Cherbourg to facilitate a work shop with the purpose of connecting the group to their culture through teaching their traditional art practices.

There were seven talented artists involved in the exhibition and each came to the microphone to tell the story of their art and what it means for them as individuals. The most touching part of this experience for me was when one of the artists told their story of feeling lost for many years, leading to alcoholism. He spoke of the connection that he felt when he was approached to re-engage with the group to produce new art for the exhibition. He explained that the

connection he felt to his culture and his people through this brought him out of a very dark place - he again felt that he had a purpose and no longer had a need to drink alcohol. Instead he felt a need to create again what he had been taught and connected to by Aunty Olga all those years ago.

His story touched me, and as I looked around the room I noticed that I was not the only one. I was made aware first hand of the need to belong - for connection to one's culture, and people. I will endeavour to continue participating in such cultural events where I am able to, and would like to encourage the same of others - seeing for yourself the needs described above is how we come to fully understand the cultural needs of others.



LAUREL PLACE INC

Services Against Sexual Violence

@ www.laurelplace.com.au

Visit our website for information on becoming a member

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