



Supporting independence and growth
within the home and community



Newsletter | Summer 2011

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From The CEO

In the last newsletter for 2011, we are excited to write about the past, present and future successes of Tandem services and the opportunities in the New Year.

We have supported the Every Australian Counts campaign to advocate for a National Disability Insurance Scheme. Similarly, Tandem will be focusing strongly on preparing for the potentially significant changes to the community sector, and have aligned our strategic direction to reflect existing and expected change, specifically in the disability, aged care and mental health areas.

In preparation for such changes, we are actively working on revising our policies and procedures, as well as further developing our Client Management System, updating our Work Harmonisation (Occupational Health and Safety) and implementing Human Resources, and training and development to meet the changes needs of the sector in the ACT.

The Prime Minister announced last month that the Commonwealth Government will fund its share of an Equal Remuneration Order (ERO) made by Fair Work Australia (FWA) for Social and Community Service (SACS) workers. This means that over several years, approximately \$2 billion will be invested to "close the gender pay gap" for almost 150 000 community service workers. It is an important step forward in valuing the work of our community sector, and we are keenly awaiting the outcome of this exciting development.

For the second year, Tandem House will be operating Holiday programs. It is our hope that overnight respite for teenagers will commence in early 2012, and we are looking forward to informing you of future developments.

I'd like to thank our staff, Support Workers and Volunteers for their wonderful work this year, and wish you all a relaxing, safe and rewarding Christmas and New Year break, and look forward to welcoming you back in 2012 for another year of opportunity and success.

Cheryl Pollard
Chief Executive Officer



OH&S Update

Sun Smart

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world with over 1000 people being treated for skin cancer each day. As a large part of the service we provide occurs in the community it is important that all employees and clients are aware of Tandem's Sun Smart Policy which states:

Tandem requires all employees to take appropriate Sun Smart precautions when planning community access outdoors for a client.

For all outdoors sessions – and particularly those that take place during 10/11am – 2/3pm – it is the responsibility of support workers, carers and clients to ensure that all participants wear long sleeves, a hat and sunglasses and that 30+SPF sunscreen has been applied to all exposed skin areas. Support workers must continue to apply 30+SPF Sunscreen at 2 hourly intervals and seek shade when possible. Hydration is another major issue at this time of year and it is recommended that water bottles are taken on outings, for both the client and the support worker.

Client Feedback Opportunities

As a part of Tandem's commitment to ongoing improvement, we are always pleased to receive your feedback on how we can do things better. If you have a suggestion please contact your coordinator, Operations Manager Lisa Grant or Chief Executive Officer Cheryl Pollard. Our funding bodies, ACT Health Directorate and ACT Community Services Directorate are also interested in how they can improve. Their client feedback forms can be found on their websites.

ACT Health Directorate: www.health.act.gov.au
(Click on 'consumer information' then 'feedback')

ACT CSD: www.dhcs.act.gov.au
(Click on 'compliments and complaints' then 'online client feedback form')

From the Board

Tandem's Annual General Meeting was held on 26 October. It was well attended, with representation from clients, staff and other friends of Tandem, including Steve Dospot MLA and Alastair Coe MLA. Outcomes included the official presentation of our Annual Report, including an updated Strategic Plan, and audited financial statement, which can be accessed via our website.

In moving forward with Tandem's strategic direction we have been fortunate to find two outstanding new Board members – Catherine Argall and Jennifer Kerr – to fill recent vacancies. Both new members have recently completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors course and are keen to contribute towards Tandem's success and the changing environment of the ACT Community Sector.

The 2011/12 Board membership is:

Peter Gordon

President (cont.)

Patrick White

Vice President (cont.) – client representative

Karen Noble

Secretary and Public Officer (cont.)

Cath Sutton

Treasurer (cont.)

Steve Dascarolis

member (cont.)

Mark Vergano

member (cont.) – client representative

Jean McIntyre

member (cont.)

Joan Ross

member (cont.) – client representative

Ron Kingsbury

member (cont.)

Catherine Argall

member (new)

Jennifer Kerr

member (new)

On behalf of the Board, I wish you and your families a safe and restful Christmas and New Year Break.

Peter Gordon
President



Programs Update

The last three months have seen continued growth and activity across all of Tandem's service delivery areas. Teams are achieving output targets and report that outcomes for clients are positive and meaningful, as borne out of the service user surveys conducted across September and October.

Tandem House is providing after school care and varied, interesting holiday programs, strengthening our ability to respond to families' needs. The Living Skills Support Service continues to provide task-centred support sessions to school leavers and complements our Living Skills program in the Adults' program area. AFFIRM has operated at capacity and farewelled a number of families who report that the program provided some useful outcomes for them. The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Veterans' Home Care (VHC) Program became active on 1 October 2011 and is attracting a steadily increasing number of referrals which we expect will develop over time.

The Mental Health Program's recovery model has enabled a number of consumers to move through the program with meaningful outcomes and enabled them to access a range of chosen activities and services. The LeisureLink program has an active quarterly focus on volunteer recruitment, matching and annual reviews.

There have been plenty of training opportunities with most coordinators attending a range of seminars, expos, workshops and in particular the International Social Role Valorisation conference in Canberra in September. In addition Tandem has had representation on forums and meetings such as the Council on the Ageing (COTA), HACC/DS and the Belconnen Community Services, Tuggeranong and Weston Creek network meetings.

Staff resourcing and management has taken a lot of our focus this quarter with most service delivery staff assisting with support worker recruitment, and sensitivity surrounding some staffing movements within programs.

Tandem's HACC funded programs underwent the HACC Community Care Common Standards (CCCS) audit in October and achieved the very pleasing result of All Outcomes Met. The Auditors' report has a number of recommendations for enhancing our services which we will implement over the coming 12 months. We are awaiting the final version of Disability ACT's audit of AFFIRM.

With the end of year close at hand we wish you all a wonderful Christmas and New Year and look forward to working with you in 2012.

Lisa Grant
Executive Manager
Client Services

Tandem House is providing after school care and varied, interesting holiday programs, strengthening our ability to respond to families' needs.

Office Christmas/New Year Operating Times

The Tandem office will close on Friday, 23 December at Midday and re-open on Tuesday, 3 January 2012. However, Emergency On Call and regular Support will continue as usual during this time.

Support Worker's Area

New Faces

Mila Dhurbarry **Scheduling Officer**

Mila moved to Canberra from Melbourne, where she worked for Melbourne City Mission as a Community Development worker, Homework Club Facilitator and Family support Worker. She loves travelling around Australia, camping, long drives and swimming.

Joanne Ogle **Children's Program Coordinator**

Joanne has worked in the Community Service Sector for most of her career and is currently completing a Post Graduate Certificate in Counselling. She hopes to continue her studies and continue to work helping those who are most vulnerable in our community.

Congratulations



Congratulations to our very own Garang Kuer Bul who has been awarded the Personal Achievement Award at the Young Canberran of the Year Awards. Coming to Australia by himself as a refugee from

Sudan at 14, Garang has gone on to complete his year 10 and 12 certificates and is currently studying for his Advanced Diploma in Sport and Recreation Management at the Australian Business Academy. Garang is the President and Head Coach of Eagles Sports Association, a basketball association for Sudanese girls and boys in Canberra, of which he was a founder. Garang also volunteers at his local church community and the Salvation Army in Queanbeyan, and is described by his nominator as a role model to other young people.

Image above: CEO Cheryl Pollard and award winner, Garang Kuer Bul

Re-induction

Tandem will be holding a series of re-induction sessions for all Support Workers in early March 2012. Sessions will be spread over the course of a week, and each will run for 2 hours. These sessions are designed to be a refresher of key Policies & Procedures. This is a great opportunity to come in and meet Tandem staff and ask any questions you might have.

Work Experience

We were fortunate to have Donna Figgis, a student from the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT), complete her industry placement at Tandem during November. Donna is completing her Certificate III in Disability at CIT and is looking forward to becoming a Support Worker. Donna spent a lot of time working at Tandem House and in the office. Tandem is committed to assisting community sector students by providing work experience opportunities and work placement assistance.

Safe driving

Tandem, in conjunction with Ablaze Total Solutions, will be conducting a series of safe driving courses in 2012. The course runs for 2 hours and all support workers are encouraged to take part. Please contact your coordinator to register your interest.

2012 Training Calendar

Keep an eye out on our website for the 2012 Training Calendar. It will detail all Support Worker training and professional development opportunities in the new year.



In the Community



In October, Tandem joined with Kokoloco Dance Studio to support National Mental Health Week (9–15 October 2011). To promote good mental health, exercise, and wellbeing, Tandem presented a free Zumba latin fitness class, with the help of instructors Mario and Kate from Kokoloco (pictured above).

Tandem's Zumba Class was a great success, and was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.



It was an exciting time for all of Canberra, when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and Duke of Edinburgh Prince Phillip visited the National Capital. Two lucky

Tandem staff, Kelly Grimmond and Ann Murphy caught a glimpse of the royal couple, on their boat ride to Floriade via Lake Burley Griffin (pictured).



Congratulations to our Board Member Mark Vergano, Chief Executive of Cricket ACT for his organisation's success at the Chief Minister's Inclusion Awards in November 2011. Cricket ACT received the Chief Minister's Award for Excellence. Our congratulations to all involved.

HESTA

As a community service provider, HESTA is here to help support you.

With more than:

- 750,000 members
- 100,000 employers; and
- \$18 billion in assets

As an industry super fund, HESTA is run only to benefit members – not to make profits from them. Unlike many retail funds, HESTA doesn't pay commissions to financial advisers, and is committed to working closely with our industry, bringing more than 20 years experience in health and community services super as well as financial, education and advice services.

Founded in 1987, HESTA (Health Employees Superannuation Trust Australia) has grown into the leading super fund for the health and community services industry. Run by a board of 14 Trustee Directors made up of equal numbers appointed by industry employer and employee organisations, HESTA is a regulated industry super fund open to anyone eligible for super.

For more information about HESTA's range of Superannuation and other services, go to www.hesta.com.au or free call **1800 813 327**.



Ariette Singer poses in her office with her book, 'Emotionally Unqualified'.

Author's note

This poem is from my play, based on my book of poetry 'Emotionally Qualified!'

The play deals with my chronic illnesses Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME/CFS) and Multi Chemical Sensitivities (MCS). When exposed to chemicals (through inhalation), my whole body, including brain, suffers severe painful and disabling symptoms – for up to 10 days.

I aim to make the public aware of how the MCS and ME/CFS sufferers are isolated from the world due to their allergies to widely used chemicals. How they become dysfunctional – mentally and physically – for days.

If the public will learn how their personal products are affecting the person sitting next to them in the bus, or standing in a queue at the post office – or any public place, then I will be gratified that my play's message has reached at least some understanding and sympathetic people.

Your Voice

Thought Traffic Control

OK. Let's get started! Let's sort you out.
 Good thoughts – to the right, please! Bad – to the left!
 Unfinished thoughts – right here, in groups of three.
 Hey! Don't rush around in circles! Focus, please!

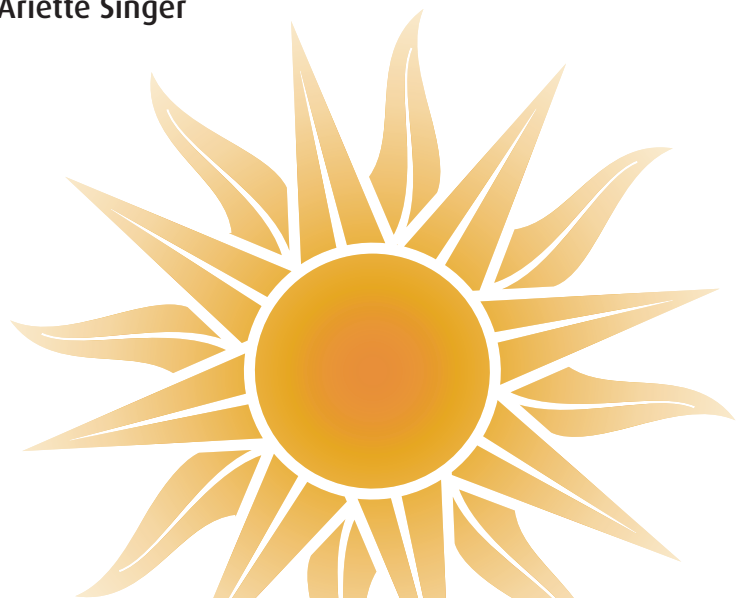
There are no speed limits on my 'mental highways'.
 No double lines, no irritating traffic lights,
 And certainly, no camera surveillance!
 Quite a democracy, initially, for all my thoughts;
 Humorous, critical, useful, whimsical, dull or bright –
 All thoughts are given mind-space, with no time limits
 Dictating, how long they are allowed to occupy my mind.

When, sometimes, inferior or alien thoughts invade,
 And are not as warmly welcomed with my open mind –
 With time, they too get scrutinised and 'classified'.

Some thoughts can never leave me, and some are such
 That, willingly, I would ever want to let them go –
 They'll cling and age with me – keep me good company!
 A bunch of these, I wish, would get better organised,
 And have the decency to let me sleep at night!
 Some thoughts are too slow, persisting, or too fleeting,
 At other times, it's quantity, not quality, alas...
 And it is a necessary periodic chore to sort them – fast!
 So I can put my mind to rest, or use it for a better task.

Stay close in groups, please! Don't get lost!
 Especially, the good ones! And you, the idiotic kind –
 Shame on you! Why do you waste my precious time?
 How dare you enter, and 'pollute' my mind?
 Who sends you? Where do you come from? How?
 One day, when I will finally get well, I'll know
 How to 'arrest' you, and control you – from the start!
 So only positive, productive and most useful kind
 Will have a permanent 'green light' to roam in my mind!

Ariette Singer



A showcase example of support

“Tandem and other service providers are helping us to develop a new support model for my son Peter and his flatmate Adam’s house in Kambah (pictured). It’s a model designed to develop their potential, increase their independence and provide happy and fulfilling lives – and it’s a model where Tandem is an important player.

Peter is 30 and lives with Autism. Adam, Peter’s housemate, is 37, and has a moderate intellectual disability with OCD and epilepsy. The pair have been house sharing for two years.

So how does it work?

Firstly, it’s not rocket science, but it requires parents who are committed to providing the best lifestyle possible for their sons and daughters. We want the support to be an integrated part of their lives – not just a person filling a shift.

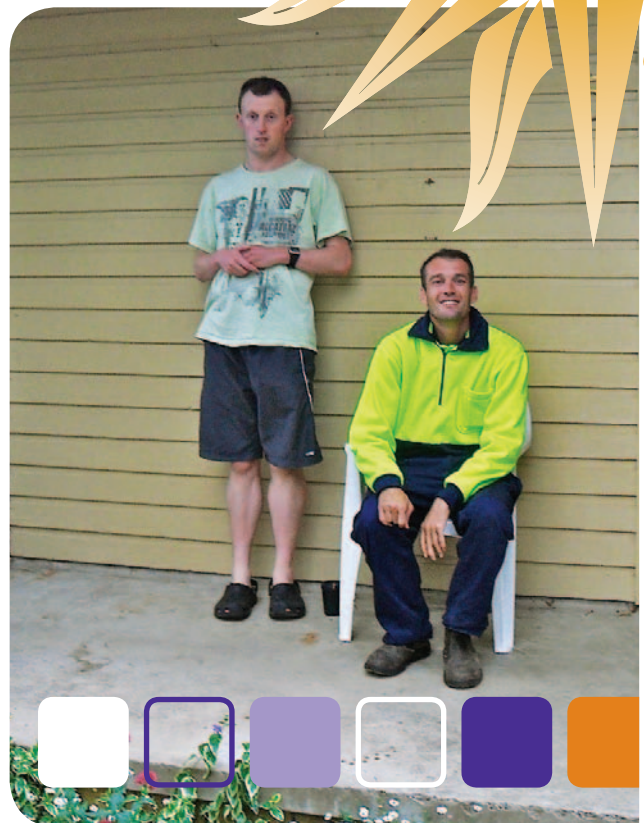
The appointment of a house coordinator about 12 months ago (via Disability ACT funding) was an important first step. It takes some of the responsibility for dealing with support organisations and managing the house, away from the families. Our coordinator, Frances Kravec from House With No Steps has helped us develop our support model as well as the ‘Essential Lifestyle’ plans for each lad which are integral to their aspirations – and our goals – for their development. These plans outline their interests and their needs, their likes and their dislikes, in plain, easy-to-understand language. We have shared these plans widely because we want everyone involved to understand our support philosophy and ‘buy in’ to making it happen.

Tandem’s role is evolving. We have shared our ‘Essential Lifestyle’ plans with each support person and encouraged them to be part of our ‘community’ – a part of our team. By ‘cobbling’ together hours from various sources we now have access to support each evening, which is used as a time for learning – how to prepare a meal, set the table and clear up afterwards, for washing clothes and ironing them for the next day, making lunches and for getting properly prepared for bedtime. All this supervised and facilitated by support workers, not done by them! That’s not all – there are games of pool, watering the garden and walks in the local area. On Sundays the lads take turns in doing the weekly shopping with a Tandem worker. All the while Peter and Adam are encouraged to make their own choices!

Our house is a work in progress and there are still challenges ahead. Tandem and other service providers are embracing and adapting to these challenges and we will look to them to find and supply the kind of support we need.

Not everyone will be suited to our model but some will. For the workers it offers the chance to engage in activities with clients, to teach them new skills, to watch them develop and give them opportunities for the kind of varied and interesting life we ourselves take for granted. For our lads it provides them with a good life where they work, enjoy the company of others, participate in activities outside the home that they love and contribute towards the home.”

John Thorn



Tandem’s CEO, Cheryl Pollard, has enthusiastically endorsed our model and is keen to foster and develop it as part of Tandem’s support services.



Sponsors and Donors

Tandem would like to thank our generous sponsors and government funding partners for their ongoing support:

- DLA Piper
- DECCA
- Zurich Insurance Ltd.
- The Lidia Perin Foundation
- Ms Jayne Suitor
- Lions Club of Gungahlin
- Canberra Toyota
- Capital Insurance Brokers
- Home and Community Care
- Mental Health ACT
- ACT Health Directorate
- ACT Community Services Directorate
- Department of Veterans Affairs

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After Hours Emergency Contacts

Adult Program
0411 480 597
Children/Young Person's Program
0413 459 183

Coming Up

School Holiday and After School Programs Open

There are still spaces available in both Tandem's School Holiday and After School programs.

Based at Tandem House in Kambah, Tandem offers a fun, interactive, friendly and inclusive program for students with disabilities. Some transport is available. Contact the office on **6287 2870** for details and to book your place.

Heart Moves is Coming To Tandem

With the support of ACT Health and the Heart Foundation, Tandem will soon be offering Heart Moves falls prevention classes and information to Tandem Clients, carers, families and Support Workers over the age of 55.

Call the office to register your interest in this exciting, fun and new health and wellbeing initiative.

Department of Veterans Affairs Tender Success

Tandem Respite Inc (Tandem) has been contracted to provide support to the veteran community of the ACT through the Department of Veterans' Affairs Veterans' Home Care (VHC) Program.

The VHC Program assists those veterans and war widows/widowers who wish to continue living at home, but who need a small amount of practical help. Tandem provides the following support services to VHC clients: domestic assistance, personal care and respite care.

To determine eligibility, all veterans and war widows/widowers should contact their VHC assessment agency on **1300 550 450** for an assessment.