

SPOUSE SUPPORT GROUP

For Partners of Adults with Asperger's Syndrome

Growth



Recovery

Advocacy

Support for

Partners (& ex-partners)

“Mutual acknowledgement and understanding
of the Asperger marriage experience”

NEWSLETTER – July 2005

PLEASE PROVIDE FEEDBACK as requested below *

With 144 names now on our contact list, we need to ask everyone who receives this newsletter to please provide us with some simple feedback so that we can be aware of the specific interests and support needs represented within our group. There is also a possibility that sub-groups or satellite groups could be formed depending on what people's situations are and where they live. Responses can be sent by the following means:

Email: carol.grigg@bigpond.com or cgr29373@bigpond.net.au

Mail: PO Box 57 Macarthur Square LPO,
MACARTHUR NSW 2560 (this is a new postal address)

Phone: 0408 817 828

SMS: 0408 817 828 (please give name)

**** Please respond to the following questions:***

- 1) Would you like to continue receiving Newsletters and Flyers about meetings and events?
(ie Remain on the contact list.)
- 2) Briefly, what is your situation/interest? (AS may just be suspected, not necessarily diagnosed)
 - a) Partner/ex-partner
 - b) Adult with Asperger's Syndrome
 - c) Parent/s of adult child with Asperger's Syndrome
 - d) Other. Please describe.
- 3) What is your location? Suburb/town. (city/region/state if country or interstate)
- 4) Would you be interested in having contact with others on our list who may live near you?
(I will contact you before giving your details to anyone)

- 5) If you have Asperger's Syndrome are you interested in meeting others with Asperger's Syndrome?
- 6) If you have an adult child with Asperger's Syndrome, are you interested in speaking with or meeting others who also have an adult child with AS? And would your child be likely to want to meet others with AS?
- 7) If you're receiving this by post, is there an email address we can use instead?
- 8) Are you willing to speak to someone from the media if we're approached for articles or documentaries?

Thank you for your attention.

A VERY BIG THANK YOU for all the donations that have come in since our last newsletter, amounting to several hundred dollars. This has certainly relieved some anxiety and enabled purchase of more stamps, ink, paper and envelopes, etc.
Thank you

THANK YOU TOO to those who have sent cards and notes expressing appreciation for the support that GRASP has been providing and the difference the information is making. The personal love and appreciation you send helps to encourage and support me too and means a lot.

Exciting news from GRASP – Hopefully in our next Newsletter we will be able to announce that our group has incorporated as a not-for-profit association. Unfortunately this will involve a change of name as the name "GRASP" has already been claimed by an organisation in the USA that is run by and for people with Asperger's Syndrome and they have a strong web presence and intentions of expanding into Australia. Although I am negotiating good communications with this group, it would obviously be an undesirable conflict of interest and confusion for us to continue with the name GRASP. ☹️☹️ I'm sure you will like our new name, although I would like to save the announcement until I receive the paperwork back from the Office of Fair Trading. We have formed a committee and will announce all relevant details soon. Needless to say, further donations will continue to be **very-welcome**.

Do you need more information?

For those partners who have been on our list for some time, it may be that we have more recent helpful information about Asperger's Syndrome and relationship strategies that you have not been able to take advantage of yet. We have lists on *suggested* ways to manage Aspie relationships, *suggested* ways to avoid melt-downs, and other information sheets that help to understand what's going on in the Aspie way of thinking. These notes have become available through the psychologists that have spoken at our meetings. Please let me know if you feel you could use this kind of help still.

SMH NEWSPAPER ARTICLE – AMAZING IMPACT

On Thursday 9 June 2005, the Sydney Morning Herald included an article on Asperger's Syndrome in their Health & Science liftout. The article was written by freelance journalist Fran Molloy and the title of the article was "A Syndrome for Success". The front page of the Herald contained a small highlighted box with the words "What Mozart, Andy Warhol & Bill Gates all have in common", with reference to the Health & Science liftout. On the front page of the liftout there were four famous faces in vivid colour with the words "What diagnosis could these famous faces share?" The article was on page 4 & 5 of the liftout, and the first paragraph begins ... "People with Asperger's Syndrome – a developmental disorder on the autistic spectrum – may seem socially odd and they may have difficult relationships with their partners, children and parents, but they're in good company. Director Steven Spielberg has been diagnosed with AS. Einstein probably had it.", etc, and the main focus of the article was the difference that a diagnosis can make. The article contained many quotes from various people involved with Asperger's Syndrome, including a couple of words said by me. Our own special couple Nola & Peter Norris were willing to be interviewed and have their photo taken for the article and shared some of their own personal experiences. Our gratitude and applause go to both of you!

Although the article was written from a fairly positive perspective, even beginning with a celebrity touch, it was very factual and very informative. It is my opinion that because of the approach Fran took, many partners and even people with possible traits of Asperger's Syndrome have been prepared to identify with it and seek information or help. The article is presented in such a professional way that doctors and those in the help professions would be sure to read with interest. I believe articles such as this can probably do more to educate the community, inform professionals and support our cause than articles that present Asperger's Syndrome from a very negative, desperate angle.

How did this article affect us? Our contact details were included at the bottom of the article and I have received approximately **40 NEW ENQUIRIES** as a result, and they continue to come in! The majority of these enquiries were from partners, like ourselves, but a handful of people with suspected AS traits also enquired as well and, as some of them will also be receiving this edition of our newsletter, we want them to know that we commend them for their honesty and courage in seeking help. So many of the partners on our list just long for their own Asperger partners to show this kind of interest and co-operation in assisting their own relationships. There were also a significant number of enquiries from couples who have an adult child or other family member with possible AS.

Also, Tony Attwood was interviewed on ABC Classic FM this week. Worth listening to. www.abc.net.au/classic/throsby/ then scroll down to entry for Monday 25 July 2005.

Sympathetic Psychologists

For those who are looking for a psychologist I recently phoned a number of new names I was given by Aspect (formerly Autism Assoc) to speak with them personally and gauge their attitude towards AS and how it affects relationships. Pleasingly, I have added a further three to the three we are already privileged to be able to refer to. Locations are Wahroonga, Mosman, Sutherland, Burwood/Ingleburn & Nowra. The 6th is at Balmain but his experience is mainly with adolescent boys though he is very interested in learning about adults. Contact me if you would like any details. If you can recommend a good professional anywhere in Australia, please let us know.

Upcoming Events

GRASP - Saturday 6 August – next meeting. Come and be part of our warm and supportive group time.

Speakers will be coming to September, October & November meetings – details soon

Also, Sunday 23 October – please reserve date in diary for our first major event. Chris & Gisela Slater-Walker (authors of "An Asperger Marriage") are coming to Sydney and will speak to partners and couples. Roger Meyer an adult with AS will be speaking on Monday 24 October to wider audience. More information to come soon.

Other Groups Advertising:

Saturday 6 August, 1pm-4pm. Richmond Support Group. There may still be time to register to hear Tony Attwood at Richmond. Workshop on 17+ Post School Options & Adult Life. Contact 0425 380 575. \$50.

Wednesday 10 August, Southern Suburbs Autism Support Group & Sutherland Shire Learning Difficulties Support Group Inc holding Information forum & Expo at Sutherland where Wendy Lawson will be speaking. Focus is on those with children with Autism/Asperger's Syndrome. 9545 1505 or email: autismgroup@optusnet.com.au

Tuesday 16 August. Free workshop at 2 Astral Drive, Doonside for parents & carers who have an Asperger teen in highschool. Contact Family Development Services Inc on 9831 5687.

Tuesday 13 September. Learning Difficulties & Aspergers Support Group Workshop on "Alternative Therapies", also at 2 Astral Drive, Doonside. Contact Family Development Services Inc on 9831 5687.

Help or Advice needed

If anyone on this list has any contacts or skills in event management, venue hire, catering, printing, advertising, accounting, other support groups, etc, and could offer your services or helpful information, could you please let me know.

We may be grateful of your assistance very soon.

*GRASP meets at Parramatta RSL Club, Lachlan Room
1st Saturday of every month, 2pm – 5pm
Cnr Macquarie & O'Connell Streets, Parramatta
Free parking Macquarie Street, opposite Club main doors*

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MACARTHUR NSW 2560 (Aus)
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Please note the change of Postal Address and also addition of new email address.