

Pave the Way Newsletter

July 2010

What do we mean when we talk about safeguarding?

Inside this Issue

- 1 What do we mean when we talk about safeguarding?
- 2 Staff News
- 2 Special Disability Trusts
- 2 Community Living Initiative
- 3 Safeguarding – new resources on our website
- 4 Contact Us
- 4 Upcoming Events

A safeguarding mentality means being aware of possible risks, but not getting in the way of an individual's dream and goals".
 ("Addressing personal vulnerability through planning" – Community Living, British Columbia)

In previous newsletters Pave the Way has written about some of the words and concepts we use when talking with families about visioning and planning. This edition explores the notion of **safeguarding**.

Pave the Way believes that safeguarding is fundamentally about protecting and maintaining **all** our efforts towards creating a rich, meaningful life for our family member with a disability no matter where they are living or what they do in their life. In that sense it is not solely about issues of personal safety, important and necessary as they are. By having this broader understanding of safeguarding we not only strive to keep the person "safe on the ground" but also strive to keep "alive" the bigger picture aspects of their life. These will differ for each family but vital ones include the developing and articulating of a vision for our family member; regular planning and review; appreciating the need for fun and for creative, spiritual and sexual expression; creating and maintaining support networks; providing and sustaining opportunities for connections and natural relationships to flourish by being in those places and spaces where people live, work, play; maintaining health and physical well being. In other words, all those elements that embrace a *whole-of-life* approach and which work to keep a person safe through having a life connected with others.

These two levels of safeguarding: the practical, safety level and the bigger picture, whole-of-life level need to be kept in balance. The practical aspects of day to day living and personal safety for our family member often take precedence simply because they are such overriding, ever present concerns, but they can distract us from the harder tasks of facing our fears and stepping out into the unknown. If we operate only out of this level of 'keeping safe' we may limit those very opportunities and relationships that will ensure both a safe and meaningful life for our family member. Planning with trusted others can help in thinking through practical strategies that minimise potential risks without limiting life's possibilities.

Safeguarding then, is not about avoiding risks for the sake of personal safety and peace of mind. It is about a long term strategy of intentionally gathering around you people, ideas, support and practices that will guide and assist you to create and sustain your vision for a rich and meaningful life in the long term. This is what will ensure a good and safe life for your family member...this is what must be safeguarded.

To talk about any of the ideas in this article, please contact Pave the Way on (07) 3291 5800 or 1300 554 402 or by email pavetheway@pavetheway.org.au

News

Staff News

We are sad to announce that Sharon Bourke is leaving her role with Pave the Way after 7 years with the team. Sharon has been instrumental in the development of the work of Pave the Way and is well known to many families through her work in Brisbane and regional Queensland. We will miss her presence on the team but wish her well for her new role and for this new opportunity to use her knowledge and experience to continue to work with families to create positive lives for people with disabilities.

Sharon writes:

After 7 years with Pave the Way, I am leaving to take up the position of Local Area Co-ordinator in the Gympie district at the end of June. It has been a difficult decision, but family commitments have meant that it is time to move back to my home town. My position with Pave the Way has provided me with many wonderful experiences. What an absolute privilege it has been to work with families who are striving to safeguard the lives of their sons and daughters into the future. I would like to thank those many people who have supported my work over the past 7 years and all those people who are "the Mamre community", who have welcomed and supported me throughout the years. I feel privileged to have worked alongside, and been welcomed into, the lives of many families throughout Queensland. I will cherish the conversations, the lessons and experiences from families, their friends, allies and neighbours. These are gifts that enrich my life and my work. I am sure our paths will cross in the future.

Special Disability Trusts

In the recent Federal Budget, some changes to the Special Disability Trust provisions were announced. Contact Pave the Way for further information or ask to speak to Jeremy Ward at the Pave the Way office.

Community Living Initiative.

This new initiative from the Department of Communities is designed to provide assistance for people with disability to live in their own homes in the community. Disability Services is encouraging people who have a clear vision for their future and who have been actively involved in planning for this, to apply for this funding. Applications can be submitted at any time. On its website, Disability Services has listed Pave the Way as an organisation that can support individuals and their families to plan and set goals. There have been some misunderstandings about what this means for families. Pave the Way does not have a role in developing a plan for the purpose of receiving funding. However, if families are interested in engaging in whole of life, long term planning as a safeguarding strategy for their son or daughter, we are pleased to offer support through the thinking that is involved. For some families this long term planning has meant that they have been ready to apply for the Community Living Initiative.

For more information about the Community Living Initiative contact Ruth Whereat on 3235 9669 or via the website: <http://www.disability.qld.gov.au/support-services/community-living-initiative/>

Pave the Way is happy to talk with families at any time about any of the ideas in this newsletter or about any other information that may help with your own safeguarding strategies.

Safeguarding – new resources on our website

Strategies for keeping people safe~ Involving Others.

One of the most important aspects of planning for a good and safe life for our family member is to involve trusted others in our thinking and planning. To assist families to think about how to involve others, Pave the Way has updated the website under the **Working with Families** section.

This section includes ideas about:

- sharing important verbal and written information with trusted others;
- ensuring that the people we ask to be involved in financial and legal matters understand and support our vision for our family member;
- involving others in our planning, either informally through individual conversations or more formally, through a facilitated planning session;
- involving trusted others by inviting them to be involved in developing a support circle around our family member.

This new section of the website also includes an annotated list of resources on the topic of support circles including books, articles, DVDs and links to other websites of interest.

Information for families regarding developing and maintaining a support circle is a new document based on what Pave the Way has learnt from the many families, facilitators and circle members that we have worked with over the past 6 years. This document includes some suggestions about how to organize circle meetings, ideas about note taking and some trouble shooting ideas for some of the more common stumbling blocks, to name a few.

Sarah's Support Circle is a new story on the website. Jane Hudson gives a regional perspective on how her family overcame significant geographical challenges to have regular circle support meetings.

Addressing Personal Vulnerability Through Planning. This new article on the website is an easy to read guide to understanding the notion of safeguarding. It includes stories and practical strategies that can be used when planning with a "safeguarding mentality". New articles by Michael Kendrick and Ian Boardman are also on the topic of safeguarding.

The **Document of Personal Information** has been updated to include a format in Microsoft Word that families can use to create their own personalized document online. Families are encouraged to use this resource as a guide only as personal information is more compelling when it reflects the person's own wishes, story and culture.

If you are unable to access the website, please contact the office for a copy of these resources

"The best way for an individual to be safe is to have family, friends and other people in their lives that know and care about them." ("Addressing personal vulnerability through planning" – Community Living, British Columbia)

Pave the Way

Pave the Way assists families throughout Queensland to clarify their vision for their family member with a disability and to plan to implement that vision. We encourage planning which is vision driven, 'whole of life', developmental, outside service planning and which safeguards family members in the long term. We believe it is other people who keep people safe and support the development of personal networks, including Support Circles.

Contact Us

Please contact us if you would like to be on our mailing list, or would like information or assistance developing a vision and plan or developing a support circle or similar network. If you are part of a group of families and would like us to come and talk about these issues, let us know.

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Upcoming Events

Workshops

Planning for Now, Tomorrow and the Future

Mt Gravatt 16 July 2010
Newmarket 29 August 2010

Developing a Vision and a Plan

Coolum 22 – 24 October 2010

Documenting Personal Information for your Family Member

Stanthorpe 13, 23 or 30 July 2010 (to be advised)

Building Lifelong Supports & Safeguards

Robina, Gold Coast 14 July 2010



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To book for a workshop, or to contact Julie van Oosten regarding regional visits, please contact Pave the Way, phone (07) 3291 5800 or 1300 554 402.

You can also view the Workshop and Events Calendar online at www.pavetheway.org.au/home/workshop-calendar.php.