

DHS Group Home in Pascoe Vale, Victoria

"Active Support in Action!"

DHS Consumer Newsletter, Issue 17, November 2009 - the latest
"The Department is not telling the full story!" - see LISA Comment

It has been several months since Gary Radler (Positive Behaviour Support project) commenced training a team of staff from a group home in Pascoe Vale, and what a difference this opportunity has made in the lives of the six men who live there. [http://www.gradler.com.au/Positive_Behaviour_Support_Services/Welcome.html]

Although the team had been engaging the residents in many activities, the training gave the staff an opportunity to look at what we were doing and how we could do it better.

A number of the guys now make their own breakfast, lunches, snacks, and help with the washing and drying of dishes and clean up.

Wednesday night is pizza and pasta night. Three guys are supported to go out for dinner and three stay home. The guys who stay at home are encouraged to make their own pizza with a variety of toppings and pre made bases.

Although the guys find it actually make it onto the bases for an enjoyable meal. It is unlikely that our take over bid on Pizza Hut will occur in the near future but it's definitely a winner with smiles and full tummies all round.

Lawn mowing is another activity of choice mower out and started than there is a struggle over who gets to push the lawn mower first. Staff keep a close eye on the proceedings to ensure the activity is carried out safely.

A range of activities and games have been purchased to challenge and stimulate the guys in between community based activities. Our second lounge that was with as they choose. Jigsaw puzzles are a hit with one resident who has demonstrated an uncanny ability to complete puzzles in mind blowing times even when several puzzles are mixed together.

For the guys there has been a significant decrease in behaviours of concern evidenced by reductions in medication and use of PRN and more over a happier environment for those living and working here.

Who knows where we will end up but the journey is certainly fun.

LISA Comment: Most of the residents, all high support needs, of this brand new group home came from the closure of an old group home in Preston, where the service level and quality was shocking for most of its eleven year existence.

The old place finally ripped itself apart when the department, without consultation with parents or direct care staff, introduced a totally incompatible sixth client who was excessively destructive to sitting residents, the staff and the home.

Having devastated the lives of the sitting residents and staff at the old place, the department moved the hot-bed-situation to the brand new home where the devastation by the incompatible client continued.

Despite protests from parents and staff, the department (Client Services) categorically refused to remove the incompatible client until he did serious injuries to a sitting resident and the parents got together with legal support.

Ongoing meetings with, and pressure from the united parent group and their legal support, saw the department buying its way out with equipment and a market place agency to provide "Active Support/Person Centred Active Support (PCAS)".

In total contrast, and despite repeated meetings with the department over the eleven year existence of the old group home in Preston, the parents got nowhere in asking that their family member receive quality of life care through "PCAS" or similar interaction, developmental and social activities. Parents were told, "We have no time for all that rubbish, we are too busy managing behaviours and attending to basic house chores!"

This, and the Luke Modra story, demonstrates the department's reactive and inconsistent service provision, where it uses its massive money bag to buy its way, not manage its way.

Tony & Heather Tregale

LIFESTYLE IN SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION (LISA) INC.

Tel: 03-9434-3810: Email: vk3qq@optusnet.com.au

Web: www.lisainc.com.au : www.lisa-aus.blogspot.com