

NCNS NEWSLETTER

GOLDEN OLDIES LEARNT ABOUT FIRE SAFETY WITH FIRE NSW & SPENT TIME WITH 2 CHEEKY COCKATEILS RICK & MORTY

The past month at Golden Oldies, we welcomed four new members and hosted a special home safety session with Fire NSW, Regentville! It's been a fantastic time building friendships and socialising, including a scenic bus trip with Active Care Network to Blackheath and Katoomba. The group enjoyed a lovely visit to Gardner's Inn and took in some stunning lookouts along the way.

Two of our South Penrith staff, Jerry and Lisa also conducted a practice fire drill with the Golden Oldies. We discussed the fire drill process, potential emergencies, and how we would safely evacuate the building. Fire NSW joined us to talk about home fire safety, making the session both educational and helpful. We look forward to continuing these discussions and working on home safety plans together in the coming months.

"It's so important to stay prepared. The drill today really helped everyone understand the importance of knowing how to react in an emergency," said Jerry, our WHS representative.

Did you know Fire NSW offers free templates for creating home escape plans? They're easy to access and a great way to ensure your household is prepared in an emergency! We're also planning to help the group create personal evacuation and safety plans for home and link them to their local fire stations for smoke alarm checks. You can explore more fire safety resources here: www.fire.nsw.gov.au/page.php?id=9225



An amazing moment that we enjoyed with Golden Oldies was planned spontaneously by Community Worker, Jerry.

'Throughout my time at NCNS, spending over 100 hours with the Golden Oldies group, I have never witnessed such a positive outcome as I did during the recent bird show and tell event. Originally, this was a last-minute idea to replace a planned Bunnings Workshop, but it turned into something truly special.

What made the experience even more meaningful was that I was able to involve my brother, who enjoyed connecting with the community and giving his time to help. He even made a bird stand at home that morning (in 20mins) to make the show and tell easier for the group. Sharing something personal and important with the group, reflected the friendships I've built with many of them. This event wasn't just about bringing joy to the participants, but also about extending my own sense of community with them, which I believe helped strengthen the rapport we've developed.

The smiles were genuine, the joy was real, and seeing participants, many of whom are in their 60s to 90s, experience something new was incredibly rewarding. One of the highlights was Linda, who had a bird perched on each finger—Rick and Morty—a moment that brought laughter and light-hearted fun to the group.





It was also a special moment for Mary, who has been a member of the group since the early days and is slowly becoming blind. Initially hesitant, with some gentle encouragement and guidance toward the bird, Mary ended up petting Rick, who enjoyed a little scratch behind the head. It was heartwarming to see the connection between them.

I noticed the event was especially meaningful for a few of our members who have Alzheimer's and Dementia, often coming back to the birds forgetting they had a turn, but we always accommodate these. Studies have shown that interactions with animals can be beneficial for cognitive health, helping to boost mood and memory, and I try to keep this in mind with activities, so they have multiple purposes for the group. It was heartwarming to see them so engaged with Rick and Morty, creating moments of joy and connection that are crucial for maintaining cognitive health.

Seeing the joy and connection within the group reminds me why this work is so important, both for the participants and for me.'

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A FFT-CW PRACTITIONER



At FFT, like many teams, we start our day with coffee! Either from across the road at the Penrith Westfield or from Sara's plunger (never instant – we don't stand for this). We work within the busy Department of Communities and Justice Community Service Centre (DCJ CSC) so there's plenty of folks to greet on arrival. We might chat with a caseworker about a recent referral in the kitchen or around the office.

If we're working with toddlers or bubs or having a parent-only session, we hit the road early. Otherwise, we're at our desks writing up notes and therapy plans during the day. We also might use this time to catch up with Kelly, our Program Manager, for direction and guidance around a particular family.

On Fridays, we catch up as a whole team for group supervision.

Sometimes we escape the fluorescent lights and meet on the roof top of our building and chat against the backdrop of the stunning Blue Mountains. This is one of the perks of working in Penrith, I often look towards the Mountains as I drive and contemplate 'the bigger picture'. They offer me perspective when I'm stuck on minor details.

Many of our families include older kids and teens, so most therapy sessions start after school is out. This is when the 'magic' happens. FFT sessions are focused on process, rather than content. Our most powerful tool is observation. So, we're less focused on what people say and more how they say it, and how family members react and respond to each other.

Families have such creative and effective ways of moving through dark times; our job is to draw out and develop their internal strengths. Our goal is to shift families into safer ways of being together, so as therapy moves forward, we continue to observe, looking for small positive changes. Every session and family look a bit different, so no day is ever the same!

Written by Monica Purcell,
Family Practitioner - FFT-CW Team



FUNCTIONAL FAMILY THERAPY-CHILD WELFARE (FFT-CW)- FROM A FAMILY PERSPECTIVE

Our family was referred to Nepean Community and Neighbourhood Services (NCNS) for Functional Family Therapy (FFT) following a few meetings with the Department of Community and Justice (DCJ). As a single parent I'm doing my best to raise my children the old school way where they're taught morals and values, the ones where you say please and thank you, you help others or offer your seat to an elderly person or a pregnant lady and you earn respect instead of thinking it's an entitlement. My children rarely have access to devices, they read books, play outside and actually communicate with people in person or on the phone and while I wasn't raising the perfectly obedient children I, like most parents plan to have, I thought I was doing a pretty good job so when therapy was suggested I figured 'why not, it can't hurt'. Prior to that I'd never heard of NCNS or FFT.

Craig was our therapist and having a stranger come into your home to observe your parenting is really daunting but he put us at ease quickly. We laughed, I cried, we told stories and jokes but most importantly we were all honest, we owned our mistakes, celebrated our achievements and we never felt judged.

Parenting is hard, especially in this day and age, and even though you think you're doing it right there will be times where you're unsuccessful and that's OK. FFT isn't easy but it teaches you alternate ways to parent that are positive and effective.

I would recommend trying FFT because it might give you other ways of parenting that you hadn't considered.

LOTS OF EXCITING THINGS HAVE BEEN HAPPENING AT OUR KOOLY CENTRE & GREAT NEW PROGRAMS STARTING IN TERM 4

Over the last few months Kooly has been holding a Community BBQ each fortnight which has seen great attendance. This community BBQ is open to everyone from the local area to enjoy a feed and a yarn together. Through these get togethers, we would love to find out from the community what they would like to see happening at Kooly. All community is welcome to come along to the centre whether you need help sending emails or referrals while to centre specialises in Aboriginal Programs. Nepean Community & Neighbourhood Services is committed to reconciliation, and we think it is important for the whole community to know that they are welcome to the centre.

The Kooly outreach days have been going well with numbers of 80-100 community members coming through. We would like to remind the community that Western Sydney Legal Service and Centrelink are open to all community members so come along if you would like to speak to those services.

Our Men's group has increased in attendance and during September, our Aboriginal Men's Group spent time together at La Parouse and while they were there, they connected with an Elder who had lived there for 70 years. The Elder ended up joining us for a feed and a yarn, then spent the morning with the group which was a wonderful and warm welcome for all of the men. It really was a beautiful day, blessed with great weather with the sun shining, the water a beautiful temperature for everyone to have a swim which was such a treat!



Ben from our Closing the Gap team was our bus driver for the day, so thank you to the Closing the Gap team for lending him to us for the day. The men enjoyed a delicious BBQ by the cliff/waterside creating a spectacular view. It was a fantastic day for the Aboriginal Men's Group.

The Koori Cuppa's Women's Group celebrated their last group of term 3, doing weaving with Meggan which was a nice treat for the group and all the women really enjoyed this.



In Term 4, Kooly will be starting to develop a community garden with some donations generously given to us from Bunnings. If this is something you would love to be a part of, please chat with the staff at the centre. We are looking for community members to join us in creating and developing the community garden.

We would love to see community members; families and we need some diggers and muscle to help start the garden. The community garden will be running during Tuesdays all day, each week so we would love to see you join us. All community is welcome to come along.

We will be starting the Sassy Sista's program within the local schools from 21st October 2024. Sassy Sista's is a cultural program for young girls to learn about Country, Bush Tucker, Art and Weaving/ Beading. We are excited to see how this program progresses.

Another amazing program that will be starting in Term 4 at Kooly is the Physical & Mental Resilience with GKR Karate Female Instructors. This program is an exclusive woman-only physical and mental resilience seminar where women will learn essential techniques to protect themselves and gain confidence in any situation. These sessions are designed to equip women with the skills and mindset to feel safe and secure. This activity will be running thanks to the Penrith City Council and GKR Karate so thank you so much to them for allowing us to run this great program and we are looking forward to seeing the women build their confidence and resilience throughout the term.

For all NCNS Activities please check out our [Term 4 Activity Directory](#).

CRANEBROOK HEALTHY PET DAY

Check out photos from the Cranebrook Healthy Pet Day, a great initiative for the Cranebrook community to bring their fur babies along for a free health check and receive some great freebies such as dog food, collars, dog beds and more!



FEATURED

TERM 4 ACTIVITY DIRECTORY



Physical & Mental Resilience

with GKR Karate Female Instructors



KOOLY COMMUNITY

BBQ



KOOLYANGARRA GOOD SERVICE MOB & SERVICES DAY

10AM - 2PM WEDNESDAY 27TH NOVEMBER 2024



ADHD Families Learning Together - Term 4 2024



Circle of Security - Parenting™ - Term 4 2024



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