



Let's Start

Parent-Child Program

Let's Start Newsletter – June 2012

Welcome to Let's Start 2012!

It's been a while since our last newsletter, and a lot has been happening.

Vic-Daly

We've expanded into the Victoria-Daly Rivers Region – and after many months of workshops, meetings and other community engagement activities, we've finally delivered our first 10-week program at Daly River this term, with fantastic participation of families from both Woolianna and St Francis Xavier schools. The contribution of our local community group leader, Mary Marrar, has been integral for insight into the families and everyday functioning of the community.

Next term we will be delivering the program at Nganambala – a small community near Peppimenarti. The community does not get a lot of services for small children and are excited about trying something new – and we are looking forward to being there.

Tiwi Islands

Term 1 saw the Let's Start team back at Wurrumiyanga, with a great group of families. It was nice to see quite a few dads getting involved too. Thanks especially to our local community group leader, Kaylene Puruntatameri for hanging in there right up until the birth of her new baby – welcome Leonardo!

Our new coordinator for the Tiwi Islands, Cherie Mackley, together with local community group leader, Michelle Woody, has been busy talking to families and getting ready to deliver in Milikapiti for Term 3. Both the community and the school have been making Cherie very welcome.

The Let's Start Team

Cherie, the new Tiwi coordinator, comes with an education background, with previous experience as a school teacher in Arnhem Land, Victoria and the UK. We also have a new project officer for the Vic-Daly region, Virginie Branchut. Virginie is an anthropologist, who joins the team after several years of working in community development in the child welfare sector, also in Arnhem Land.

We welcome back to Darwin, Dr. Sarah Mares, who has been part of our team since 2010, working from Sydney. Sarah is a child and family psychiatrist with extensive experience in working with families with infants and young children and supervision of multidisciplinary teams. You may have met Sarah when she was part of the Let's Start delivery team at Pirlingimpi in 2010. Sarah's new role, based in Darwin, will include involvement in the research programs of the Centre for Child Development and Education at Menzies, as well as consultancy to the Department of Children and Families. She is looking forward to delivering Let's Start on the Tiwi Islands again this year.

We also have to say some farewells this term. Carolin Stock, who has been part of the Let's Start team on the Tiwi Islands for the past four years, will be having a break from work as she heads off on maternity leave – good luck with baby number 3, Carolin! Birgit Hallenstein, who has been working both in the Vic-Daly region and Tiwi Islands, will be leaving the team to relocate to Melbourne with her family.

For More Information

Phone (08) 8943 5034

Email letsstart@menzies.edu.au



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Congratulations to Yomei Jones, our longest standing team member, who has been with Let's Start since 2006. Yomei was recently awarded the Ryan Family Prize for her outstanding contribution to making Menzies a great place to work and helping Menzies achieve excellence.

The head of our team, Associate Professor Gary Robinson, has just been appointed to lead the development of the nation's first National Indigenous Suicide Prevention Strategy. Let's Start was originally developed on the Tiwi Islands in response to the Tiwi Health Board's concerns about the dramatic rise of suicides and the about the quality of parenting in families under stress.

Training Workshop in Wurrumiyanga – May 2012

In May we managed to get the whole team, including staff from Darwin and our local community leaders, to a training day at the Wellbeing Centre in Wurrumiyanga. Invitations were extended to anyone working with families and children. We had a great day learning about early childhood development and sharing information and interactive activities from the Let's Start program.



Let's Start Resources

We have a new flyer about Let's Start and how the program works, as well as a more detailed Information Paper which outlines the rationale behind the program. To see a copy check out our website at <http://ccde.menzies.edu.au/our-projects/lets-start>.

Thanks to everyone for making the first semester a success. Enjoy the dry season and school holidays, and we look forward to seeing you in semester two.

Contacts

Phone: (08) 8943 5043

Email: letsstart@menzies.edu.au

Mobile (Vic-Daly): 0419 976 033

Mobile (Tiwi): 0407 604 167

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