

ASPIRATION

We Will Continue To Change

The change process within the Bankstown Handicapped Children's Centre Association Inc. has only just begun.

On 1 April, 2009, we made one significant change to the Association—the name with which we trade with the community.

The name chosen by our Management Committee is Allevia (from the Latin root which means 'to relieve, to soothe, to make better, as in alleviate). Our logo says it all—'making life easier'.

In time, the legal name of the Association may also change to this new name.

It has been heartening to hear the positive responses to our new name, from our staff, our families and clients, and from the agencies we deal with in government and the community.

The next step in the change process was the upgrade to our financial systems—new computer software, new banking facilities, and new pay system. All of these changes have seen Allevia operate now with a system which reflects industry standards. The new system is more efficient and more cost effective, in a time when administrative costs need to remain viable.

So where to from here. Allevia management are plan-

ning to engage all of its employees and clients in a process of ongoing change, which will begin with a series of consultation opportunities, where each person can put forward their ideas for the organisation's future. Have that information, a plan will be formed about what will happen next. So in short, the future is not clear—we have lots of ideas, and we have lots of motivation to try some new things. But exactly what has not yet been determined.

Allevia wants its members, clients, and employees to be:

- Committed to a shared vision of the future.
- Operating from the "big picture".
- Committed to making change happen.
- Responsible for the change.
- Taking the initiative.
- Using their creative powers to their fullest potential.

Our aim is to realise dramatic and sustainable change, achieving better results, higher qualities of life, improved relationships, and increased capacity for succeeding in these turbulent times.

To achieve this we want to create workplaces and com-

munities that foster high commitment through participation. Everyone has a role in change.

We also recognise that there are many things we do which we will not change—things we do well and which all agree should not be meddled with.

So should anyone be worried about the changes which may occur in the future. We do not believe so. Everyone should be excited about the possibilities, because we firmly believe that anything is possible if we put our minds and efforts to it.

We acknowledge that effective, sustainable change can be elusive, particularly if it is not managed well. We recognise that there is often no middle ground when it comes to describing the success of a change effort—it is either very, very good, or very, very bad. The extent to which all the people involved with Allevia participate and contribute to the change effort will decide how well our change processes will go and what the outcome will be.

In short, we are in this together, so let's pull together and get on with it. The results will most certainly be very, very good for all concerned.

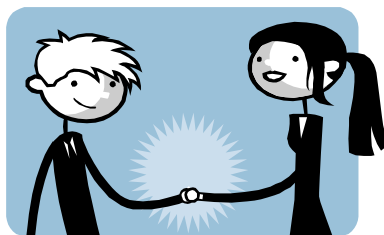
Responsibility and Respect

When our group home at Townsend Street, Condell Park moved to 66 Yanderra Street, Condell Park, it was for a few reasons.

One reason was a deep sense of community partnership and a respect for the lifestyles of our neighbours. Another was a sense of responsibility to our residents and the importance of providing them with a living space which met their needs and which was in harmony with the surrounding community.

The move also highlighted our responsibility to show respect for our residents. The staff assisted

with the moving and the arranging of each resident's personal belongings into their new bedrooms and throughout the house. Whilst going back and forth moving things the staff were stuck with where things should be placed throughout the house. One staff member posed the perfect solution to this dilemma, "Why don't we ask the men



where they want to put everything?' The men arrived home from their day program that afternoon and when the question was posed to them, they proceeded to show staff exactly where things should go. Sometimes we forget that we are visitors in our residents' homes, and as staff we assume too much with decision making responsibilities. When considering change we have an ultimate responsibility as staff to consult with our residents directly about matters which affect their lives.

Viki Moraitis (Cluster Manager)

Quality Enhancement

Allevia is committed to always enhancing the services it provides to the community and enhancing the conditions for our employees. We believe that everything can be done better—the only limits are our imaginations.

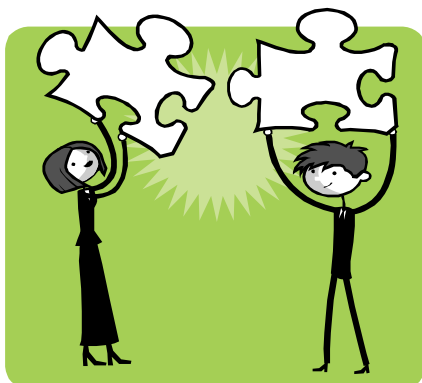
On the 4th of May, 2009, Melina Voukidis transitioned from her position as Cluster Manager to a newly formed position as the Manager Quality Enhancement.

This new role provides Allevia with the dedicated resources it needs to review and monitor its services and practices, and to continuously move forward in its quest for quality enhancement and better outcomes for our clients and employees.

Melina is currently working hard on developing a number of internal audit tools which she will use to gather information about our services and practices, and which

can then be used to drive planning for better services. She will be trialling these tools over the coming months, and we look forward to her reports and feedback.

Her first project is to look at how we support our clients to manage their medications. This includes the procedures we use for supporting clients with health professional contact, the records we keep, and the practices we use to ensure clients take their medica-



tions as they are prescribed. So far we have identified some minor adjustments to the medication management system, but rolling out these changes will occur when the Audit has been completed.

As she works through different projects, Melina will be assisting with the review of policies and procedures, with our new version of the General Services policies and Procedures Manual due to be rolled out in the coming months.

Part of this process will include stakeholder consultation—where everyone gets to have their say. We trust that everyone will welcome her in her new role and give her every assistance as she endeavours to help make life that little bit better and easier for us all.

'Dare to Aspire'

Dare to Aspire is focusing on marketing and getting its name out to the broader community. Following attendance at a marketing workshop and holding a couple of planning meetings, the dare to Aspire clinicians have developed a number of initiatives, including developing a new website (to be launched shortly), promotional brochures, pre-paid staff training discount offers, and a newsletter.

Our efforts have so far seen a number of organisations engaging us for work, including behaviour intervention work, staff training, employee assistance, and psychological services.

Most recently, Clinicians have gone as far a field as Dubbo—a very real challenge when you appreciate that people who hate flying have had to experience flights in very small planes. But the effort has been outstanding with some very positive outcomes for the clients and staff in regionally isolated services who seldom see outside support.

We are also currently working hard on a range of training resources, designed to assist workers in the field through their own development (e.g. a range of informative industry specific books) and through their efforts to train clients in their activities of daily living.

The key is going to be the new website. We are making it informative and packed with downloadable resources. We will let you know when the site is ready.

I recently graduated as a Forensic Psychologist and have also attained provider registration with Medicare—making the cost to clients much less, and helping us fulfill our commitment to low cost services.

Amanda Wood (Director)

Determination

In 1883, John Roebling was inspired to build a bridge connecting New York with the Long Island. However bridge building experts thought that this was an impossible feat and told Roebling to forget the idea. It just could not be done. It was not practical. It had never been done before.

Roebling could not ignore the vision of this bridge. He knew deep in his heart that it could be done. After much discussion and persuasion he managed to convince his son Washington that the bridge could be built.

Working together for the first time, the father and son developed concepts of how it could be accomplished and how the obstacles could be overcome. With great excitement they began to build their dream bridge.

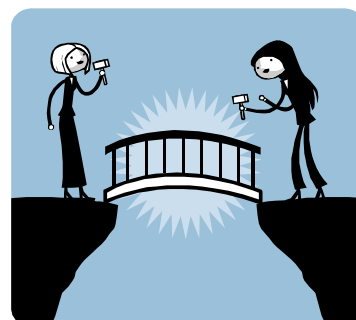
The project started well, but a tragic accident on the site took the life of John Roebling. Washington was injured and left with brain damage, which resulted in him not being able to walk or talk or even move.

In spite of his handicap Washington was never discouraged and was determined to complete the

bridge. He tried to inspire and pass on his enthusiasm to some of his friends, but they were too daunted by the task. As he lay on his bed in his hospital room an idea hit him. All he could do was move one finger and he decided to make the best use of it. By moving this, he slowly developed a code of communication with his wife.

For 13 years Washington tapped out his instructions with his finger on his wife's arm, until the bridge was finally completed. Today the spectacular Brooklyn Bridge stands in all its glory as a tribute to the triumph of one man's indomitable spirit and his determination not to be defeated by circumstances.

Even the most distant dream can be realized with determination and persistence.



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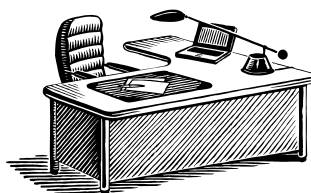


All contributions to 'Aspiration' are welcome. Please email your contribution of no more than 250 words to philip@allevia.org.au or by mail to The Executive Director, PO Box 90, Bankstown, NSW 1885, or deliver to the Jacobs Street office, no later than the last day of each month.

From the Desk of the Executive Director

In our work lives, when something isn't working, we struggle with which part of the problem to tackle first. Do we struggle with cost reduction in these troubling economic times? What about morale? Or should we begin with process enhancement first?

The optimist says there's opportunity everywhere we look. The pessimist says everything is messed up, and it's as though every system is perfectly designed to stay messed up, no matter how many things we try to fix. We pick the problem to work on, and we either fail or succeed. If we fail we add frustration to our list of problems. If we succeed a new problem pops up to replace the old one. The reason fixing problems often doesn't deliver expected results is that the result is often superficial. What is left untouched is the under-



lying dynamics that perpetuate the problem.

For every problem there is a future that has already been written. This future includes assumptions, fears, hopes, resignation, cynicism, and lesson learnt through past experience.

Although most people have never talked about what they really think will happen to them personally, professionally, and to the organisation, they live every moment as if it's destined to come about. Employees are reduced to going through the motions, never fully engaging, never taking on the politics that they believe is holding the organisation back.

If this is then the case in Allevia, how do we change, How do we tackle the future and transform the

situation we live and work in, and realise a dramatic lift in performance?

I believe that if we re-write the future, then many of our problems will simply disappear, or at least our efforts to tackle problems will bear more positive fruit.

I had the pleasure of working with a group of staff earlier this year who were dealing with many very real problems, with clients and with their own performance as individuals and as a team. We talked about the future as we saw it and we re-wrote that future into something that inspired and motivated us. The result has been staggering—many problems have disappeared, but more importantly the team manage problems to resolution effectively every day.

Philip Petrie
Executive Director