

ACCA Newsletter September 2005

www.campconnect.org.au

① NEW ACCA Web site coming soon...

Reconnecting
Dads & Kids



Australian Camp Connect Association

Contents in this issue:

- Presidents Message
- Resources For Dads – Being Connected
- Resources For Dads – Staying Connected
- Father's Day Weekend 2005 Dads & Kids Camp
- Resources For Teens – Make A Noise
- Resources For Kids – Google Earth
- Memberships
- Community Calendar – Father & Sons Retreat
- Community Calendar – SMF Weekend Gathering
- Resources Available To Purchase
- Acknowledgements
- Suggestions



ACCA Proudly
Supported by...



Presidents Message:

Dear Supporter

With the Camp Connect Father's Day Camp held over the Fathers Day weekend, we were privileged to see some fantastic role models and fathers involved with their children. We saw kids and their dads come together to learn, interact, communicate and create valuable, lasting memories at what is recognisable as the best Camp Connect Camp ever. We were privileged to meet some fathers who were doing there up most for their children and their stepchildren:

- All of the dads that attended were focused on ensuring fantastic relationships with their children
- We saw a beautiful relationship between a thirteen-year-old son and his terminally ill father.
- We heard from a father who, after separating from his wife, has had his stepson living with him fulltime (he has been the only father that this boy has known).
- There was another father who was going back into battle through the family law court to fight for custody of his three sons - to help ensure their safety. And another father, from an intact marriage that just wanted to spend quality time with his kids and enhance their relationship even further.

The camp environment provided for many examples of what being a father is all about.

There were also some disturbing.... A friend's three sons were devastated on Father's day because their father allegedly either didn't want to or couldn't be bothered seeing his children. They didn't even get the opportunity to give their dad the presents that they had bought him. The effect on the children was such that they were not sent to school the next day as their mum didn't want them getting distressed about having to write about what they did on Fathers Day. As I have said previously....we still have plenty of work to do.

BUT we have turned some of the starfish on the beach! - by igniting stronger relationships for many of the fathers who attended the Fathers Day Camp -- and this still, is our primary goal.

Brad Mander
Australian Camp Connect Association Inc

Resources for Dads – Being Connected

<http://www.csa.gov.au/parents/bc.htm>

A new program to support separated parents.
Being Connected supports separated parents who are not working.
If you are:

- Recently separated
- Not living with your children
- Out of work and on Newstart

There are two new free and confidential services are now available.

1. Being Connected Telephone Service

The service can help in many ways:

- Talk about your parenting concerns
- Help you stay connected with your kids
- Identify ways to manage your new life
- Support to help you get back to work

2. Being Connected Group Programs

- If you are interested in learning new tips and hints to help you look after yourself, stay connected to your kids and talk to the other parent without arguing, this session may be just what you need.



Resources for Dads – Staying Connected

A new program to support separated parents.

Staying Connected supports separated men in the workplace.

The Child Support Agency has joined with the community and business sectors in partnership to develop and deliver 'Staying Connected' which specifically targets separated fathers in the workplace.

The Child Support Agency has trained facilitators to deliver the program in workplaces across Australia.

40% of marriages in Australia end in divorce. How does this affect you as an employer?

Research has shown this translates into

- Increase in leave of absence
- Increase in workplace accidents
- Reduced productivity
- Reduced job concentration

'Staying Connected' is a 3 hour program designed to be presented to groups of up to 16 separated men in the workplace covering:

Looking after me - promoting help-seeking behavior

Me and the other Parent - promoting a business-like relationship

Me and my kids - tips and hints for staying connected with your kids post separation





Fathers Day Weekend - Dads & Kids Camp, 2- 4 September 2005

The venue for this camp was Allambee Camp. It is set in the secluded tranquility of the majestic Strzelecki Ranges, Gippsland Victoria. It proved to be an excellent venue for our third Father's Day Weekend Dads & Kids Camp. The weather was equally as kind to us.

This camp had thirteen dads and twenty-two kids registered into it. The mix between those who had attended a Camp Connect camp before and those who hadn't was evenly split. There were many shared wonderful moments. It was very humbling for all who attended to have Geoff and two of his boys attend. Geoff apart from having to deal with separation and bringing up four children has a malignant brain tumour. To witness his courage and the love for his boys and the relationship that they share was indeed awe-inspiring.

The workshops were well attended and received by the dads, reinforcing the notion that Camp Connect is more than just a fun weekend away.

On the Saturday afternoon, Rev Rod Brown led 'How To Drug Proof Your Kids', where he covered:

- Briefly what the 'How To Drug Proof Your Kids' Program is all about, the statistics of drug use.
- What we thought the most rewarding and challenging aspects of parenting were.
- How we were parented by our parents and how that influences our own parenting style.
- How well we really know how our kids.
- Despite being only able to scratch the surface of the topic, Rod was nonetheless able to generate some healthy discussion amongst the dads.

On the Sunday morning, Mark Macdougall facilitated a 'Heart Circle'. All the dads were offered [and took up] the opportunity to share from the heart, an issue in their lives in the safe, supported environment created by Mark and the dads in attendance.

Many activities were available for the kids and the kids at heart to partake in. There were a number of specialist activities that have not been available at previous weekend camps. Generally the kids took to the activities like ducks to water. At times the challenges provided by the activities proved too great. There were magical moments when the kids [& dads] felt the fear and did it anyway much to the encouragement & excitement of all those around them.

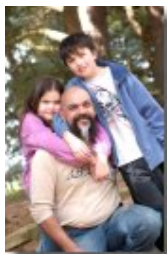
Activities that were on offer to all included:

Abseiling Tree
Flying Fox
Making of Father's Day Cards.

Giant Swing
Climbing Wall
Kite flying

Billy Carts
Night Reflector Trail
Bush Cooking

Archery
Trampoline
Low Ropes Course

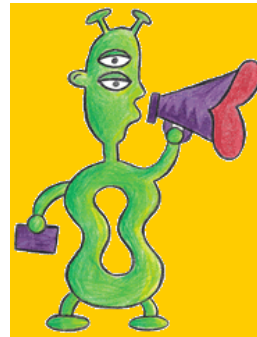


Resources for Teens - Make a Noise

<http://www.makeanoise.ysp.org.au/>

This is an excellent website for teenagers. It has been developed as part of a youth suicide prevention campaign in the Greater Murray.

The site has information to do with;
Bodies, body image & health issues,
Drugs, Study & Money,
Healthy Minds, Depression, Suicide prevention,
myths and warning signs,
Getting moving, cars, travel, moving out of home,
Sex & Relating, safe sex & sexually transmitted
diseases



Your safety, bullying, harassment & sexual
assault,
School, links for project work
Health Services,
Computers & the Internet

Make A Noise is the central concept which has been adopted to engage young people in help seeking behaviour. This is promoted on four levels.

1. Peer Support - Initiatives which encourage young people to talk to their friends about problems and to develop reciprocal listening skills to enable them to detect when a friend may be in trouble and to talk to friends about problems that they may be having themselves.
2. Talk to an Adult - Encourage young people to talk to an adult they trust about problems.
3. Promotion of Existing Source of Information - This initiative involves the promotion of services that are anonymous and are available 24 hours a day, such as the Make A Noise website, Kids Help Line & Lifeline.
4. Greater Murray Area Health Services - It is recognised that formal health services play a valuable role in preventing youth suicide. However evidence suggests that encouraging young people to talk about problems at an early stage can help reduce the call for clinical services.

Resources for Kids [& Kids At Heart]

Google Earth

<http://earth.google.com/>



Explore, Search and Discover - A 3D interface to the planet

Want to know more about a specific location? Dive right in -- Google Earth combines satellite imagery, maps and the power of Google Search to put the world's geographic information at your fingertips.

Google Earth puts a planet's worth of imagery and other geographic information right on your desktop. View exotic locales like Maui and Paris as well as points of interest such as local restaurants, hospitals, schools, and more.

Download the free version of the software from the Google Earth website.

Broadband internet is required.

Memberships

ACCA is like most non-profit organizations, in that it receives no financial support from the government. To be able to continue with the work that we do we rely upon the support of sponsors and of members.

Membership of ACCA costs \$55.00 per annum. Current memberships are valid from July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006. Membership provides you with 15% off all adult program registration costs to any Camp Connect program conducted within the 12-month membership period. It also entitles you to special offers that are limited to members only. These offers are listed in the "Benefits of Membership" page on the ACCA website.

To register go to: <http://www.campconnect.org.au/membership.shtml>

Community Calendar

Men Alive – Annual Father & Sons Retreat

FRIDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY November 11th, 12th & 13th 2005

The Annual Men Alive Father & Sons retreat is being held so men and their boys can experience bonding, love and growth the way our elders used to do it. Our wise elders used this time to initiate boys into manhood. Sadly it doesn't happen today. For those who have experienced the inner joy of a Men Alive retreat this is not to be missed. A few days in the bush sharing the outdoors with their Dads is the "rights of passage" young men yearn for to start their adult lives.

Teach, nurture and empower your son and yourself and have the most peaceful time where you will meditate, talk secret men's business and campfire to your hearts content. Fabulous country food all-inclusive. Lots of walks, fun and quiet time and enjoy a magnificent dinner on top of Bald Hill in the Strathbogie Ranges overlooking Euroa with a gorgeous sunset as your backdrop.

This is a weekend to share the love and care you know you have for your young man. It is also time to teach your young man to free the mind, make correct choices and get clear on how to handle the challenges of modern life. The dearest thing to all men, is the love we have for our families and sometimes we neglect our young men at the time they need us the most. This weekend is about consciously returning to what is really important to us.

MEN ALIVE is about bringing love and life back into men and their boys and this is an opportunity not to be missed. Bring forth some inner joy and a whole lot of happiness that can only be shared with your son.

The program is open to men and boys of all ages

Reservations are essential so ring Robin on **97295531** or Mobile **0412825840** to secure your rights of passage journey or go to <http://www.menalive.com.au/> to find out more.

Community Calendar

Sydney Men's Festival Weekend Gathering

November 12-13, 2005.

Venue: Minto Bush Camp overlooking the Georges River

Website: <http://www.sydneymentfestival.org.au/>

or email info@sydneymentfestival.org.au

Throughout the year weekend gatherings are held at Minto to give men a taste of the festival experience and to maintain contact with other men they have met at the festival. The gatherings are weekends of unwinding, talking, relaxing playing and sharing time with other men. They are an opportunity for men to get together to explore their ideas and issues with the support of other men. The weekends are a mini version of the Sydney Men's Festival - just a weekend retreat. There will be one or two workshops and we'll form into affinity groups but most of all there will be companionship and closeness.

The Festival Weekend gathering is open to all men regardless of colour, creed, religion, sexuality, profession or employment status and welcomes children (boys all ages and girls under 7).



Resources Available To Purchase Fatherhood CD

\$15.00 – Financial Members

\$29.50 + \$2.00 P&h – Non Members

We have purchased a supply of the locally produced CD titled Fatherhood. It contains a mixture of songs by celebrated Australian songwriters as well as unknown talent.

“Totally glorious, strikingly different, these songs tap into a vein of male creativity that has long been hidden. Each artist leaves you wanting more, and feeling that the music you’ve been hearing on the radio is just so much McDonaldized pop.

The spoken word segments are so evocative they send you into deep

reflection, and with an urge to change your life starting this very second. This is the purpose that music was made for.” Steve Biddulph – Author of Raising Boys

For further details about the CD or to order a copy go to
http://www.campconnect.org.au/fatherhood_cd.shtml

Part of the proceeds of every CD sold goes to support Camp Connect.

Acknowledging Those Who Helped Us To Make A Difference

On behalf of the organising committee we sincerely thank the following individuals and organizations for their contributions towards making the Father’s Day Weekend Dads & Kids Camp the success it was:

- **McKillop Family Services** in **Melton** in bringing Geoff to our attention and helping to fund his attendance.
- **Southern Region Parentzone** for their PEGs Funding
- **Camp Mallana Trust** for helping to support the registration of some of the children who attended.
- **Cr Orpen & Cr Cicchiello** from **Knox City Council** for their combined grant to assist us in conducting programs and weekend camps.
- **Jenni & Greg Freddo**, the campsite managers and their staff for making us feel so welcome and for allowing for the program to run so smoothly.
- **Rev Rod Brown** from **Boronia Church of Christ**, who ran the How To Drug Proof Your Kids workshop.
- **Mark Macdougall**, for running the ‘Heart Circle’ workshop on the Sunday morning. Mark also provided the transport for Geoff and his family both to and from the camp.
- **Nick** from **Minuteman Press** in **Prahran** for generously donated the printing of our camp flyers.
- **Michael Green QC**, For allowing us to use a chapter from his Fathers After Divorce book on the CD.
- **Colin George & Soulman** [Fatherhood CD] for allowing us to their songs on our CD.
- **Eric Povey**, the ‘Muso’ for producing the music and lyrics for “Feels Like Summer Rain” and for professionally recording the individual families singing this song karaoke style.
- **Vince**, from **Child’s Play Photography**, for the taking of the professional photographs, for the non-intrusive way in which he went about taking them and for capturing so many magic moments.
- **Simon Biar**, for all his work in keeping the website updated.
- **Tony Watkins**, our newest committee member. Tony is responsible for creating the ‘corporate’ look and feel to the Camp Connect website, stationary etc. He has spent countless hours, both prior to and during the camp producing the CD set so that each family got to take home a set with them at the end of the camp.

Suggestions:

Is there is something that you would like to see included in our newsletters - that isn’t currently there?

If so please let us know by email to: feedback@campconnect.org.au

