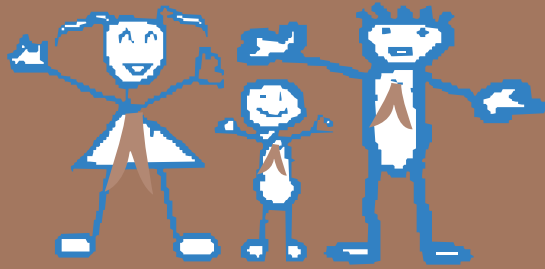


# MONTH

*child abuse*



Logo designed by Brooke (9) and Jake (11) Samuels

## REVEALING IMAGES PROGRAM

*by Kerrie Moynihan from the Purple Ribbon Committee, Wollongong*

One of the projects run in Purple Ribbon month is the Revealing Images program which run by Advocates for the Survivors of Child Abuse (ASCA), a national organisation for survivors of abuse. The program, which was steered by myself and Jill Darville commenced with a grant from the Wollongong City Council which enabled the establishment of separate art workshops for men and women.

The workshops were offered at no cost to survivors of child abuse and were publicly advertised. Criteria for participation was based on personal interest alone with individuals with little or no artistic experience being the focus of groups. The workshops were facilitated by local artists Jasmine Hurst, Susan Levy and John Marsh, and culminated in the official launch of Revealing Images.

### *signifying compassion"*

The final works produced in the workshops were then displayed at the Wollongong City Art Gallery throughout Purple Ribbon Month. The gallery generously donates time and space, allocating the exhibition as a primary part of gallery events during the year. Displaying the art works of survivors of child abuse became an integral part of the campaign in raising community awareness. Personal experiences were highlighted and those adults carrying the effects of trauma were given the opportunity and space to tell their stories.

The growth of Revealing Images has been propelled by the acclaim its artworks have received from community members with over 800 people attending the exhibition launch in 2001. The most notable part of the evening were the reactions from the artists themselves who had expressed a part of themselves and their experiences through photography, painting, models, computer generated art and mixed media.

The positive response from the community was not only rewarding for participants, but also served as an acknowledgment of the experience and impact of physical, sexual and psychological abuse, and domestic violence in children and adults. The diversity of materials used by the artists reflected the multitude of these experiences. Rather than being an expose of the horrors of child abuse, the exhibition was a celebration of the strengths and courage of the individuals who chose to speak out in evocative visual landscapes, and continue to survive.

The guest book for the 2001 event was saturated with praise for the artists and the integrity of a regional art gallery that could support such important work. The exhibition gave the community a view of a side of life that is so often shunned by our society and reminded many that these too are the voices of children who cannot yet name the horrors of their abuse. These images are those that so many children will know as they struggle to cope in adult life. For the participants, the images also confirmed the extent of abuse and it gave those who have suffered alone, the knowledge that there are many who can walk with them. Individuals suddenly found solace, support and unconditional understanding that in many cases could not otherwise be found.

Artwork produced by this year's Revealing Images was again displayed at Wollongong City Art Gallery. I have emerged from this year's program as an organiser and participant with an enormous sense of pride in this initiative, and in the courage of those who gave it a go – those who, in connecting with others, have touched a part of themselves forever scarred by experience and memory. It is my hope that this initiative will go on and the images that are revealed will send a message out to the silenced, and set someone free.

*To find out more about Revealing Images, contact Kerrie Moynihan at [kaptain@hotmail.com](mailto:kaptain@hotmail.com)*



Artwork by Kerrie Moynihan  
Photography by Jill Darville

Artworks and photography by Jill Darville