

## Introducing

# Two new members of the Training and Support Team of the Stronger Families Learning Exchange

to all the lovely people that we met in Melbourne and at the workshop. We did some really good networking and hope to keep in touch in the future.

But it didn't end there. We were sitting in the Airport waiting to go back to Broome and there was this lady with all these pearl necklaces. Shelly and I just started laughing. I said, "Can't be, I wonder if we are going to get our pearls after all." Well we did. We got back to Broome at about 11.30 that night and by the time we booked in and got to our rooms it was about 12.30 which is about 2.30 Melbourne time, we hit the bed without a whimper. The next morning we packed the car thinking only another 240 kilometres and we will be home, but to our disappointment the car would not start, we had a flat battery. Shelly rang to get some service to get the car going. Meanwhile the weather in Broome was *hot* and my face was melting. It could only happen to us.

What a trip! It's one that we won't forget and has been told over and over again. Everyone thinks it's really funny – lucky Shelly and I have a good sense of humour. HA! HA!

The End. From the Derby Crew.

**Ronda Clarke** is a Project Coordinator with the Derby Young Women's Centre.

between agencies and the development and evaluation of existing services to identify service gaps.

*Warren Cann*, Director of the Victorian Parenting Centre, said working with parents with a learning difficulty presented the opportunity for services to promote best practice for all parents. "If we can get it right for this group, we can get it right for everyone."

A key outcome of the forum was a commitment by more than 25 per cent of delegates to form a working group to draw together the key themes from the forum into a plan for action including lobbying key stakeholders like the Department of Human Services for change.

### *What do you most enjoy about working in the SFLEX project?*

**LIZ:** My kids and I have returned to Melbourne after four and a half great years living and working in Alice Springs. Having just joined the team I am impressed by the welcoming and vibrant atmosphere of the SFLEX team and the diversity of approaches to facilitating action research and community development. I visited a project in Tasmania with Kelley during my first week and am looking forward to working with the broad range of projects and people involved in the Stronger Families Fund projects around Australia. I feel enthusiastic about catching up with the other projects I have been allocated soon.

### *What do you hope to learn from working in the team?*

Reflecting on experience and sharing ideas with this dynamic team and network of community projects and exploring creative ways to record, document, reflect and enhance the things that communities find are useful and lasting for them in the important process of growing up kids. I also hope we will explore accessible ways



**LIZ ORR**

to share that knowledge with a broad audience and contribute to linking communities and projects up with each other.

### *What is your contribution to the team/project?*

How we keep on keeping on and energise each other matters. Participation, participation, participation and participation! Communication, communication, communication! I have been working with community groups to reduce isolation, address violence, understand grief, loss, and life changes and learning ways to work together to develop approaches, services and networks that speak and act with the diversity that are communities, for about twenty years. People have amazing ways of growing connectedness and harmony. Listening, recording and reflecting on those stories contributes to long-term good health and wellbeing. Connecting in with the projects and other team members I hope to be part of resourcing, documenting, and developing learning tools that give voice and share skills and local knowledge in authentic ways that will build strength and resilience for the process of community development at both practical and theoretical levels.

### *What do you most enjoy about working in the SFLEX project?*

I have always enjoyed working at a grassroots level, acknowledging the strengths and expertise that is often hidden within communities. I have the delightful advantage of arriving in the team at a time when the learnings from some of the projects are clearly demonstrating the benefits of local ownership and control of innovative ways to address issues.

### *What do you hope to learn from working in the team?*

There is a wonderfully diverse and extensive body of wisdom and knowledge within the team. They also bring back an enormous wealth of experiences, expertise and ideas from the projects to share with others. I'm already finding new ways



**MARGO NORTHEY**

of looking at the world and I've only been here a week!

### *What is your contribution to the team/project?*

I have many years of experience in the community and education sectors, working from a community development perspective. Supporting participation in, and ownership of, decision-making processes at a local level is exciting, challenging and never boring. I have been involved in a range of social and environmental issues in the Latrobe Valley in Victoria where we lived for twenty years. My most recent work has been with vulnerable women and children, attempting to increase community awareness and understanding of the devastating effects of domestic violence on the whole community and to support the development of a more responsive service system.