

2011 Issue 4
November 2011

CHATS Newsletter



33 Hope St
Blaxland 2774

Opening Hours

Monday – Thurs
9 am to 4.30 pm
Friday
9 am to 1 pm

Phone:
02 4739 1164

Inside this Issue:

White Ribbon Day	2
2011 Christmas Food Drive	2
Acknowledgements	2
Community Notice Board	3, 6
LMNC's AGM	4
Endings and Beginnings	4
'Real Communities' by Hugh Mackay	5
Community Development News	6
Volunteer Home Visitors news	7
LMNC News and Diary Dates	8

*The newsletter of the Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre
Neighbourhood Centres: the heart of our community*

The stuff of life

Welcome to the fourth and final edition for 2011 of 'Chats', the newsletter of the Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre.

Another busy year for the Centre is drawing to a close. A snapshot of our work is reflected in our 2010-2011 Annual Report, which was presented at our Annual General Meeting in October. If you would like a copy, please contact us on by phone on 4739 1164, email admin@lmnc.org.au, or you can find it on our website,

www.lmnc.org.au

The end of a year, the so-called 'festive season', can be a mixed time for many people. There might be family tensions, or a resurgence of grief, loss and loneliness. The Buddhist teacher and author, Pema Chödrön, writes that *'Life is glorious, but life is also wretched. It is both... Gloriousness and wretchedness need each other. One inspires us, the other softens us. They go*

together.' It seems to me that this is the stuff of life; the duality of good times and bad, of sadness and happiness, of friendship and loneliness. We need to embrace it all; the nature of being human.

But in the mixture of being human, may there be blessings of good-will and joy and laughter over this festive season. Thank you for being with us over the last year, and our warmest wishes to you all.

Peta Williams, Manager

**Office Closure: from Monday 19 December 2011
Re-opening Monday 16 January 2012.
For urgent medical transports, call GREAT Community Transport
on 4759 2403.**

Wishing you a safe and joyful festive season.

LMNC Volunteer Transport Services for Seniors

Medical Transport Service

This service is for older people who are either frail or for people with a disability who have difficulty getting to medical appointments and accessing public transport.

At least **3 DAYS** notice is necessary as we cannot handle emergency requests. Client bookings: 4739 1164.

Note: all first requests for medical transport will be assessed by GREAT Community Transport (GCT) – please phone

4759 2403. They will then refer your needs to LMNC Front Desk volunteers, who organise a local volunteer driver suitable to your appointment.

Fortnightly Shopping Bus

Shopping bus service on Pension Thursdays each fortnight, to Lennox shopping centre. Cost \$9 per person or \$12 per couple.

Limited seats available – **BOOK NOW!**
Bookings 4739 1164.

Next dates are:

Thursday 10 November,
24 November, 8 December

Christmas special on Thursday
15 December.

One-to-One Shopping Service

Part of our Volunteer Home Visitors program, this service is for people not able to physically access the bus service. Please phone Eva on 4739 8169 to access this service.

White Ribbon Day – 25 November

The 'Thanks and Appreciation' Column

Individual Donations

Thank you to all those individuals who have made donations to us since the new financial year, and in particular to Mike Page, Colin Lee, and the Rotary Club of Lower Blue Mountains.

Corporate donations: Friends & Neighbours

FluidQuip Australia Pty Ltd
Just Rooibos Australia
Supa IGA Blaxland

Government Support

NSW Department of Family and Community Services

(a) Community Services under the Community Builders Program for our general operations, services and community development programs

(b) Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) under the Home and Community Care program (HACC) for the Volunteer Home Visitors service

NSW Office of Fair Trading for NILS® administration

Blue Mountains City Council for supporting the production of the CHATS newsletter

Other Support

National Australia Bank (NAB) for NILS® capital

Glenbrook Panthers for the 'folk music around the world' Euroka music project

John Godfrey from Artful Fundraising Pty Ltd for the donation of his book, 'Artful: Major Gift Fundraising' (www.artfultraining.com)

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

Celebrities, sportsmen, politicians, community leaders, businessmen and thousands of men and women across Australia will mark White Ribbon Day, 25 November, the UN's International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women, by joining together and swearing: 'never to commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women.'

The White Ribbon Campaign is the only national violence prevention campaign, and it is unique in that it aims to raise awareness among Australian men and boys about the roles they can play to prevent violence against women.

The Blue Mountains City Council is hosting the **Mayoral White Ribbon Day Breakfast** on Friday 25 November, 8 am to 10 am. It will be held at Council Chambers, Civic Place, Katoomba.

There will be Guest Speakers and local men will be sworn in as White Ribbon Day Ambassadors. For more information, call Nicole on 4780 5631.

And for more information on White Ribbon Day, go to the website: www.whiteribbonday.org.au

Wimlah Women and Children's Outreach Service

Wimlah is a Blue Mountains specialist domestic violence service that welcomes any woman, with or without children, regardless of her ethnicity, age, sexuality or gender who identifies she is currently escaping or has ever been at risk due to domestic and family violence.

Wimlah provides a support service for women at Springwood Neighbourhood Centre. Drop in afternoon every Monday from 1-4 pm. Call 4782 9158, or drop in at 108 Macquarie Road, Springwood (opposite the library).

2011 Christmas Food Drive

The Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre, the neighbourhood centres in Springwood and Winmalee and Gateway Family Services are working together to provide Christmas food and Gift Hampers to families who are experiencing financial hardship. As with last year, there are a significant number of families seeking assistance.

At LMNC you can 'purchase' a \$15 Christmas Hamper by making a donation to LMNC, which we will pass on to Gateway Family Services in East Blaxland. Please either drop into LMNC or call us on 4739 1164.



Community Notice Board

The Community Notice Board is a service we provide for activities of other groups and organisations as well as LMNC activities. We are not affiliated with the activities of other groups and organisations unless otherwise stated.

Gateway Family Services

Contact Gateway Family Services (formerly known as Lower Mountains Family Support Service) to find out details of their next parenting courses.

Gateway Family Services also provides **Emergency Relief Programs**, which can assist families with food and/or financial assistance.

Tel: **4739 5963**

'The Cottage'
70 Old Bathurst Road,
Blaxland.

Youth gig – Band night Saturday 26 November

Mountains Youth Services Team (MYST) in partnership with the Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre is hosting a youth gig at the Sharon Burrige Hall, Blaxland Community complex, on Saturday 26 November, 6pm to 10.30pm.

This event is alcohol and drug-free and is aimed at young people aged between 14 and 17.

Tickets are \$10 by pre-sale only. Call Maddy at MYST on **0421 389 790**.

Lower Mountains Men's Shed

The **Lower Mountains Men's Shed** is now established at the Blue Mountains Woodcraft Centre, 19 Calver Ave, Mt Riverview.

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday and the fourth Saturday of the month from 9 am to noon.

For more information, go to the website

www.lmshed.org

Enquiries: call Ramon on 4751 6819 or email lmshed@gmail.com

Blue Mountains Home Modification Service

The Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre manages the Blue Mountains Home Modification and Maintenance Service, which provides home modifications for people of any age with a moderate to severe disability, or people who are frail-aged.

The emphasis of this program is on ensuring and maintaining people's independence.

For more information, see the website www.kncinc.org.au, or telephone 4782 1117.

LMNC programs and services

Financial support

The No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) provides no-interest loans to people on low incomes living in the 2773 and 2774 postcode areas for essential household items, driving lessons, and medical and educational purposes. For more information, call 4739 1164.

Free financial counselling is available at LMNC for people who find themselves under financial stress, offered by Wesley Creditline Financial Counseling.

Phone **4725 9288** to make an appointment.

Social groups at LMNC

Clak'n'Yak knitting and chat group, 2nd and last Friday of the month, 10am to 12 noon.

For Love of Music (FLOM), Wednesday each week, 10am to 12 noon.

Over 50s Social Club, Thursday each week, 10am to 12 noon.

Sing-along with Phyl 2nd and last Monday of the month 10am to 12 noon.

Health and Wellbeing

Tai Chi breathing and movement exercises. Thursdays 2-3 pm, \$8.

Counselling

Adolescent & Family Counselling – Peter Hurley, Monday afternoons. Tel. **4754 5411**.

Clearview Counselling Service – personal and relationship counselling with Trish Briggs. Tuesday by appointment. **0417 062 842**.

Computer classes for Seniors – Managing your Digital Photos

Are you interested in learning how to manage your digital photos? Well, we have the course for you!

Join computer tutor Jon Bayley on a 5-week course on '**Managing your Digital Photos**'. The course is run as a small group for 5 weeks on Thursday mornings and cost \$50 which covers the cost of tuition plus a step-by-step manual.

Ring **4739 1164** for dates and to book for the next course.

LMNC's AGM

Thank you to those members of LMNC, volunteers, and members of our community who were able to attend our Annual General Meeting on 19 October; it was great to have you there.

We celebrated our 30th anniversary with a small but lovely gathering, and the birthday cake received a 'thumbs up' from all.

The people making up LMNC's Board for 2011-2012 are:

Chair: Warwick Fuller

Secretary: Elizabeth Rose

Treasurer: John McLean

Public Officer: Jenny Dooley

Members: Terry Body, Trevor Day, Harry Klajman, Carmel McCallum, Robin Mitchell.



Board members at our AGM:

*Back row, from left: Terry Body, John McLean,
Trevor Day, Warwick Fuller*

*Front row (from left): Robin Mitchell, Elizabeth Rose,
Jenny Dooley*



Endings and Beginnings

by Peta Williams, Manager

At LMNC we have been engaged in both *reflection* – our activities over the last year as we wrote our contributions to our most recent Annual Report, and *anticipation* – planning for 2012 and beyond.

In reflecting on the last year, there were two highlights for me. The first was the '**Finding Fabulous Folk!**' children's music project with musicians Mara and Llew Kiek and children from the Euroka Children's Centre. This musical cultural journey of folk music from around the world was a wonderful way to introduce children to the cultural diversity of our community, and the joy of music and connecting with others.

The second was the community forum with the acclaimed social researcher, psychologist and novelist, **Hugh Mackay**, who gave a stimulating presentation on the substance of his most recent book, '*What Makes Us Tick? The ten desires that drive us*'. Mr Mackay was impressed by the quality and thoughtfulness of the questions from the discussion after the presentation, and the feedback from the evaluations was overwhelmingly positive.

In looking forward to 2012, we not only continue our medical and transport shopping services and the array of wonderful courses being offered in partnership with TAFE and TAFE outreach, we are also exploring two new programs involving the telling or writing of stories. The first program is called '**Journeying: the storytelling project**', a four-week group workshop program involving the medium of storytelling, where stories guide us and nourish us along the journey of being human. Presented by professional storyteller Paula Novotna, this project starts on Monday 13 February, 10am to 1pm for four weeks.

The second program is the **life story writing project** with Pat Ainsworth, which involves participants in the journey of writing their life story, to be held over 8 weeks from Monday 30 April.

We are excited to present these two new programs in 2012. As spaces are limited, call us on 4739 1164 for more information or to book in if you are interested.

As always, the work we do at LMNC could not be done without a large number of great people behind the scenes. As we end one year and anticipate the start of the new, my warmest thanks to the staff team – Leigh, Robyn and Eva; the LMNC Board under the chairmanship of Warwick Fuller; and a great bunch of people who comprise our wonderful volunteer team. The heart of our community, indeed.

Peta Williams, Manager

Essay: Real Communities

by Hugh Mackay

Griffith REVIEW, May 2009, pp 41-46 (edited extract)

Investment is the key to the creation of stronger communities and, ultimately, to a stronger nation.

But this is not only about dollars. We could dream a much larger dream about investment since, one way or another, we all make a social and emotional investment in the kind of society we are becoming. We could, for instance, choose to dream of a society where each of us understands that we are all part of one vast, vibrating web of interconnectedness. We could invest in the idea that all our actions – the way we save and spend our money, the way we occupy our time, the way we respond to the needs of strangers, all the ways we live – have consequences for the health and well-being of the whole. At its utopian best, this would be a dream about a nation – or even a neighbourhood – where our natural individualism is submerged beneath a concern for the common good; where, as a guiding story, competition gives way to a more egalitarian spirit of co-operation; where the shared values of citizens are shaped by a powerful sense of belonging to each other.

Belonging? Community? Shared values? These, surely, have become the weasel words of contemporary social analysis. Overblown and overplayed, they have been robbed of much of their meaning. They have come to sound more like mantras than social goals. Indeed, the word 'village' is de rigueur if you're writing a real estate advertisement or creating a promotional brochure for a new high-rise development: the vertical village is with us. It's even become fashionable to speak of 'the Australian community', as if Australians were a close-knit little group, sharing in the life of some village where everyone knows everyone, everyone trusts everyone, and from which we draw a powerful and sustaining sense of identity and emotional security.

Yet we cling hopefully, and sometimes desperately, to words like community and village, precisely because we know, deep in our guts, that any successful, civilised society would aspire to that utopian prospect. Perhaps we also sense that the fondly imagined community is under threat, and we suspect the consequences of that might be serious. In fact, the consequences could hardly be more serious: our moral sense is, after all, a social sense.

It is only by learning how to live in a community that we gradually acquire our sense of right and wrong, as well as more subtle values like tolerance, compassion and respect for others.

Most of us find the richest source of life's meaning in our personal relationships. Being herd animals, we are born to communicate, to join, to gather, to connect and to share. When we deny those natural impulses, we diminish both ourselves and the communities to which we properly belong. The online revolution notwithstanding, I believe the most significant communities - significant, that is, in building a civilised, participative society - are still our local neighbourhoods. Grand visions of society have their place, but it's in the neighbourhood that we join the dots, a fact brought home to us with stark clarity whenever a crisis, like a flood or a bushfire, draws us together.

Getting along with friends and other like-minded people is easy: belonging to school or church communities, or even to gardening clubs or art classes, can be deeply satisfying and should be encouraged. But if we're not careful, micro-communities can become tribal enclaves that add to the problem of social divisiveness.

The real test of the civilising power (indeed, the moral power) of community is how we get along with people we haven't chosen to be with, don't especially like, and who don't necessarily share our interests.

Those unplanned, accidental encounters still happen in streets all over Australia, where people manage to get along with neighbours they never chose to live beside. But the pressures of our society are working against the miracle happening. We are tending to confine our contacts to the tried and trusted, at the cost of connections with our neighbours. That is unhealthy. There's no point in complaining about the loss of a sense of community if you haven't knocked on your neighbour's door and introduced yourself.

If you're serious about wanting to restore the health of your neighbourhood, join a choir or a book club, by all means. But don't forget to invite the neighbours in for a drink, as well. Find a few neighbours prepared to take it in turns to mow the lawn of the elderly person on the corner, or do the shopping for a harassed carer or single mother. Leave the car in the garage and walk around the block occasionally, greeting the people you meet.

That's participation; that's engagement; that's investment.

Hugh Mackay is a psychologist, social researcher and novelist. Our thanks to him for permission to print this edited extract.

Community Notice Board (continued)

*Those who can, do.
Those who can do more,
volunteer.*

Anonymous

From 'Beyond Just Words'
collected by
Dr Judy Esmond
www.morevolunteers.com

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre

To help older people live independently in their own homes, Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres provide free information about community aged care, disability and other support services.

Call **1800 052 222**.

Women's support service at Springwood

Are you, or have you ever been in an unhappy or abusive relationship? Wimalah Women and Children's Outreach service provides a support service for women at Springwood Neighbourhood Centre. Drop in afternoon every Monday from 1-4 pm. Call **4782 9158**.

Blue Mountains Food Services

Blue Mountains Food Services provides both Meals on Wheels and Village Restaurants throughout the Blue Mountains.

The Village Restaurant in Blaxland is held on Tuesdays at the Sharon Burridge Hall, Blaxland Community Complex, from 11am to 1pm. For more information call **4759 2811**.

Robyn's Chat Room Community Development news

Wrap With Love (WWL)

Thank you to the people who donated yarn or contributed to this Project. We sent 11 rugs and 235 squares to WWL since the last CHATS. Donations in cash or kind are always appreciated; yarn needs to be 8ply preferably acrylic. **Clak'n'Yak** has a healthy membership and recently branched out into patch working; first timers report having great fun. Meetings are on the second and last Friday of the month, 10am. **Golden Years**: First trip for 2012 will be to Manly Beach for 'fish'n'chips'. **The 2011 Premier's Christmas Concert** is booked out, however we do have a Waiting List.

Tai-Chi classes are held Thursdays 2pm in the Sharon Burridge Hall at the Community Complex. No need to book.

ALL TAFE computer courses for 2012 are confirmed by TAFE; you can register now for the following: 1) Introduction to

Computers 2) Basic Level Computing 3) Extension Units: PowerPoint Publisher and Photoshop Elements, Excel Managing Money, Internet and Email. The new offering in 2012 Semester 2 'Introduction to Community Services' has been confirmed and we are taking bookings. All TAFE courses have limited places; register early.

Women Growing Older

started in mid-October and from what I am hearing the women are really enjoying this Program. In mid-2012 we will again partner with Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre to offer **Women Living Well**, an art therapy program for women living with or who have experienced depression. This was extremely popular last time it was offered and yes, you can call us and register your interest.

Sing-along with Phyl. This new group is headed up by long standing Blue Mountains Musical Society

personality Phyllis Doyle.

The group meets the second and last Monday of the month from 10am.

Don't forget our regular groups, **FLOM** Wednesdays 10am and **Over 50s Social Club** 10am Thursdays.

Red Cross will be doing a presentation on Wednesday November 23 2011 about their **Emergency REDiPlan**. This Plan is not restricted to any particular emergency, but designed to cover preparation, response and recovery. Bookings are open now.

2012 is GOING to be a big year for us, packed full of events and activities all aimed at YOU our fantastic community. Keep watching for announcements and be sure to make us the 'heart of your community'.

I would like to take this opportunity of wishing you all a safe and peaceful Christmas and I hope a prosperous and happy 2012.

Robyn Stewart
Community Development
cd@lmnc.org.au



Neighbourhood Centres:
the heart of our community

Volunteer Home Visitors by Eva Regitz, Co-ordinator

The Volunteer Home Visitors Service - A Vital Service located in Your Community!

The Volunteer Home Visitors (VHV) program offers a friendly home visiting service to frail older people and people with disabilities and their carers. Volunteers assist with shopping, writing correspondence, a library service or by simply sharing a chat over a coffee. The VHV program aims to help people to continue their involvement in their local community.

What makes this service different to other services in a time when the move is towards more centralised and bigger organisations?

The VHV service is a *small service* that grew out of an identified community need in the local community. It depends on a committed team of volunteers who contribute their time and skill generously to improve a client's quality of life and to enable them to remain living in their own home. Our volunteers are in fact people who do (and still do) what neighbours used to do – helping people with things. Providing a front-line support service, home visitors can often 'make the difference'.

The Volunteer Home Visitors Service is *connected to our community* – we know people and their needs. Being part of the Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre, the service is *one of the last community services still located in the community*. This means that the staff who answer the phone and take enquiries are also the staff who provide the services. This builds trusting relationships with people, and services can be delivered in an atmosphere of encouragement that promotes social connections as the following story (with friendly permission from the client) demonstrates:

One day just after arriving at the office I got a phone call from an elderly resident who was very distressed. John (name was changed) was very worried about what would

*'Act as if what you do makes a difference.
It does.'*

William James

happen when he had to move out of his home because he could no longer manage on his own. He said he did not know who else to contact.

When I later visited him for an assessment, he told me how lonely he often felt with no family living nearby or any other support available, so he would find everyday life quite difficult to manage at times. During our conversation, I found out that John used to be a keen painter and gardener and also knows a lot about local history. If I hadn't been there for work, I could have stayed all afternoon so insightful was his story-telling! I told him what our service does and John said he would love someone to visit him so he would have someone for company and to talk to. I told him I would try to find him someone suitable, but in the meantime – would he be interested to come up to the Neighbourhood Centre to meet other people over a lunch at the village restaurant. John has been a regular visitor of the lunches since and not only has he made friends but he has also extended his interest to other programs run at the Centre.

John would still like a home visitor, but when he will finally have someone to take him out, I can imagine that his volunteer, too, will get to a lot of interesting places he might have never been before!

Volunteer positions available

Is this for you?

The service is currently looking for a volunteer who loves scrabble and who would like to share his interest with an elderly resident (Glenbrook).

Thank You!

With the year coming to a close I would like to take the opportunity to thank our team of volunteers for their dedication, commitment and contribution. Without you this service would be unthinkable. It is *you* who make it the vibrant service that can make the real difference to someone. Thank you!

Wishing you all a joyous, safe and healthy remainder of the year and a happy and peaceful Christmas, festive season and New Year!

*Eva Regitz
Service Co-ordinator*



Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre Inc.

33 Hope Street
Blaxland NSW 2774

PHONE:
02 4739 1164

FAX:
02 4739 4863

E-MAIL:
admin@lmnc.org.au

ABN:
23 468 704 495

Registered Charity
CFN 14546

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.lmnc.org.au

Do you want to become a Volunteer?

Are you interested in volunteering? LMNC welcomes new volunteers!

Volunteering is a fundamental building block of a civil society. Volunteers contribute unique and special skills to benefit the people of our community, and in the sharing of experience and expertise with others can come true connection, support,

friendship, hope and ideas for the benefit of us all.

At LMNC we are looking in particular for volunteers for our Front Desk reception, Home Visitors Service (see page 7), drivers for medical transports, and shopping bus helpers.

Call us on **4739 1164** for an Information Kit.

How can you help LMNC? Donate now!

As a non-profit organisation with deductible gift recipient (DGR) status, any donations to support our local services are tax deductible and always gratefully received.

Send your unconditional donation to:

Lower Mountains
Community
Development Fund
33 Hope Street
Blaxland 2774

About Our Organisation...

LMNC was formed in 1981. It is one of six neighbourhood centres in the Blue Mountains that all have a commitment to *community strengthening*, the enhancement of

wellbeing within our community through partnerships and collaboration with the wider community.

AT LMNC, our aim is to provide services in response

to identified needs, and to provide opportunities for people to share their wisdom and experience with others, through volunteering and participation in a variety of activities and events.

Office Closure

LMNC will be closed from **Monday 19 December 2011**, re-opening on **Monday 16 January 2012**.

For urgent medical transports while we are closed, contact

**GREAT Community
Transport on**

4759 2403.

GREAT COMMUNITY TRANSPORT Phone 4759 2403

GREAT Community Transport offers the following services for people in the Blue Mountains.

All bookings and enquiries phone 4759 2403 for the following social outings for older people who are frail, people with a disability or their carers. Assessment determines eligibility.

Bookings & payment for bus 14 days in advance to secure your seat.

29 November – Sara Lee and Cobbity for Christmas goodies then lunch at Mounties. Bus \$16; set menu lunch

14 December - GCT Christmas Lunch at Warragamba Workers Club. Bus free; lunch \$20.

Regular Shopping buses for eligible Lower Mountains residents - \$9. Phone 4759 2403.

Off- Pension Thursdays to Springwood shops; Pension Fridays to Nepean Square & Penrith Plaza.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**This newsletter is proudly sponsored by the Blue Mountains City Council
Supporting the provision of community services information locally.**