

## Welcome to August 2013 PPSS Newsletter



Welcome to another information packed PPSS newsletter. Well it has been a while since I spoke with you – it has been a busy and exciting year of service for PPSS. Our Annual General Meeting is coming up on November 6 and it is a great time to reflect on the years achievements – and there is a lot to celebrate. More news on our Annual General Meeting in coming weeks.

The Melbourne Marathon is fast approaching and I have made a \$100 donation to support Emily and PPSS. This is a major fundraising event for PPSS and one that I trust you will all support. In this edition my fellow Board member Emily has provided details about how you can [sponsor](#) her and help raise money for PPSS. You may even want to register yourself – Emily's article provides all the details. If 21km is just that bit too long for you, Board member Ross Mackiggan will be doing the 10km run.

I also wanted to bring to your attention the Stability and Permanent Care Consultation Forum survey. The survey is open until 1 September and we really want to gather your views. See more details including the link to the survey in this edition of the newsletter.

As you know Jennifer Duncan, our CEO left PPSS on 14 August to take up a role in South Australia. Jennifer made a major contribution to PPSS through all the work she undertook with her team of staff and the many PPSS volunteers. I and members of the Board want to thank Jennifer and acknowledge the major contribution she has made to the organisation. Jennifer remains a member of PPSS – our only South Australian member. The Board is in the process of recruiting a General Manager to lead the Organisation in the future – this process has commenced and we will be expecting to make an appointment in September. In the meantime we have been fortunate to engage the services of Kylie O'Connell who is assisting us through this transition.

We'll enjoy this edition of the newsletter. We welcome your comments and any feedback you may have.

Enjoy reading



Chris Lockwood  
Chair

## Dates for Your Diary

Wednesday August 28

**Week 4** of 6 week course

7.00 – 10.00 pm

**Parenting Children in Permanent Care and Adoption**

Wednesday August 28

10.00 – 11.30 am

**NEW Journal Club, Werribee**

Wednesday September 4

**Week 5** of 6 week course

7.00 – 10.00 pm

**Parenting Children in Permanent Care and Adoption**

Thursday September 5

8.00 – 9.30 pm

**Journal Club, Collingwood**

Tuesday September 10

10.00 am– 2.00pm

**Life Story Work**

Wednesday September 11

**Week 6** of 6 week course (final week)

7.00 – 10.00 pm

**Parenting Children in Permanent Care and Adoption**

Tuesday September 17

7.30 – 9.30 pm

**Identity and Search**

Thursday October 3

8.00 – 9.30 pm

**Journal Club, Collingwood**

Friday October 11

10.00-2.30pm

**Raising Teens**

Information including venues and how to book your place, visit

[www.ppss.org.au/event-calendar-all](http://www.ppss.org.au/event-calendar-all)

## Life Story Work



PPSS is very excited to be rolling out a new program on Life Story Work, to begin on Tuesday 10 September. As part of the process of developing this new program, and in line with our commitment to ensuring the program reflects the lived experience and needs of our members, we held a member consultation. Many thanks to the eight members who attended a trial run of the training on 23 July, and then provided valuable and in depth feedback. We are confident that this feedback has helped to shape our Life Story Work program into a relevant and valuable tool for families formed through permanent care and adoption.

Date: Tuesday September 10  
Time: 10.00am—2.00pm  
Venue: Hawthorn Community House, 32 Henry Street, Hawthorn  
Booking: <http://www.trybooking.com.au/DJOV>  
Cost: PPSS members \$55.00 with Life Story Book publication  
PPSS members \$40.00 without publication  
PPSS members \$40.00 (concession) with publication

### So what is Life Story Work?

Life Story Work is a therapeutic tool to use with your children. "Life story work allows children to explore safely and securely how they have reached where they are and to attach identity and meaning to their lives, to consider, to think, to understand and to reflect." (Rose & Philpot, 2005)

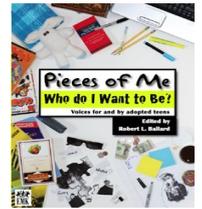
Children of families created through permanent care and adoption often require additional guidance from the adults in their lives to ensure they have opportunities to record their history. They may also need help reflecting upon the impact of this narrative on their life. Life Story Work is a researched and highly regarded mechanism for providing structure and purpose to children and families engaged in this activity. It includes communication and documentation tools to encourage identity and self-esteem development such as life books, journal writing, life maps, life narratives, therapeutic play, and family trees.

So join us for Life Story Work and learn about;

- Current research and thinking on Life Story Work and the role it can take in family life
- Shared learning, reflection and problem-solving
- A 'toolbox' of suggested strategies and activities
- The opportunity to explore, in a practical way, how to create and use life stories.

### Book Review

#### Pieces of Me: Who do I want to be? Voices for and by adopted teens



By Robert L. Ballard (ed.)

*"I tell you this story because for too many years, People have told my stories for me.*

*I am ready to speak for myself.*

*So where do I begin?"*

Juli Jeong Martin

*Pieces of Me* is a collection of stories, poems, art, quotes, provocative questions and more, for the young adopted teen who wants to figure out his or her story, and start putting pieces of the puzzle together. It is a book of many different voices from ages 11-63 speaking honestly and authentically about what it means to be adopted. The voices come from all over the world, some are transracial, some are from foster care, and a few are adoptive parents and birth parents.

An easy book to pick up and read from any page, with photos and other visuals to make the stories and speakers come alive. Suitable for ages 13 and over. To purchase this book visit our website <http://shop.ppss.org.au/prod834.htm>

## Report on newsletter and website survey



Thank you to everyone who completed an online survey during June about the PPSS electronic newsletter and website. This brief report is part of PPSS's commitment to feeding back to members the results of our evaluation activities.

The 49 members who answered the questionnaire were very positive about the newsletter – both its current format (that is, its design and 3-4 page length) and its range of content. They generally read every issue or most issues, and they read or scanned most articles. They shared the newsletter with others, and members who had professional roles said that they gave it to their clients.

PPSS members mainly used the newsletter to identify events, locate resources and read about issues relevant to them, but many also enjoyed photos and reports of past events. Links to the PPSS website and other websites were well utilised. Some people would like to see more content relating to personal stories and child development issues, but generally members appeared satisfied with the balance of articles.

The website was also viewed positively overall. While most people had not visited it more than a few times, many regularly recommended the website to others. Suggestions for improvement included posting more content on some pages and, like the newsletter, including content about people's personal stories and child development issues and challenges.

Altogether, the electronic newsletter plays a key role in providing information about events and issues and engaging members in a variety of ways, and it is highly valued. The website is also viewed positively but as a little less useful or engaging than the newsletter. However, the website has an important role as the 'public face' of the organisation, and it is often recommended to others by members.

About two-thirds of our respondents were possibly interested in joining an online discussion forum for articles and issues. However, most would want a guarantee of anonymity and careful moderation of the discussion if they were going to participate.

If you would like any more information about the survey results, please feel free to contact Julie Contole, on email [juliecontole@gmail.com](mailto:juliecontole@gmail.com) or telephone 0417 397 050.

The Evaluation Team  
Julie Contole and Gaye Mitchell

## Identity and Search

Tuesday September 17  
7.30—9.00pm



Don't miss the next discussion evening for PPSS members on the topic of *Identity and Search!*

Identity development can be a complex process for young people with permanent care and adoption experiences. Find out more about how the search for identity and self-understanding can be supported by the access to records and finding connections that help to complete their story.

Hear two guest speakers bring their different experiences to this topic: Helen Freris the National Services Manager from International Social Service- Australia, and Dr Margaret Kertesz, Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne, "Who am I?" Project.

Discussions will be interactive, and include:

- The importance of records and record keeping in supporting identity
- Locating and accessing records – locally and overseas
- Social and emotional aspects of reconnection
- Using internet and social media in the tracing process

**Date:** Tuesday September 17

**Time:** 7.30pm—9.00pm

**Venue:** PPSS, 135 Mt Alexander Rd, Flemington

**Booking:** <http://www.trybooking.com.au/DHEM>

## Raising Teens – New PPSS Training!

We are delighted to promote one of our new training events – *Raising Teens in Permanent Care and Adoption*.

*Raising Teens* has been developed in consultation with the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare. We are very thankful to the wonderful input and insights our members have shared during the development of this project. PPSS member views have been represented via participation in a reference group, electronic survey conducted by the Lighthouse Institute and attendance at a trail training session on August 16. Along with staff, interested members were taken through the draft training. The group was able to offer the developer valuable insight and experience.

We look forward to offering the final version of this excellent training program to our members. Bookings are currently being taken for our first session.

### *Raising Teens - Program Overview*

Adolescence is a time of great transformation. Teen behaviour at the best of times confusing, and coupled with additional issues related to permanent care and adoption this transition can have a significant impact on relationships within families. Behaviours connected to attachment and trust; developmental trauma; identity; emotional regulation; and grief and loss often emerge in significant ways during teen years.. *Raising Teens* explores these concepts and helps parents to:

- work collaboratively with their teenager to build the young person's emotional and social skills within and outside of the family;
- resolve behavioral issues placing family relationships at risk;
- and identify when outside therapeutic services may be required.

This four hour initial training will be complemented by a 2 hour follow up discussion and support session.

**Date:** Friday October 11  
**Time:** 10.00am—2.30pm  
(follow up session November 8 at 10.00am)  
**Venue:** Flemington Community Centre, 25 Mt Alexander Rd, Flemington  
**Booking:** online via <http://www.trybooking.com.au/CZAK> by October 4

## Adult Adoptees Stories

Parents are often interested in hearing

young people's lived experience of adoption. On the 24th July, PPSS held an Adult Adoptees Stories evening presented in an unusual format of facilitated discussion in a relaxed and informal setting.

*"Covered a lot of information on a range of topics I had not previously thought of".*

Thirteen people came together on a wintery evening to listen to 3 wonderful speakers who were kind enough to share their experiences about being raised in Australia through adoption. Each speaker shared with such genuine openness and honesty. They spoke of various topics such as connection with culture, transitions, being adopted, loss and healing and the things adoptive parents must know.

Parents shared some wonderful feedback on what touched them about the evening;

- *"Really appreciated to hear about the different life experiences/perspective of being adopted".*
- *"Very worthwhile and would definitely come again".*
- *"Covered a lot of information on a range of topics I had not previously thought of".*
- *"Wonderful session – grateful to the participants for being so honest and sharing".*

A special thank you again to all the Adult Adoptee speakers for sharing such valuable insights about their experiences of being adopted, it was a moving experience for all involved.

*"Wonderful session – grateful to the participants for being so honest and sharing".*

## Stability and Permanent Care Consultation Forum

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of July the Stability and Permanent Care Consultation Forum was jointly hosted by Post Placement Support Service, the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare and the Foster Care Association of Victoria.

This forum was set up as part of the Stability Planning and Permanent Care project which was the Victorian Government's response to the May 2012 report *Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry. Recommendation 23 of the report stated that barriers should be identified and removed to achieve more timely and permanent placements for children who are unable to be reunited with their biological family.*

The aims of the Stability Planning and Permanent Care project are to:

- Identify those children under 10 years old who have been in care for more than 12 months and do not have an activated permanent care plan and identify opportunities to improve stability and permanency for these children.
- Identify recommendations for changes to occur in practice, legislation and policy to increase the quality of stability and permanent care planning.

The participants at the forum were foster carers, kinship carers, permanent care parents, adoptive parents and agency workers with experience of the permanent care system. They were invited to discuss their experiences of permanent care arrangements for children in their care.

The key points that were raised in discussion were:

- The need for funded access to attachment/trauma specialist services for children post legalisation
- Significant delays for permanent care planning for some children in out-of-home care
- Limited lifelong service provision to support permanent care families, which may impact stability within the family
- Permanent care family expenses related to legal costs with court processes around permanent care.

Many families contributed valuable input about the system and its impact on stability and parenting children in permanent care.

If you were unable to attend the forum and would like to provide comment, or even if you attended the forum and have further comments to offer, we are still taking feedback on the Stability Planning and Permanent Care system through our online survey. This will take only minutes for you to complete, and will help further inform DHS's project. Feedback can be provided at:

[www.surveymonkey.com/s/G7F2XTS](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/G7F2XTS) **Comments are due by midnight on Sunday, 1 September.**

The *Stability Planning and Permanent Care* action research project began in February 2013 and will conclude in mid-2014. We will keep you advised of opportunities to engage with the project, as well as its outcomes, as it continues to progress.

## Need help negotiating access arrangements?

The Melbourne Family Relationship Centre (FRC) has a Family Dispute Resolution Service which is open to anyone involved in caring for a child including: permanent care families, birth parents, grandparents and other significant people in a child's life.

The service assists parties to reach workable arrangements regarding their children. It can help people to discuss issues, look at options and work out how best to reach an agreement.

Family dispute resolution practitioners are impartial and keep the best interests of the child as paramount. Family Relationship Centres can help families with any issues, including negotiations around Permanent Care Orders such as access arrangements, which require mediation and impact on children.

Some fees may apply, depending on financial circumstances. Healthcare or pension card holders are exempt from fees.

Click [here](#) for more information about the Melbourne Family Relationship Centre, or visit our website's Resources page, navigating to our External Information section, available at [www.ppss.org.au](http://www.ppss.org.au)

To make an appointment, contact the Melbourne FRC on Phone: 8625 3666 or email: [melbadmin@melbournefrc.org.au](mailto:melbadmin@melbournefrc.org.au)

## Let's get behind Emily and support PPSS

Hi my name is Emily, I'm an adoptee, and I'm terrified about this thing that is coming up in October. And I'd really appreciate your support.

'This thing' is the 21km race as part of the Melbourne Marathon 2013, and I'm hoping to raise awareness about permanent care (whether formed through kinship care, foster care or an adoption and permanent care organisation) and adoptive families. I'm also aiming to raise some much-needed funds for the invaluable services and programs for our families that are provided by PPSS.

Adoption - and what it means for my family and me continues to change and throw curveballs. Sometimes it doesn't feature in my general musings, other days it deals blows to the gut, heart and head in rapid succession and with painful accuracy.

Sorting through all of this is a haphazard activity for me. Sometimes just having a coffee with someone who just gets it is the treat, other times reading or hearing about other adoption experiences gives me a light bulb moment. In short, having informed networks and a range of support has made a huge impact on me. And this is why I joined PPSS.

With the direction, effort and care of committed staff, volunteers and families - many of who have lived experience of permanent care and adoption - PPSS and its programs, resources and networks make a huge difference to Victorian families. Last year PPSS connected and supported over 4,000 families and individuals.

So while my Melbourne winter months would normally be spent hibernating under several doonas or at best busting out some yoga, this **October 13** I will be doing my best to complete my first ever half marathon course around Melbourne. Trotting with me will be my best friend and partner, Alex (who also happens to be my personal trainer!), as well as other members of PPSS and the PPSS Board.

I am ~~dreading~~ looking forward to this amazing race and training hard. I've worked out how to run with five layers of down, fleece and windproof shells and can be spotted trotting around the northeast. (Watch for a short, waddling snowman. Do say hi if you spot me. I also accept steaming hot chocolate).

I'd really appreciate your support of PPSS and my 21km endeavour! There are three things that you could do that'll each take less than 5 minutes:

**Sponsor me!** Every donation counts. **All donations go directly to supporting our families, and a tax deductible receipt will be emailed to you.** Please see <http://www.gofundraise.com.au/beneficiary/PPSS> for my page or go fundraise: <http://melbournemarathon2013.gofundraise.com.au/page/EMC>

**Share** this article with other people who might be interested.

**Trot with me!** The more the merrier. Please consider joining me and fundraising for PPSS. (Yes, maybe the event will take a little more than a few minutes – but signing up only takes 5!) There are walk and run events for the whole family– 3km, 5.7km, 10km, 21km, 42km. You can sign up for events and fundraising [here](#). Remember to select 'Post Placement Support Service' when you're setting up your fundraising page!

A special thank you to those who have supported PPSS and me along the way – particularly the Tonic PT personal training studio in Carlton. Tonic PT has really helped me take those first few faltering strides on the treadmill, and is a keen supporter of PPSS' work. Whether you're up for a walk, jog or run for PPSS, or you just want to win the next Boston marathon, Tonic PT has individual coaching as well as running squads for the absolute faltering novice (me) right through to serious runners with short shorts. Check out the Tonic PT website here: [www.tonicpt.com.au](http://www.tonicpt.com.au)



**From Strength to Strength: improving the care system for children and young people through participation.** Will take place in Canberra, to coincide with the city's centenary, at the National Convention Centre over the weekend of 22 to 24 November. The conference will be open to all children and young people in care in Australia. The conference will also be open to and appealing for carers, government officials and those working in the sector.

The overall purpose of **Strength to Strength: improving the care system for children and young people through participation** is to provide a national forum for young people with a care experience to learn and grow, and to connect with their peers, and those working within the system. The collective aim is to enhance community awareness and to reduce the stigma associated with children and young people with a care experience and to provide them with an avenue to feel empowered, informed, and to have a say and be heard.

More information about the event can be seen on the conference website, <http://www.strengthtostrength2013.com.au/>

- Early bird registrations are open and will close on the 30 September.
- Grant applications for young people are also being accepted and will close on the 3 September.

## Can you recommend a good lawyer?

PPSS is working to bring our members a forum on legal issues affecting families formed through permanent care and adoption. Through this project we also hope to develop a series of fact sheets on common legal issues experienced by our members.

At the moment we are in the planning stages and seeking your suggestions for individual practitioners or legal firms with a demonstrated understanding of family law as it relates to care and adoption. We would also like any suggestions you might have regarding questions for us to cover in our member forum.

To suggest a question or recommend a lawyer, just email Daniel Hunt at [daniel@ppss.org.au](mailto:daniel@ppss.org.au) Daniel is a legal studies student on placement with PPSS until the end of October.

## Thank you!

PPSS thanks its supporters: **The William Buckland Foundation, The Collie Foundation, The Felton Bequest Committee** and **The Truby & Florence Williams Charitable Trust**, which are managed by **ANZ Trustees**; and **The Jack Brockhoff Foundation**. PPSS depends on your support. Donations enable PPSS to continue to deliver high quality programs in support of families formed through permanent care and adoption. [Please give](#). Donations over \$2.00 are tax-deductible.



australian  
childhood  
trauma  
group



### PPSS Partner Event – ACT Group Training Free Ticket offers

#### **At Cutting Edge, Self Harming Behaviours, Understanding why and what to do**

Speaker: Gregory Nicolau

Date: September 13, 2013, 10.00am—1.00pm

#### **Mad, Bad or Sad, A Pathway to Healing**

Speaker: Gregory Nicolau

Date: October 11, 2013, 10.00am—4.00pm

#### **Dangerous Liaisons**

Speaker: Gregory Nicolau

Date: November 11, 2013, 10.00am—4.00pm

\*1 FREE ticket is available to each of these events.  
Claim the ticket via email or telephone.

To email: list the title of the seminar in the header and in the body of the email, include your name, address and contact phone numbers to: [info@ppss.org.au](mailto:info@ppss.org.au), or

Telephone: 9020 1838 at least two weeks before the scheduled event dates, leaving your name, contact number and preferred session.

### **\$900 000 for workshops for parents and carers of children with disability.**

Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers, Amanda Rishworth, has announced \$900,000 in funding for close to 300 workshops over two years in locations across the country as part of the Federal Labour Government's Better Start for Children with Disability initiative. The Better Start Early Days Workshops aim to provide parents and carers all over the country with practical information about eligibility for Better Start funding as well as advice about the assistance that is available to them to help them care for their child with disability.