

ANNUAL REPORT

1995



KENSINGTON WOMEN'S GROUP CHILD CARE
ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

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KENSINGTON WOMEN'S GROUP CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION INC.

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1995 COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT MEMBERS

Willy Maddock

Helen Frawley

Debbie Gath

Nafisa Amini

Loan Le

Amando Tores

Maureen Fagan

1995 WORKERS, VOLUNTEERS AND COMMITTEE

Lyn Healy
 Freda Tarr
 Joyce Morgan
 Donna McMahon
 Wendy Toohey
 Yvonne Phung
 Nafisa Amini
 Barbara Bohnke
 Andrea Shea
 Amina Diria
 Carolyn Fuller
 Mary Anne Misfud
 Catherine Gow
 Thuong Vuong
 Loan Le
 Hai Huynh
 Carmello Misfud
 Diane Duckworth
 Beryl Forster
 Kenny Reardon
 Ruby Guy
 Debbie Gath
 Trevor McGregor
 Sandro Onofrio
 Ella Butler
 Edna Lunn
 Kim Lan Hua
 Chi Tran
 Willy Maddock
 Mai Phuong
 Catherine Healy
 Nicole Yates
 Heather Barnes
 Simone Harding
 Jan Hase
 Wendy Lampert
 Judith Dahl

Ich Nguyen
 Dan Basso
 Nigel Lampert
 Sylvia Tollit
 Amy Lau Chi
 Lisa Vuong
 Tanya Martin
 Anne Zammut
 Donna Moore
 Temalesi Longanimasi
 Venessa Collingburn
 Joy Fraser
 Michelle Wearne
 Karla Montavalda
 Amando Tores
 Trinh Nguyen
 Le Thi Nguyet
 Sen Nguyen
 Robert Firth
 Sally Banks
 Brian Scanlon
 Maureen Fagan
 Albie Kennedy
 David Maddock
 Mick Cahill
 Bisharo Mahommed
 Hamdi Mohammed
 Ann Beck
 Helen Frawley
 Bernadette Suter
 Allison Rowles
 Kaye Westlowe
 Judy Tenenbaum
 Jan Copping
 Maree James
 Maureen Thorp
 Christine Gordon



KENSINGTON WOMEN'S GROUP CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION INC.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- To provide quality Child Care including full-time, part-time and occasional care.
- To provide a welcoming environment which is universally accessible and free of discrimination, to foster personal growth and development.
- To provide an environment which encourages self-determination by which individuals may seek choice and take control of their own lives.
- To encourage enhancement of skills and knowledge to develop each individual's potential as members of the community.
- To provide an environment where people may develop community networks and supportive relationships.
- To provide the opportunity for individual self expression, social interaction and personal achievement and growth.
- To provide access to information and facilitate sharing of resources.
- To provide opportunities (services and activities) which promote a creative, purposeful and self-fulfilling utilisation of leisure time.

HISTORY OF KENSINGTON WOMEN'S GROUP

CHILD CARE

A neighbourhood house is a house or other similar building, that hosts a variety of programs, activities and services involving a diverse range of people from the local community.

The first Neighbourhood House began in Victoria in the early 1970's to bring people together and enhance their opportunities. They support individuals and groups within the community, particular those who are disadvantaged. Neighbourhood houses are managed by community-based committees of management. There are now over 400 neighbourhood houses in Victoria, which have developed in different ways in different areas. Neighbourhood houses were started for varying reasons; Kensington Women's Group was started as a support group for women, but others began as a common interest group, or people who get together to learn something specific i.e. literacy. Because there was no government policy about neighbourhood houses, there was no set pattern for growth or development, or for funding. Many were run originally by volunteers. Money was sought from anywhere possible to pay co-ordination and to run programs. Originally a little money came from churches or local government.

Kensington Women's Group was lucky to be approved for full-time funding from the Federal Government under a Family Support Scheme, but this was unusual. By the early 1980's, some neighbourhood houses managed to get some funding from Community Services Victoria (CSV). By 1986 CSV had developed a Neighbourhood House Co-ordination Program to provide selected houses with some co-ordination, plus an annual amount to cover gas, electricity etc. It is important to realise that houses are all different and get funding from a variety of sources in varying amounts.

Since about 1985, the City of Melbourne has given the Women's Group an increasing amount of money to run general programs, including camps. Since the changes in local government boundaries, the City of Melbourne are no longer responsible for us, despite the fact that 90% of our participants live in Melbourne. Currently we are in the boundaries of the City of Moonee Valley.

Kensington Women's Group Child Care Association Inc., now receives funding from a range of government bodies as well as through fundraising and donations for various classes and activities. We have grown from a fully volunteer organisation focused on the support needs for women in Kensington, to a large and well established Association which offers both full-time, part-time and occasional child care, accredited educational and vocational classes as well as support groups, recreational activities, self help and community education and organisational activities.



IN THE BEGINNING
A PHOTOGRAPH FROM 1979 - DO YOU RECOGNISE ANY OF THESE WOMEN?

CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

The Committee of Management continued to meet throughout the year on a monthly basis. Increasingly the Management Committee found itself dealing with complex legal and monetary matters such as employment policies, insurance and funding. Whilst funding bodies (those providing the money) expect that the Management committee will reflect the make-up of the community, they do not take this into account when writing to us or in what they expect us to do.

Documents arrived full of jargon, difficult to understand even if English is one's first language. The Management Committee has worked very hard to understand their role and to act in the best interest of the whole House.

Serious effort has been put into discussions about the programs the Women's Group might develop, job descriptions, the Accreditation Process for the Child Care, staffing arrangements and the formation of policies for the whole House. Sometimes the outcomes have not been very clear and the staff of both the Women's Group and the Child Care may not have felt well supported.

Upon reflection, I wonder whether, in the future, Staff and Management Committee might benefit from the assistance of a mutually acceptable independent facilitator in some discussions, especially staffing arrangements. The recent decision to delegate the drafting of policies for the House to a professional could also be another way of dealing with some of our difficulties in a realistic way.

A decision was reached during the year that all staff should be either employees or on contract. This change affected the cleaner, who entered into a contractual agreement on 7th August 1995. Mick Cahill's contract terminated on 21st December. In early 1996 the job was advertised and the 1996 contract was awarded to Robert Firth, after a month's trial.

The transition to Association from Co-Operative has had a mixed outcome. We were able to overhaul our Constitution so that it reflects the ethos of the House. However, the aim of becoming eligible for tax relief has not yet been achieved, and the change has caused unforeseen administrative problems for the Child Care.

I resigned officially as Chairwoman on 1st November 1995 after being on sick leave and realising the need to re-organise my work-load, at which time Maureen Fagan became the interim Chairwomen. I have enjoyed my time as Chairwoman. Involvement with the House has opened a window into this ever changing community, which has been very significant in my role as Anglican priest in Kensington. Moreover, it has given me the privilege and pleasure of working with Staff and Committee who are committed to serving this community and this Neighbourhood House and Child Care Centre.

Willy Maddock, Priest.



ACTING CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

I took over as Acting Chairwoman in November 1995 when Willy resigned from the position. In my time as A/Chairwoman I was involved in selecting and appointing the new cleaner for the Child Care Centre, as well as undertaking the official responsibilities required by funding bodies.

Willy's report details the significant events and issues throughout the past year. I would like to thank the staff and all the committee of management for their hard work throughout the last year and hope 1996 will be as interesting and successful.

As one of the founding women of the Neighbourhood House, I have found it exciting to see the massive changes in the last 15/16 years. We have grown from a small group of women who supported each other in the early 1980's to seeing the House extended to include more women and families and seeing the Child Care Centre being established. Comparing what we started with in the 1970's, with what we have today, it is a massive achievement for all those who have been involved and who worked hard over the years. Today Kensington Women's Group Child Care Association Inc., is now recognised throughout Victoria as one of the great Neighbourhood Houses. This is an achievement to be proud of.

Maureen Fagan
A/Chairwoman

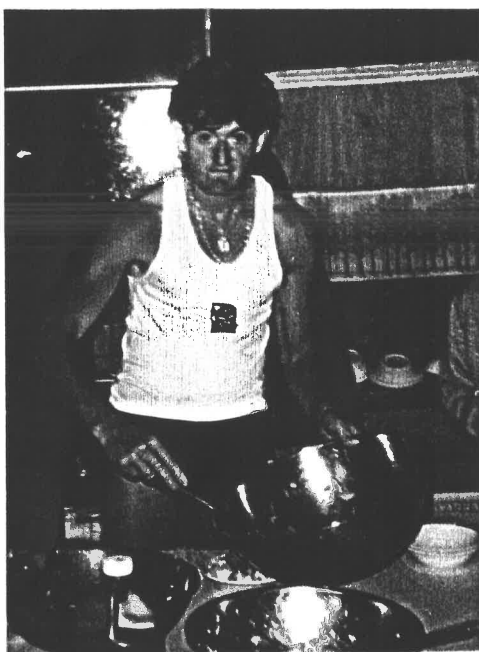


NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE REPORT

The Neighbourhood House is run by Carolyn Fuller (full-time) Co-ordinator and outreach worker and Catherine Gow (part-time) Further Education Co-ordinator. The Further Education programs and 0.5 co-ordinator are funded through the Regional Council of Adult, Community and Further Education and the House Co-ordinator is funded through Health & Community Services. In the last year we have both seen many changes within the Kensington community and within the House itself. Yet with all the changes, both within the political and social environments of Victoria, Kensington has been able to successfully hold on to its own identity, to stay united against forced changes and is still a very invigorating and strong community.

1995 was a year of intense activity with a number of changes occurring at the Statewide and Regional levels and with many new and exciting programs being offered at the Neighbourhood House.

Regionally, the Central Metropolitan Regional Council was amalgamated with the Western Regional Council. This has meant that the Neighbourhood House is now in the Central Western Metropolitan Region of Adult, Community and Further Education. Although at this stage the change in regions has had little impact on the work and funding of the Neighbourhood House there is some real anxiety that the house and/or the Co-ordination position may not continue to receive the same levels of funding in the future. We will have to wait and see.



Additionally the 'State, Adult, Community and Further Education Plan 1996-1998 was announced. This plan states that "over the next three years policy will be directed towards achieving a State Training System where government purchases places in training rather than funds courses and providers". It is still unclear what impact this will have on the further education courses offered at the house and whether we will still be funded for co-ordination.

In 1995 we offered a combination of 'old faithful' courses and activities which have been very popular over the years, including Pre & Ante natal exercise, cottage craft, Gentle exercise, walking group and community lunches on Wednesday. The success of the weekly trips to Victoria Market and swimming at Footscray have continued to be in demand and very popular. We also introduced many new courses and activities. For the first time, the Neighbourhood House offered the accredited 'Certificate in Child Care (Assistant)' which was a six month full time course. 12 students successfully obtained the full certificate, whilst another 4 received certificates for specific units. We also ran the St. John Level 2 First Aid course, Food Hygiene for Food Handlers, and three levels of English as a second language classes. We initiated the African Women's Group which meets on Thursday for a range of recreational, craft and information activities, and of course our middle-aged and elderly Indo-chinese groups continue to thrive with regular information sessions and outings being very popular.

We were fortunate to receive substantial funding from DEET (Department of Employment , Education and Training) to conduct a six months intensive Literacy course for African women. This course was desperately needed and proved to be an outstanding success with all the women involved gaining literacy and English skills as well as getting acquainted with the Kensington community and Australian life. Unfortunately, this funding was a one-off so we were not able to continue offering literacy for this group of women, however many have entered classes here and elsewhere. We are continuing to explore other funding options.



During 1995, we offered a range of cooking classes both during the day and at night. This was our first attempt at night classes and the night vegetarian cooking was a hit! Also offered was a 'Healthy Living Advice' course, Aromatherapy and massage,

With the help of funding from the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, we have continued to offer a range of *active* activities for older participants the gentle exercise class, walking group

and swimming have all increased in numbers with people from non English speaking background actively joining in.

During 1995 we held two family camps. In January, 110 people went to the Howqua Valley to a beautiful camp situated by the river not far from Mansfield, and in July we went to Blampied, between Daylesford and Ballarat, which, despite the snow!!! was extremely successful. The camps are an integral part of the Neighbourhood House program and are a wonderful opportunity for people from many different backgrounds and cultures to share work and relaxation together. These camps are vital in ensuring that people in Kensington have access to affordable and enjoyable holidays. The camps not only include families, but also many single adults who have the opportunity of forming friendships and networks across cultures and ages. In the past we have received some funding from the City of Melbourne to help finance these camps, but now with the changes in Local Government boundaries, the Neighbourhood House is located in the City of Moonee Valley and they have promised us funding for 1996 to allow the camps to continue.

Kensington has a wonderful sense of community and we have had valuable relationships with many local community groups. Some of our programs are run jointly, for example the pre & ante natal exercise class with the Health Centre and the young parents group with Holy Rosary. We have constant discussions and networks with many other groups and we are extremely grateful to the Kensington Joint Congregation for the use of their hall to run activities and classes, and also to the Kensington Primary School for the use of their Gymnasium and classrooms for some of our activities.

We give a special thank-you to Kenny Reardon for the continual use of his buses, without which many of our activities would be impossible. We would also like to acknowledge our gratitude to Lyn Healy, 'Ms. Green Fingers', for the revitalisation of the House's garden, to Joyce Morgan and Freda Tarr for their help in the office and to Carmello Mifsud for his handy person skills, We are sure the house would fall down without him. THANK-YOU. There are many people who contribute in various important ways to the smooth running of the House. THANK-YOU.

Thank-you to all the McCracken Street Child Care Staff, taking our telephone messages, putting up with our mess and our noise and for their co-operation, support and tolerance. THANK-YOU

We would as well, like to thank the members of the committee of management for their hard and continual work throughout the year. We know that it is not always easy and we appreciate their dedication, sense of humor and support. THANK-YOU.

Catherine Gow
Further Education Co-ordinator

Carolyn Fuller
Neighbourhood House Co-ordinator



MCCRACKEN STREET CHILD CARE REPORT

1995 was once again a pleasant, yet busy year with several changes occurring during the year. Yvonne Vuong, our part-time worker gave birth to a baby boy 'Harrison' on August 31st. Yvonne is still on maternity leave and hopes to return to work in the middle of August 1996 and existing staff retained their normal days and hours.

During the year, we had several 'Parent Information Nights' with topics discussed such as sleep problems, bed wetting, eating habits. The information sessions were a success and we hope to continue running them throughout 1996. Many parents commented that the information they received was very valuable and they were able to put it into practice at home.

Very successful story telling sessions were held at Kensington Primary School and were greatly enjoyed by all of the children. We would like to thank the school for the opportunity to attend the sessions.

Our excursions were very limited this year as our children were much younger in age than previous years, however we still enjoyed a visit to Queen's park to feed the ducks and enjoyed a picnic lunch. We also went on a trip to the Zoo and to the Victoria Market.

The Child Care Centre program was made up of various themes, such as colours, shapes, seasons, transport etc. Our activities were fairly structured, yet made flexible whenever required so that the children were able to freely enjoy all the various themes. A shop and a post office were made up in the corner of the Centre at different times throughout the year, and were a great hit with children receiving letters and taking it in turns to be the shop keeper or the shopper. The Centre was often decorated in the colours that we were exploring e.g. green. Everything was presented in the colour green - green paint, green paste, green play dough etc. Lunch was even green - green spinach and pasta was served, followed by a green cake and green milk.

Several child care students attended the Centre throughout the year for their practical placement. Thuong successfully completed the Certificate in Child Care (Assistant) course run through the Neighbourhood House.

New floor coverings were laid in the Child Care Centre during the Christmas holidays. It has made the Centre brighter, feel bigger and certainly cleaner. The floor coverings were funded by the Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health, through a upgrading capital grant. We are still waiting for our review from the National Child Care Accreditation Committee.

We would like to thank all parents who were involved in our cooking and laundry rosters - your help was gratefully appreciated and also a special mention to our gardener, Lyn Healy who does a terrific job.

Donna McMahon & Andrea Shea
Co-ordinators





FANCY HATS AT THE WINTER CAMP.

THANK-YOU TO THE FOLLOWING FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN 1995

*Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health
Health & Community Services*

Council of Adult, Community & Further Education

Office of Training and Further Education

Vic Health Promotion foundation

Ethnic Affairs

City of Melbourne

City of Moonee Valley

Department of Employment, Education & Training

Health Department