

Julius Kulhan— Making Changes



When Julius Kulhan got his job as a School Crossing Supervisor a whole community came together and united in more ways than one. He sought and succeeded in getting substantial alterations that would benefit everyone. He was also the catalyst for change that altered public perceptions of disabled people working in the community. Julius has been employed as the RTA School Crossing Supervisor at Balgowlah North Primary School for over a year.

Julius' position is one of responsibility. It was a difficult position to apply for, as the selection procedure and criteria are quite extensive and strict. There are so many standards and rules that need to be followed when working with traffic at a crossing. Julius also had to pass numerous personal checks, which are necessary when you want to work with children. It took him three months to go from presenting his application to actually working. Julius finds his position very rewarding as he constantly has to manage

the complexity of road traffic and the often sporadic, spontaneous actions of children. He wanted the position because it was a good opportunity for him. It was also close to home and gave him the opportunity to have school holidays off.

The parents feel safer with Julius on guard, as do the staff of the school, because of the responsibility he applies to his job. When people from the community see him, even when he is not working, they often come over to say hello; especially the children, he will occasionally become surrounded by enthusiastic youngsters.

Julius ascertained, when he had been working on the crossing, that it was more than just a hazard, it was dangerous. He noticed that the gradient from the pathway to the road made it difficult for prams and scooters. Not a good situation for parents and children. Worse though were the cases where people had tripped and fallen. Knowing that this was not the ideal situation for a pedestrian crossing, and being pro-active in his work environment, Julius worked with SEDS and Balgowlah North Public School to put an application in to Warringah Council to fix the crossing. The Council responded very quickly. They ripped up the entire crossing and rebuilt it.

Julius is happier now that he is working, he feels that he has a purpose and is doing a worthwhile job for the community and now his own children are even prouder of their father.

QUOTE

Change your thoughts and you change your world

Norman Vincent Peale



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Time For A Laugh

Hi All

“Rice Pudding” (murder, mayhem, and dessert)

Hot out of the ovens of the NIDA Playwrights Studio, my short play, “Rice Pudding”, will be on at the 2005 Short and Sweet Play Festival at The Seymour Centre.

When: Wed Feb 2nd to Fri 4th at 8pm. Sat 5th at 2pm and 8pm

Where: The Seymour Centre, Cnr of City Rd & Cleveland St, Uni of Sydney, Newtown

Why: Cause I didn't do a bloody playwriting course for nothing

Cost: \$27/\$22

Bookings: 9351 7940. They reckon tix are selling fast, so best to book early.

Cheers Ashley Walker



Managers Report

Welcome to 2005 and our Summer Edition of the Newsletter.

I am sure that 2004 was a busy year for most of us. No matter what last year meant we will all look to a successful year in 2005.

In April this year we will undergo an annual QA (Quality Assurance) audit, which is conducted by an external company called Benchmark Certification. The audit focuses on how SEDS meets the Disability Service Standards and how we provide a service to you.

Last year SEDS was in the final stage of preparing for the introduction of Case Based Funding (CBF) to start on 1st January 2005, a process that has taken many years. However after the Federal election, disability employment services, such as SEDS, had their funding body changed from FACS (Dept of Family and Community Services) to DEWR (Dept of Employment and Workplace Relations) which meant that the full introduction of CBF has been delayed for 6 months. DEWR is responsible for Job Network services who assist able bodied people seek work.

The move to DEWR has created some uncertainties, however DEWR is outcome focussed, which may mean people getting jobs much faster. There may even be more money to assist more people. It is a bit early to tell what the real benefits will be, but at this stage it is "business as usual" and there should be little impact upon our clients.

We would like to thank Meredith (Client Liaison Officer) for organising another great client Christmas party at Sydney Aquarium in December. Also our thanks go to Linmar Travel, who supplied the lunch, the Aquarium for cheap entry and Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority for providing a free lunch area.

Denise Hardingham has moved from SEDS North (Allambie) to work as Project Co-ordinator with SEDS West and South (Parramatta and Liverpool) she has a variety of skills and experience in the disability area.

As we look to the year ahead and as we think of the many challenges, whether it is looking for work, changing careers, working with a new funding body, or QA audit etc, we need to remember the Proverb:

"Where there is no vision the people perish."

So set your mind on what you want to achieve and go for it. You may not be 100% successful but at least you have tried.

Best wishes for 2005.

Tim and Warren

Useful Websites and Contacts

We have had requests from people wanting to know how they can get easy access maps for Sydney. The best site I have found, and definitely the most up to date is

www.transport.nsw.gov.au/using_trans/access-trans-maps.html

If you have been trying to use directory assistance to find a phone number and have ended up using the Sensi 1234 number, remember that you are charged at the cost of 40c to call the number, then 4c a second. Because Telstra is still majority owned by the Government they have to provide a free directory assistance number.

The free directory assistance number is 1223

If you have not used them before, and you are looking for a place where you can search for jobs on the internet a useful one to remember is

www.careersonline.com.au

For anybody that is thinking of getting an apprenticeship to launch them into the workforce try

www.newapprenticeships.gov.au

Do You Need a Holiday? Linmar Travel Helps

We have had enquiries from people who are just having trouble getting to and from work, so I am sure that a few of you may raise your eyebrows and sigh with the frustration of even thinking about going away somewhere for a break. Everybody needs a holiday sometime though.

Eight years ago Maryanne came up with the idea of setting up her own business, a travel agency that would be exclusively for people with disabilities and their family and friends. If you can think of a place you would like to go, Linmar will try to cater to any idea you come up with; if it is physically and financially possible. They take groups of four to six people. If you don't have a group of people that you know to travel with, you can always check with Maryanne to see what holidays are already planned. They often have places available.



L to R: Maria and Maryanne

Maryanne wanted to work for people with a disability because she said, generally speaking, disabled people were a much nicer bunch of people to work for and the holidays were just more fun for everybody all round.

Maryanne employs people, not primarily for their qualifications; firstly they have to have heart and secondly they have to have a great sense of fun. Every

two people on a trip are assigned one carer. All of her carers have first aid certificates and they will do whatever needs to be done. Linmar Travel caters for people with intellectual disabilities from mild to moderate, and for most physical disabilities. A person in a wheelchair does need to be able to transfer. There are five carers, as well as Maryanne available; Maria, Mary, Linley, Nina, and Marie. If you came to the SEDS Christmas party, hopefully you have met them already, as they were the people who arranged lunch.

Some of Linmars best trips are the overseas and interstate trips. It is the opportunity to be introduced to a totally new culture or a wildly different environment that makes these trips so full of unexpected adventure. For some of their clients it is the opportunity to experience things they have never had access to before. One year they took a trip to Disneyland in the United States. Maryanne also remembers a particular trip to Fiji with great affection. Carers and clients got together and had a ball. They danced, drank, ate (a lot), as well as getting involved in all sorts of activities; like the sunset cruise in the glass bottom boat and swimming amongst the coral with the tropical fish. What stays clearly in Maryanne's mind though is the fact that people were so friendly to the whole group. People in the resort made everybody feel very special. But it wasn't just the people who worked there, other people who were on holidays also made the group feel special.

Most of the trips that Linmar arrange for their clients tend to be trips in New South Wales. They usually go on five day trips in New South Wales.

Port Macquarie is a popular destination. On one trip they went on a steam train in Timber Town, an attraction in the district, and the driver was so nice he let the group go on twice for no extra charge. Port Macquarie is a picturesque area with lakes on the coast, not too far North of Sydney. It is not always possible on every trip; but when they can Linmar Travel likes to take their clients on a dolphin cruise. The special part here is that the dolphin cruise is on a Chinese Junk.

Amongst their itinerary this year are Dubbo, Huskisson, Wollongong, as well as a farm stay, which sounds very interesting. You might like to ring Maryanne and have a chat to her about what she does. Being a small company there is a lot of flexibility as to what can be arranged. They like to cater to the individuals taste and needs. Maryanne also likes to add special little touches that give you that personal feeling you can only get when you go with a small company. Would a big corporation give you a photo album at the end of your trip of your holiday away? Linmar is small enough for everybody to know each other and to want to know you.

LINMAR TRAVEL CONSULTANCY

Organizing trips and holidays for people with special needs

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Editors Report

The Client Christmas Party, at the Aquarium and Darling Harbour, was a great day. Wonderful sunshine and lots of very happy fish. Well the sharks looked a bit mean, so nobody decided to go swimming in their tank. We had a few people who met and made friends with others, which was great and really makes the day worthwhile. Clients and staff also got to have some fun together, without having to think about work. I was a bit busy making sure everything went alright, so sorry to any of those people I didn't get a good chance to chat to.

The main complaint that we had about the Christmas party was that it was held at Christmas time. So many people had family commitments and couldn't make it. There has been an idea floating around that maybe we should hold our end of year get together either in November or in January. Of course if we had it in January we might have to consider calling it a beginning of year or new year party. Let me know what you think. My contact details are below. Or you can let your EDO know and they can pass the information on to me.

Apparently I am under orders to make the next one out do the last two, so the gauntlet has been thrown down and the challenge is on. If you have any ideas as to what you would like for your end of year party please let me know. Somebody suggested bungee jumping; but apparently you can detach your retina. There are also suggestion boxes in each office that you put your ideas in. The next parties for each branch are in the mid-year. I am thinking of trying to find some great guest speaker/s and placing time to discuss client needs and issues on the agenda.



Now you may be wondering what all of this has to do with this picture of an ATM. Answer, absolutely nothing. This is the picture of the Commonwealth Bank's wheelchair accessible ATM. It is much lower, so that the keypad and controls are easily accessible, and also it has a recessed knee and toe clearance area under the machine. This should mean that you can get your wheelchair under the ATM and face the machine in a frontal position, rather than

having to turn sideways. This is the only one I know of at the moment.

Town Hall Branch
546-548 George St, Sydney

It is just opposite Town Hall Station. If you get an opportunity, even if you are not with the CBA, please let me know what you think of it. The more feedback we get the easier it will be to ask for more. And that makes it easier to get your wages! You can email directly to tedesco@cba.com.au

Cheers **Meredith McGowan**

Staff Profile – Eehab

Name: Eehab To'mah

Where do you work: SEDS, Liverpool

Position: Employment Development Officer

Health: well rounded

Main passion: my family

Main cause of white hair: my wife

Hobbies: swimming, bike riding with my kids

Favourite sport: soccer



Who would you like to sit next to on a plane? Jesus
Favourite colour: sky blue

Favourite TV: 'The Amazing Race'

Most interesting element of your job: my clients

Most frustrating element of your job: educating potential employers

A place you have never been that you would like to go to: Austria and Canada (Prince Edward Island)