

Welcome to our January/February 2014 Newsletter



It has been fantastic starting as the General Manager for PCA Families. I have come to you with a background in social work, business, training and mediation. I have worked in family counselling, domestic violence, housing, youth, income support, education, and the Out of Home Care sectors.

We are currently very busy in the service developing promotional and marketing packs with our new name; finalising the training calendar and events; and preparing our response to the issues of inter-country adoption. A very big thank-you to members for providing opinion and feedback; your views and experience are what is important to us!

In January we held a “welcome to PCA Families” event at our new premises with a great turn out. The children made their very own family forest and had a special clown entertain them whilst parents had the opportunity to meet and chat with one another. One of our lovely members has written an article on this event which you can read on page 3.

I look forward to meeting you at one of our training events, forums, playgroups or journal clubs. You will notice that Werribee Journal Club now meets on a Monday and has a new address. Please visit our website for more information www.pcafamilies.org.au

Brenda Carmen—*General Manager*

Legal answers for Permanent Care Families

Thanks to Law Foundation funding we are working with the Peninsula Community Legal Centre to develop a number of Information Fact Sheets on legal issues for Permanent Care parents. We will launch these at our Legal Forum on Wednesday, 30 April.

Russell Kennedy Lawyers have kindly agreed to host the forum at their office in La Trobe St, and will provide morning tea. A panel discussion and a “questions and answers” segment will be the highlight. Please stay tuned for more information.

- Date** Wednesday April 30
- Time** 10.00—1.00pm
- Venue** Russell Kennedy Lawyers, 469 Latrobe Street, Melbourne
- Booking** will be open soon
- Transport** public transport is the best option for commuting to the city during business hours. For city parking, please visit www.pcafamilies.org.au
- Cost** gold coin donation



Save the date,
Wed 30 April

Dates for Your Diary

Monday February 17
7.00 – 10.00 pm
Parenting Plus! (Week 1 of 6 sessions)

Monday February 24
7.00 – 10.00 pm
Parenting Plus! (Week 2 of 6 sessions)

Monday February 24
(note new day and venue)
10.00 – 11.30 am
Journal Club, Werribee

Monday March 3
7.00 – 10.00 pm
Parenting Plus! (Week 3 of 6 sessions)

Thursday March 6
8.00 – 9.30 pm
Journal Club, Collingwood

Monday March 17
7.00 – 10.00 pm
Parenting Plus! (Week 4 of 6 sessions)

Monday March 24
(note new day and venue)
10.00 – 11.30 am
Journal Club, Werribee

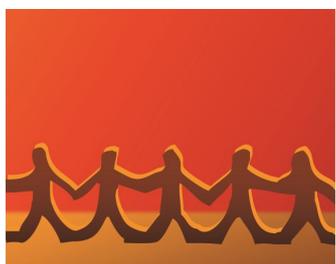
Monday March 24
7.00 – 10.00 pm
Parenting Plus! (Week 5 of 6 sessions)

Monday March 31
7.00 – 10.00 pm
Parenting Plus! (Week 6 of 6 sessions)

Monday April 28
7.00 – 10.00 pm
Life Story Work for parents

Wednesday April 30
10.00 – 1.00 pm
Legal Forum

Information including venues and how to RSVP, visit www.pcafamilies.org.au/event-calendar-all



Life Story Work for Parents

Join us on Monday 28 April evening for an informative and fun session on Life Story Work for Parents.

So what is Life Story Work?

Life Story Work, as we will be presenting it, is a therapeutic parenting tool to use with your children.

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 on Monday April 28 from 7pm till 10pm at our office in the CBD and learn about;

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

Date Monday 28 November

Time 7.00—10.00pm

Venue PCA Families, Level 5, 50 Market Street, Melbourne (CBD)

Booking <http://www.trybooking.com/EBOM>

Parking Surrounding streets or secure city car parks. Visit our website for more information
www.pcafamilies.org.au

Cost PCAF members \$40.00, concession \$20.00

"In essence, life story therapy is not just about the who, what, where, when, why and how of events – it is also about the consequences of those events, and how they drive the child." (Rose, 2012)

Self Harm

Held on Feb 12 at PCAF office



Our quarterly forum, held on February 12, provided our members with an exceptional presentation by George Habib and Anne Pratt, Senior Clinicians from Monash Health, Early in Life Mental Health Service.

The session explored *The Complexities of Self-harm Within the Context of Permanent Care and Adoption*. George and Anne's presentation married both research and their clinical experience beautifully. This complex and at times overwhelming subject was handled with enormous care, leaving parents' feeling informed and empowered to make a difference in their child's life.

Some key messages from the evening included the importance of:

- Emotional coaching
- Robust relationships
- Connectedness
- Communication
- Cohesion
- Being attuned to your young person's needs

"Attention needing behaviours.... not attention seeking behaviours" – G. Habib

Thank you to all the members who attended and a special thanks to the Department of Human Services for sponsoring this event.



Celebrating Permanent Care and Adoptive Families New Offices

On Tuesday 21st January, my son and I excitingly ventured into the city to celebrate PCA Families' new premises.

On arrival, we were warmly welcomed and enjoyed meeting PCA's new General Manager, Brenda Carmen. It was inspiring to witness her evident passion and energy! The afternoon was a wonderful opportunity to meet and chat with others connected through permanent care and adoption.

Predominantly, it was a truly rewarding experience for the children. The afternoon's activities were based on the story "Family Forest" by Kim Kane, illustrated by Lucia Masciullo. Together, the text and illustrations of this book wonderfully presented the extended family as a family forest rather than a family tree. Lindy Bok, PCA's Families' Program Manager beautifully engaged the children in her reading of the story. Delightful chuckles could be heard as the children responded to the humorous illustrations. The book allowed the children to begin to connect with each other. This connection continued as the children discussed what each of their family consisted of.

The idea of the family forest was further explored when the children were given the opportunity to choose a picture from around the room of a forest that appealed to them. An inspiring discussion ensued of how the forests and the trees were the same or different from each other. Some thoughtful comparisons were made:

"Some forests have trees with roots you can see, some don't"

"Some forests have lots of trees, some only have a few"

"Some trees stand tall, some trees are small"

"Some trees have many branches, some only a few"

"Some trees have bark that is dark, some have bark that is light"

"Some trees stand together, some trees stand alone"



One question was raised - "is a tree stronger on its own or when it stands together?"

There was a touching connection made between what the children were expressing and how this related to themselves and family.

The children were asked to represent their own family forest using a variety of art materials. The result presented an array of individual pictures that truly expressed each child's own depiction of their family forest.

For my son, it was a discovery that his family consisted of 21; including his tummy mum, birth dad, his "huggle" mum and dad, cousins, grandparents, aunts and uncles. He felt a tremendous connection. His picture displayed a central tree with a multitude of stars and dragonflies around the tree. It was as if he was the central tree surrounded by a family of stars and dragonflies. He asked me to then list each family member on the back of his picture.

The afternoon then concluded with a yummy slice of pizza and a visit from a clown who captured the children's attention with some clever magic and balloon creations.

Article written by PCAF Member; Yvonne





Parenting Plus!

Don't miss out on this strength's based course which is delivered across six separate modules of approximately 3 hours each and built around the core challenges of parenting children with early experiences of disrupted attachment and trauma. The sessions explore:

- Impact of early experiences
- Understanding the impact of early experiences
- Models of Therapeutic Parenting
- Tools and strategies
- Triggers for parents and children

Date 6 week course; Mondays, February 17, 24 and March 3, 17, 24,31

Time 7.00—10.00pm (offices open from 6:30pm to ensure prompt start)

Venue PCA Families, Level 5, 50 Market Street, Melbourne

Parking Surrounding streets or secure city car parks

RSVP Online at <http://www.trybooking.com/EBAU>

Cost PCA Families members \$240, Concession Card Holders \$150

One testimonial from a parent who previously attended the course...

"It is affirming, challenging and ultimately left me feeling empowered, optimistic and energised about parenting".

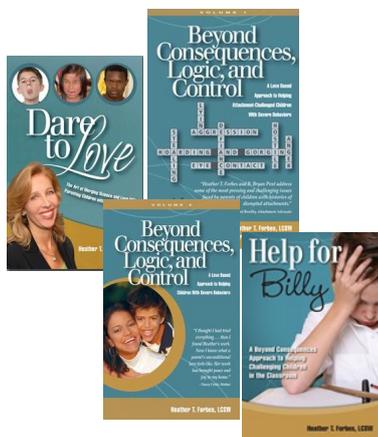
bci BEYOND CONSEQUENCES INSTITUTE

Heather T. Forbes; the owner of the Beyond Consequences Institute (BCI) in Boulder, Colorado has worked in the field of trauma and healing since 1999. She is an internationally published author on the topics of raising children with difficult and severe behaviours, the impact of trauma on the developing child, adoptive motherhood, and self-development.

All BCI titles are \$20.95 (excluding P & H)

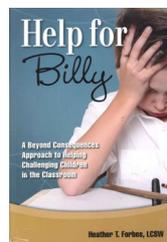
Orders must be made by March 14

Orders of two or more BCI titles will receive a 10% discount voucher to use on your next purchase from our bookstore



All four books will only be available from the Permanent Care and Adoptive Families Bookstore four times a year, March, June, September and December.

Book Review



Help for Billy

A Beyond Consequences Approach to Helping Challenging Children in the Classroom by Heather T. Forbes

This book is strongly recommended for parents, teachers and carers of young people with a background of trauma or disrupted attachment including adoption.

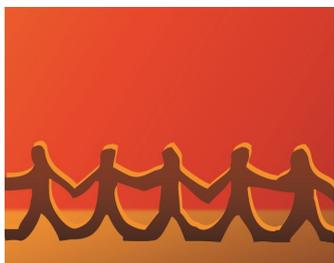
Help for Billy: A Beyond Consequences Approach to Helping Challenging Children in the Classroom is framed in terms of the journey of two children: Andy and Billy through the education system. It explores how their contrasting early life experiences manifest in very different experiences of schooling.

The book's central premise is to reframe disruptive behaviour as a regulatory rather than a behavioural dysfunction. Put another way, if a young person is 'climbing the walls', difficult to settle or uncooperative, it explains how this can be an expression what is happening in their developing brain, rather than a conscious choice the child is making. Equipped with this information parents and teachers can look beyond behaviours to start thinking about underlying causes. This approach is at the heart of therapeutic parenting and teaching strategies.

To purchase this book; visit http://shop.ppss.org.au/category98_1.htm

Orders must be received by March 14 for April delivery.

Review provided by Simon



Sharing blogs

"Well, this blog isn't just 'About Appa'. My Korean birth father (appa) is the inspiration for this blog and where it all started...

when he gave me up for adoption nearly 30 years ago."

"My name is Ra Chapman and I am a Melbourne based actress. I have recently travelled to South Korea where we met for the first time."

"I will share with you my experiences of being an adult adoptee in Australia and the rollercoaster ride of reuniting with my birth father - from the most difficult moments to the ones that have touched my heart."

"I am new to the world of blogging ... to read on <http://allaboutappa.tumblr.com/>



AACASA Victoria
Out of Africa Camp 2014
Campaspe Downs Country Resort
1302 Trentham Rd, Tylden (near Kyneton)
6pm – Friday March 28 – 2pm Sunday 30 March

This is a camp for families who have, or hope to, adopt children of African heritage, and their friends.

It is an opportunity to immerse in a relaxed setting, and network and foster mutually supportive relations & links with others. Typically more than 120 participate in the full weekend, while approx. 30 participate as a Saturday day trip.

A range of activities & resources are offered to cater for different ages & interests.

They're likely to include:

- Swimming, basketball, canoeing and billiards. BYO bikes highly recommended.
- African cultural workshop, medical health update, hair session and Ethiopian coffee ceremony
- Saturday night – communally made, traditional Ethiopian meal – many camp attendees to help and learn

An **early bird payment rate** is available for those who book and **pay by 28 February 2014**.

For a copy of the Camp Flyer and Registration Form or for more information contact:

Lisa Wilson, wilse@bigpond.net.au,

Tel: (03) 9696 0642, Mob: 0419 584 134

The Hamer Scholarships program

Language Study in China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea

As part of the Victorian International Engagement Strategy the Victorian Government has established the Hamer Scholarships, a language and cultural immersion program designed to build the Asia-engagement capabilities of Victorians and help strengthen cultural awareness between Victoria and Asia.

For more information <http://dsdbi.vic.gov.au/grants-tenders-and-awards/scholarships-and-fellowships/>



Thank you!

Post Placement Support Service (VIC) Inc. trading as Permanent Care and Adoptive Families 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**. We depend on your support; donations enable Permanent Care and Adoptive Families 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.