

Mersey Messenger

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General Manager's Message –

Firstly I'd like to thank all staff that worked over the Christmas period. Unlike many other services, hospitals can't just shut their doors over Christmas, so thank you to the many employees who helped to keep this hospital ticking during that period. It was certainly appreciated by the public and it was good to read recently yet another positive 'Letter to the Editor' in the Advocate singing the praises of staff at the Mersey.



We were sad to say goodbye to one particular staff member last week. Founder of the Mersey Chaplaincy program, Bettye Cox, retired after 15 years as Coordinator of the service. Bettye's dedication to this role was outstanding; she was available 24 hours a day for anyone who needed a shoulder to cry on or a listening ear. We will miss her and we are very lucky to have such a strong chaplaincy team to continue this valuable service. I'm sure Maureen Clarke will do an excellent job as the new Coordinator.

I believe 2009 is going to be a really positive year for the Mersey. After the upheaval of the past few years we finally have some stability and certainty moving forward. It's time to really focus on our strengths and build on them with the knowledge that there will be no ownership changes and certainly no funding cuts. I've definitely noticed a positive change in morale in the past few months around the hospital and while we still have our challenges, I hope we can keep working together to embrace some really good opportunities for enhancing the services we provide.

I look forward to working with you all again this year. Thank you for being so committed and professional in working through what has been another huge period of change for this hospital.

Anne Cabalzar, Acting General Manager



Australia Day



Australia Day, January 26, is the biggest day of celebration in the country and is observed as a public holiday in all states and territories.

On Australia Day we come together as a nation to celebrate what's great about Australia and being Australian. It's the day to reflect on what we have achieved and what we can be proud of in our great nation. It's the day for us to re-commit to making Australia an even better place for the future.

Events—Latrobe: Henley on Mersey—Bells Parade, Art Exhibition—Axeman's Hall of Fame.



Dr Premawardhana joins us from Sri Lanka

Introducing Dr Issuru Premawardhana Resident Medical Officer

Leaving your home country for the first time to live and work on the other side of the world with your wife and newborn baby would be intimidating for most, but for Dr Issuru Premawardhana it's an exciting challenge.

29 year old Dr Premawardhana arrived in Tasmania at the start of November and recently started work at the Mersey as an RMO in the Emergency Department.

He grew up in Sri Lanka and studied in the capital Colombo at the medical faculty, which is the second oldest medical faculty in South East Asia. After completing his internship he worked at a hospital just outside Colombo for a year and a half in surgical ENT.

"I loved it. I was doing basic ENT surgeries and sometimes I got to do exciting surgeries like tracheotomies."

Dr Premawardhana says he chose medicine because he thought it would be a challenge.

"I was really good at mathematics so it would have been easy to pursue that as a career, but I wanted a challenge so I chose medicine."

As if not challenging enough on its own, he then decided to relocate with his wife Keshani and two month old baby Sajali to Tasmania.

"We really wanted to explore and see what things were like outside Sri Lanka, to explore the opportunities. Tasmania is supposed to be the most beautiful state, and the people are very friendly so we decided to come here."

Keshani is also a doctor and will be lecturing in physiology once Sajali is a bit older. Dr Premawardhana says while it will take time to adjust to living so far away from a large family support network, he's

looking forward to embracing Tasmanian life.

I love walking so I'm really looking forward to exploring some of the walks in the region. I also love food and while I am missing Sri Lankan food, it's a good opportunity to try out different cuisines."

The one aspect of Australian culture he won't be embracing is supporting the Australian cricket team. There he says his allegiances will always stay with Sri Lanka.



Woolworth's Fresh Foods Kids Appeal Raises \$15,831 for Maternity Ward

Fresh Foods Kids Hospital Appeal

Last month Woolworths employees presented a cheque to the Maternity Ward at the Mersey for \$15,831 as part of their Fresh Food Kids Hospital Appeal.

The generous donation will go towards a Newborn Resuscitation Unit which is an important piece of equipment used during the resuscitation of babies if they stop breathing.

Each year Woolworths raises millions for hospitals across the Country. The funds for the Mersey were raised by staff at the Devonport and Ulverstone stores by selling chocolates and holding a trivia night.



Bronwyn Dudfield and her team were thrilled with the donation and thanked the staff and the community for their support and generosity.

Staff Profile—Aileen Lynch

If you are feeling a bit lacklustre about work or life in general, just go and spend some time with Aileen Lynch. As the Mersey's longest serving employee, she has an unstoppable energy and passion for her job, in fact after 54 years as a nurse she has no plans to retire.

Aileen was 17 when she moved into the old Nurses Home to start training as a nurse at Devon Hospital. When the Mersey first opened in 1961 she transferred across the road and hasn't looked back. She's spent time in a number of areas, but keeps coming back to Theatre.

I love it, it's exciting and always a challenge, you certainly never get bored."

Aileen says while many things have changed in the hospital over the years, the one thing that is consistent is the fact that the Mersey has always attracted wonderful staff.

"That's the reason it's survived, and of course the

support received throughout the years from the community."

Aileen believes the key to being a good nurse is compassion and putting the patient first, and of course a good knowledge of anatomy and physiology.

"My goal is to know as much anatomy as the surgeons but I think I'm a long way off."

Aileen loves a challenge and certainly lives life to the fullest. While many may knock-off from work each day and go home and lie on the couch, Aileen takes her three large dogs for a walk, feeds her horses and spends half an hour tending to her 7000 grape vines on her property at Spreyton; a routine she also repeats every morning.

"Keeping mentally and physically active is definitely the key to longevity."

After working in a hospital for five decades, Aileen has one piece of advice to give.

"Make sure you say goodbye to your family every day and tell them you love them, because I've seen people leave for work in the morning and not make it back home because of an accident and their family's biggest regret was that they didn't say goodbye. You just never know."

Aileen says her job has certainly made her appreciate life, and as for her plans for the future..."I think I'll retire when my hair goes grey."



Aileen Provides Us With An Incite into her Exciting And Rewarding Career Spanning A Life time At Mersey

Introducing New Staff

Welcome:

Simone Winter—Acting PIMS Co-Ordinator

Sharon King—DEM Clerk

Gail McDermott—Casual PIMS Clerk

Amy Young—Casual PIMS Clerk

Anne-Maree Maguire, Admin Officer, Maintenance and Engineering Department

Brent Hollis - DEM RN

Brett Muir - DEM RN

Leah Furley - Theatre RN

Odette Harper - Casual EN

Kara Zerna - Oncology RN

Sonia Berry - Oncology RN

Emily Maza - Casual EN

Lisa Orme - DEM RN

Jessica Porch - Post Graduate Nurse

Tracey Brand - Post Graduate Nurse

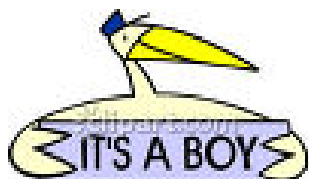
Karrie Johnstone - Post Graduate Nurse

Erin Wearne - Post Graduate Nurse

Szilvia Loekoes - Post Graduate Nurse

Congratulations

Baby Boy for Columbine & Kevin



**"I feel
so lucky
to have had
my baby
at the
Mersey"**

Columbine Mullins is no stranger to stress and enduring long hours in a hospital. As a locum RMO in the Emergency Department, she has learned to take pain in her stride, other people's pain that is.

For Collie it seems going through childbirth was a whole other story. Collie, and her husband Kevin, have just made it through a whopping 43 hour labour, and Collie says it's all thanks to the incredible staff at the Mersey.

"The staff in Maternity were totally amazing, at one stage I thought to myself I can't keep going because I was so exhausted and in pain, but thanks to the incredible strength, guidance and support from the midwives and my ONG Registrar Dr Joti Sharma, I did it, we did it.

"I must also say when Dr Kan gave me an epidural, at that moment he was my absolute hero!"

Collie's labour started at 10.30pm on Sunday and by the next morning the contractions were still ten minutes apart. So, unlike your average woman in labour, she and Kevin spent the day in the park, "yes I got some funny looks when painful contractions hit."

"We also went to Anvers for chocolate and ice cream just so I could make the most of eating for two one last time."

By the time they arrived at the hospital about 5.00pm on Monday, Collie was feeling a little fragile.

"I couldn't believe how well we were treated. A student nurse Anne Ling who had been with me throughout my whole pregnancy came in on her day off to be part of the birth. She stayed all through the

night, she was totally amazing."

Debbie Chettle also stayed well after her shift finished to help, in fact she was eventually forced to go home in the early hours of the morning because she had to come back later that day for another shift.

"I'd done Calm Birth classes with Debbie so it was wonderful to have her there supporting me. Olga Wilson and Sue-Ellen Shadbolt were also absolute angels.

"I feel so lucky to have had my baby at the Mersey. We could have been in Sydney at one of the big hospitals but we would have been treated like just another patient. Here we were made to feel so special, nothing was too much effort for the staff, they are all beautiful people. I have a new level of respect for this hospital," Collie said.



It's Time to Say Farewell!

This month we say goodbye to the following staff:

Dr Sujata Kohli, RMO—Sujata has accepted a training position within East Devonport General Practice.

Dr Raja Maddikunta, Registrar Medicine—Raja has accepted a registrar training position at the LGH.

Dr Lalith Baduraliya, RMO

Dr Abu Haque, Paediatrician

Bettye Cox, Chaplaincy Co-Ordinator

We wish them every success in their future endeavours.



Get Fit While Having Fun!

Needing to lose those few extra kilos you put on over Christmas? Well here's your chance, and you don't even have to leave the hospital to do it.

Staff Circuit Training Classes have started up again for 2009 and instructor Anne-Maree Scully says it's the perfect way to tone up, get stronger and increase cardio vascular fitness, all while having fun.

The initiative was started in October last year by the Physio department, led by a very determined Lisa Sanderson who made it her goal to get Mersey staff fitter and healthier.

Personal Trainer and Child Protection employee, Anne-Maree Scully was recruited to take the classes, which cover everything from squats, push-ups to ab crunches and stretching.

"The classes run for 45 minutes and cater for people of all fitness levels. You just work at your own pace - it's certainly not boot camp."

So even if your main form of exercise is walking out to the car park every day after work, this class is still perfect for you!

Classes can fit up to 18 people so make sure you get in quick and put your name down on the booking sheet at the end of the corridor on the second floor.

The classes cost \$5 and are done in 12 week blocks. You can buy a 12 week pass for \$60 or spend \$120 and go twice a week for 12 weeks.

Classes are held every Tuesday at 4.45pm and Thursday at 4.30pm in the Physio Gym on the second floor.

Any questions, call Lisa Sanderson on 0417 122 319.



Photo: Participants get ready to tackle some push ups.

Dr Peter Renshaw, A/DMS and Wayne DeGruchy, Director of Finance

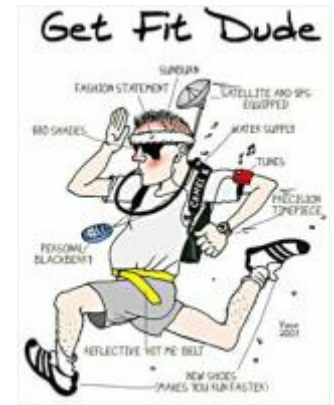
Dr Peter Renshaw has been appointed as the Acting Director Medical Services at the Mersey until the position is filled permanently. Peter's role will be to provide support and guidance to the medical administration. And just because Peter obviously doesn't like getting bored, he is also Director of Clinical Services at the Launceston General Hospital and the Chair of the Credentialing Committee for the NWRH, MCH and LGH.



Wayne DeGruchy has been appointed to the position of Director Finance for the North West Region for the

next three months, until a permanent appointment has been made. Wayne will be overseeing, as he puts it, "anything to do with finance". He'll be based at the Mersey in the old Nurses Home on the first floor.

Please make them both welcome!



Get Fit Classes

**Tuesdays
4:45pm
And
Thursdays
4:30pm**

Pats on the Back!



STAFF INNOVATION LEADS TO CREATION OF A WOUND CLINIC.

The words 'Quality Improvement Activity' are often associated negatively with tedious paperwork, increased workload and boring, uninspiring tasks. One Mersey NUM has turned all this around with her dedication to improving patient outcomes, refusing to be stopped when reaching a hurdle and her vision for this nurse led project to be revolutionary in both its concept and potential!

Alison Ellis, NUM of the Emergency Department has launched an exciting **Nurse Led** project with the aim of providing optimal wound care to the public, alleviating non urgent presentations to DEM and providing a physical link to Community Nursing and Primary Health Care. The establishment of a nurse led **wound clinic** from the 8th December has created huge excitement within the ranks, as nurses from all over the local area are queuing up to be involved in this ground breaking clinic!

The aim is to run this clinic from the Community Health Centre in Devonport, staffed and funded by DEM, once some cosmetic renovations to accommodate the new clinic are complete. The advantages of this are:

- to avoid the cumbersome paperwork requirements of Community Health Nursing (CHHNS);
- to avoid fee for service (charged by CHHNS);
- to provide the expertise of the skilled DEM nurses to clients, who will then be available to upskill the CHHNS;
- to provide continuity of care from the primary admission in DEM;
- to provide easy access & liaison with DEM if required; and
- to facilitate easy transition into CHHNS clinics if required on discharge from the wound clinic.

Presently, the clinic is run from the first floor consulting rooms Mondays and Thursdays, in order to iron out any teething problems and to establish policy and procedure, prior to out-reaching. Resource folders and wound care charts are under development and imaging of all wounds is possible through the use of a camera and laptop. A client feedback system is also under development to allow for evaluation of the new service.

The potential of this clinic to enable evidence based research, and the possibility of conference paper presentations on this innovative new concept is there for the taking, and we have just the person to take this project all the way!

Victoria Brown ,Acting Quality Coordinator

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS:

Please email your
Newsletter

Contributions to:
jan.carr@dhhs.gov.au

Next Edition
Deadline 13/2/09

Many thanks to all
staff who contributed
to this issue

Staff Forum—David Roberts Secretary, DHHS



Monday, 22nd December, 2008 the Secretary, David Roberts addressed the staff at Mersey Community Hospital on "DHHS Directions 2009—Reshaping our organisation to better support Tasmania's future health and communities".

Highlights included:

Reshaping the DHHS: Why?

"It's our job to care for people and to find the best way of doing it"

Changes aim to allow:

- ◆ Greater autonomy & accountability
- ◆ Better coordination & integration of core policy, planning & performance
- ◆ Renewed emphasis on the core business
- ◆ Better support for the more effective & efficient delivery of health & human services

For more information please refer to the Intranet.