



QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION WEEK – AWARD WINNER

Award Category: Volunteer

Award Description: Invaluable contributions to child protection made by volunteers working in government or non-government agencies.

Winner: Luise Manning

BIO

Luise is a tireless worker who has been involved in many initiatives over the years and is known in her local community as a *brilliant lady*. As a mother, Luise Manning recognised the lack of programs in the area to support parents with young children with information and opportunities to learn together and form supports. In a community where the number of children under age five was approximately 10 per cent, Luise set about developing the Springfield Lakes Butterfly Wings Parent Child Program (BWPCP).

This is a soft entry program offered weekly, enabling parents with young children to come together to gain basic parenting skills, to establish routines in a fun, interactive and supportive environment. The program is based on the work underpinning attachment theory and incorporates a range of elements such as developing emotional and social stability, improving language development and building stronger relationships between children, parents and their community. Understanding the prevalence of post natal depression, isolation, impacts of at times confusing parenting guides, families were more engaged with what was available, through visits to the group with the Child Health Drop in clinic, Baby Yoga for pregnant mums, and Breastfeeding Mothers Association.

The program organised parent information sessions on behaviour management, health and safety issues with young children to improve parenting skills for the safe development of the child. Sessions were first held at the YMCA Community Centre Springfield, from 2012 to 2014, and Luise voluntarily offered it during this time. Luise then applied for and received a Sidney Myer Foundation Grant to ensure the program could be sustained for another 2 years with a paid facilitator. This involved a partnership with Westside Community Care and the program moved to Springfield/Camira Community Centre. Through this partnership, the Community Services Manager at Springfield promoted the program to assist at risk families and foster carers. The program was made known to the Springfield Child Safety Service Centre so that families could benefit from the free program.

The trained facilitator for the group was able to de-mystify what can be a confusing overload of parenting information. This assisted new mothers to connect with other local mothers, who could then share their own expertise within the group. A protective factor emerged where early concerns could be named and referrals could provide a link for early intervention rather than have escalating risks within families.

Luise is a great advocate for child safety and is also passionate about raising awareness about domestic violence. Having staged her own play about this issue in Sydney Luise is about to present it in Brisbane.

Location: Springfield Lakes

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