



Mountain District

LEARNING CENTRE

NEWSLETTER APRIL 2024

Director's Report

Term one has finished already and we have so much to do this year.

Our 50th Anniversary celebration is being organised. A luncheon and our guest speaker is Jane De Wilt, who was one of our original Mountain Women's Co-op members.

Although I have been on the Board for 10 years, I am still amazed at how much MDLC is involved in the Community and as set out in our Rules, "MDLC is a charitable organisation whose purpose is to provide education and activities for the benefit of people in the community that improves their circumstances in life." I think the Centre certainly lives up to this philosophy.

I was invited up to Maryborough Road Housing to help with the cooking program, preparing and cooking lunch for residents who want to take part. A pleasant way to spend a few hours.

Planning is well underway for the Artisan Market in November this year. Rachel and Luise are powering through all the little jobs that have to be done. It's a massive job that needs to be progressively worked on.

Another bit of good news is that the Centre received funding for a "Men's Shed".

Work will begin on the shed in Victoria Gardens (as we call it) so watch for photos and news coming out of that spot.

I hope you all had a wonderful and peaceful Easter. See you at the Centre.

Robyn Burke

Chair
MDLC Board

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News from the Office

2024 is well underway and the landscape is looking quite different at MDLC.

The School created and nurtured by MDLC has relocated to new premises in Boronia. We wish them the best of luck in their efforts to support young people to continue their education in a supportive environment.

We are continuing our own youth education program, “The Cottage Program” here at MDLC, still within the facilities of our generous partners at Ferntree Gully Uniting Church.

Our Adult Literacy program, delivered in partnership with “Your Library” (Eastern Regional Libraries) continues to grow. Our joint initiative, known as “Leap into Literacy” is a one to one volunteer tuition program to help support people to reach their goals in improving their reading, writing and spelling. In Term 1, we trained a new group of 10 volunteers who will work with a student for an hour each week.

The success of the Cottage Program and Leap into Literacy, delivered with our partners, remind me of the value of positive and effective relationships with like-minded organisations.

When we have the same goals and we are willing to share our ideas, skills and resources, we are best able to support the people in our community. The generosity of the people within the organisations who share a partnership, in being open to opportunities, and combining an abundance of goodwill, allows us all to achieve great outcomes for local people.

We are proud of our values and work towards these in all our work at MDLC.

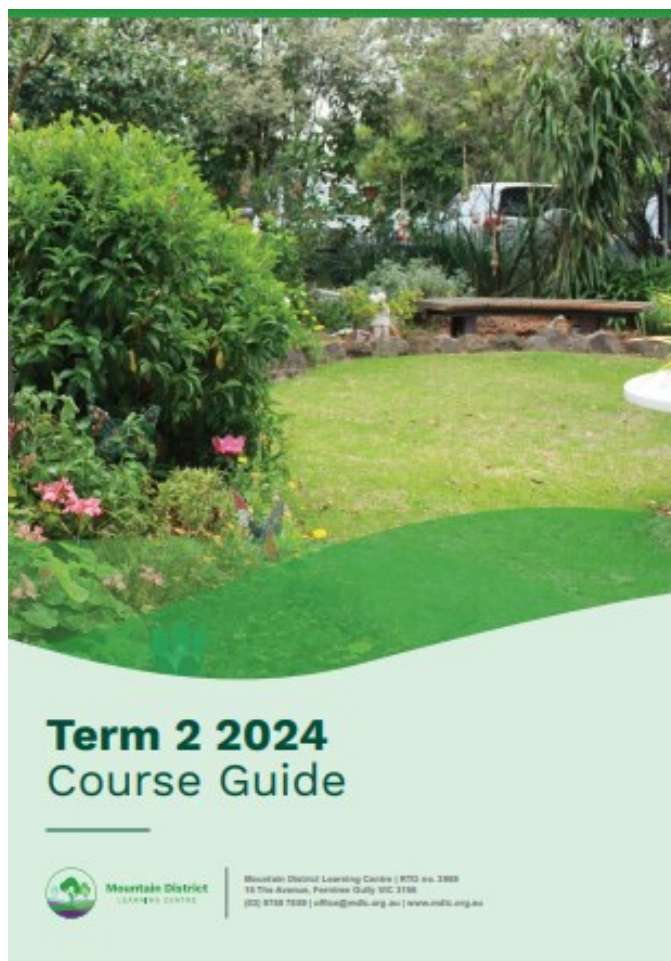
- We recognise the equal value of all people.
- We operate responsibly, honestly and with accountability.

- We work with compassion to enhance the lives of all.
- We collaborate openly and respect the views of others.

Our Term 2 program includes several highlights including our Learn Local (ACFE) courses focusing on adult literacy and digital literacy. We have a number of enticing workshops with an arts and crafts focus, and French at beginner and intermediate levels plus our usual range of groups and activities to help us connect with each other.

Feel free to pop by and have a cuppa and a chat when we start Term 2 on April 15.

Cheers,
Janet.



Click on above to access latest Course Guide



SAVE THE DATE!

11:00AM - WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14TH

50th

Anniversary celebration
FOR THE CO-OP!



- *Guest speakers*
- *Luncheon*
- *Celebration Cake & Cuppa*

The Cottage Program Term 1 2024

We have welcomed back some familiar faces this year and excitedly added some new faces to the program. It has been lovely watching new friendships emerge within the groups as they get to know each other, our teachers, youth workers and other MDLC staff. This year our numbers reached capacity prior to the end of the first term.

This year we are delivering a pilot program, based on our current Cottage Program framework for young people who would typically be in years 7-9. We aim to work closely with the young person's enrolled school to ensure that the program is aligned with the student's individual learning plan and that the transition back to school is smooth and successful.

Our purpose is to reengage students who have disconnected from mainstream schooling due to a range of physical, social, or emotional reasons. Some of the important features of a successful alternative education program includes a welcoming tone and ethos; respectful relationships; tailored curriculum and learning; and flexible structures and a safe and supportive environment.

It is important that we build relationships with our young people based on an ethic of care, trust, and respect. To reconnect and reengage young people we need to provide them with a quiet, safe, and supportive setting which caters for individual learning styles using different learning methods.

The key feature of our programs is to provide a strong youth worker presence. We are very fortunate to have the experience and skills of our youth workers to support our students. Our youth workers do a vital job within our programs, they help young people to make informed choices in areas such as education, wellbeing, and healthy relationships. Our youth workers also assist young people with tools to overcome challenges like poor mental health through support & referral and to encourage our young people to take up positive opportunities to build their skills, become independent, and contribute positively within their communities.

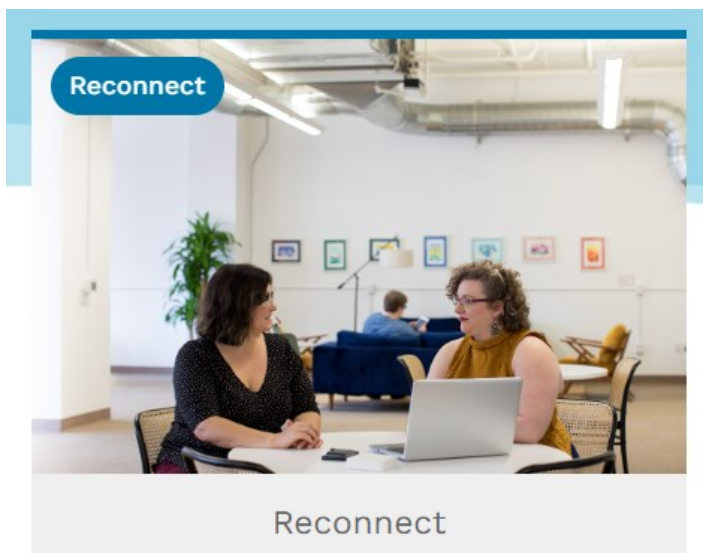
The Cottage Program team plan to run a variety of incursions, excursions and workshops this year, as always, we welcome our students to have a voice in what they would like to do, generally this information is collected through doing surveys or more informal discussions with the young people during class.

We acknowledge the funding received from Knox City Council to deliver the YES Project, which allows for many of these activities to take place throughout the year.

We are looking forward to a happy, healthy, and productive year!

Alison Percy
Education & Training Manager

Reconnect Program



Term 1 at MDLC's Reconnect program has been a busy one! We have been inundated with referrals and this is largely thanks to increased cross-program opportunities.

Support needs for participants remain high, with the increased cost of living affecting people in a variety of ways. We have observed a shift of priorities within families and young people seeking employment over education pathways to meet the demands. We are also seeing more families requiring foodbank and other support services, working alongside them to provide access and referrals.

Racheal Edwards
RECONNECT MANAGER

SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP REPORT

Friendship Group Term 1 2024

After the festive season break, Friendship Group reconvened in January, greeted by an atmosphere brimming with warmth and excitement. The session commenced with informal gatherings, characterized by lively chatter, steaming cuppas, and infectious laughter. With nearly a month apart, catching up was a priority, and the air buzzed with stories and anecdotes.

Before long, our penchant for engaging activities led us to one of our beloved pastimes – “Hangperson”. Laughter filled the room as we challenged each other on the whiteboard, showcasing the enduring popularity of games within our group. The following week, we delved into classic board games, with members gathering around tables to indulge in their favourites. For those preferring a more relaxed pace, there was always the option to enjoy a cuppa and engaging conversation.

As Australia Day dawned, we celebrated with gusto, relishing in Aussie Tucker and engaging in themed activities, fostering a sense of national pride and camaraderie.

February ushered in the Year of the Dragon, and we embraced Chinese New Year festivities with enthusiasm. Discovering our Chinese Zodiac Signs became a source of amusement, as we marvelled at the serendipity of our encounters within Friendship Group.

Valentine’s Day followed suit, with members invited to indulge their creative flair by crafting bookmarks, a thoughtful gesture for themselves or loved ones, enhancing the spirit of love and friendship that defines our group.



Saint Patrick’s Day brought a splash of green as members donned their finest attire for an afternoon brimming with jests and merriment, reinforcing the jovial spirit that unites us.



Crafting paper lanterns and savouring spring rolls and dim sims added to the cultural immersion celebration.

SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP REPORT

Friendship Group Continued

We welcomed back the Lizard Wizard, treating ourselves to a captivating encounter with an array of wildlife creatures. From fascinating insights to hands-on experiences, the session sparked curiosity and learning opportunities for all.



Friendship Group is more than just a gathering; it's a sanctuary where bonds are forged and nurtured. Our session focused on self-care, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing our well-being. From guided sessions of seated yoga, tai chi, and meditation, infused with the soothing scents of essential oils, to moments of tranquil repose, the afternoon was a testament to the restorative power of self-care.

Deb and Meredith



SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP REPORT

Nature Craft Term One 2024

This Term has been a mixed bag of a class being cancelled due to extreme heat, then beautiful days spent outside in the garden under the tree enjoying the sunshine and the beauty off the garden.

We started the term doing water colour and celebrating Chinese New Year with a Chinese Quiz and a Year of the Dragon poster. The clients did a Gratitude Wreath which are displayed on Rachels window they all look so colourful.

The ladies also made some lavender bags for their wardrobes or laundry cupboard, to keep the clothes smelling nice and the moths away. The ladies cut out circles of material added some lavender or rose petals in the bags and some essential oils, then tied it up using raffia or ribbon they all smelt amazing and looked beautiful.



To finish the term we made an Easter Card and a wreath to decorate the centre of the table for Easter. Enjoy the Easter break see you all next Term.

Sharon



Volunteer Garden Team

Lots of little tasks have been keeping the volunteers busy, from upcycling furniture for use in the main building, helping the board to spruce up some of the classrooms to growing delicious fruit and vegetables.

This summer we have had great success with growing tomato and basil from seed, we tried the “three sisters “planting method, where you plant

corn, beans, and a ground cover plant for example, cucumbers are planted together in the same bed. As the corn grows it supports the beans, as the beans grow it produces nitrogen for the corn and the cover plant protects the soil from moisture loss. The corn is nearly ready to pick, we have snacked of delicious purple beans and have had mixed results with the cucumber.

SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP REPORT

Volunteer Garden Team continued

And of course, we cannot forget our stunning flowers that pop up without fail, from always beautiful hoya, to the stunning hydrangea, which we picked and dried many flowers for an everlasting show.

Luise and the Garden Volunteer Group



Down Memory Lane...

Right is a photo of how the immature garden looked sometime in the 1990's. The current and previous gardeners have worked so hard to achieve what it looks like now.

Don't forget..

SAVE THE DATE!
11:00AM - WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14TH



SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP REPORT

Craft and Grow



The group had fun with a range of materials in Term 1. Love bugs were made from wool and egg cartons for Valentine's Day, bird seed and gelatine made little hanging treats for our feathered friends.

Stunning floral Freda Kahlo inspired headbands were the talk of the town and colourful stained glass easter eggs were made with clear contact and tissue paper as we celebrated Easter.



Luise



SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP REPORT

Monday Morning Advanced Craft

We are very excited to have Sandy join us this term as our class volunteer. She is so awesome and fitting in perfectly with the clients, always offering a welcomed cup of tea and assistance where required.

It has been a busy start to the year, jumping straight in with a mixed media canvas, some interactive cards, followed by an Easter inspired mixed media piece and tags to round out the term.

We always look forward to our end of term party. This is such a social and friendly class and everyone enjoys the opportunity to sit and chat about what's happening in their lives and their crafting worlds.

Lynn and Sandy



SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP REPORT

Thursday morning Craft Group

Term 1 has been busy for these clients, always ready for lots of chatting and crafting. Sadly, during the term we said goodbye to Interchange carer, Alicia, but the clients have bounced back eager to introduce us all to Peta who has taken over for the rest of this term. Peta has fitted in nicely and the Interchange clients are enjoying having her in the class room.

This group is extremely social and are always up for a party, so we had a farewell party for Alicia, celebrated Dave's birthday and of course our Easter party for the end of term.

The clients decorated a plate using mixed media, creating a sea scene. They made a set of CD coasters and decoupaged a candle holder.



Lynn



DIY Spectacle Cleaner

Ingredients:

Empty travel sized spray bottle
Rubbing alcohol
Liquid dish washing detergent
Water

You can find travel-sized spray bottles in the travel section of the cosmetics department of stores such as Kmart or Big W. You can also recycle an empty spray bottle if you have one (just make sure you wash it thoroughly).

Rubbing alcohol can be found in the first aid section of your chemist.

Method:

Fill the spray bottle 3/4 full with rubbing alcohol. Add two small drops of dish soap (don't go overboard, just two drops is all you'll need).

Fill the bottle with tap water.

Place the lid on the container and shake gently.

To use, spray both sides of each lens and wipe with a lint-free cloth.

That's it!

Rachel

SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP REPORT

Thursday afternoon Crafteria Group

Term 1 has flown by so fast. We welcomed Dorcas and Sarah into the class at the beginning of the year. They have fitted in well and everyone is enjoying their company in the class.

The clients have made various projects this term including one we titled "UP" as it was a bit like the movie. The clients covered a board with fabric, stuck on buttons for balloons, sewed on string for their balloons and sewed a house joining onto the balloons. Hence the "UP" theme.

The clients also did some collage, a mixed media board, gel printing which they used on a canvas to create a board with a butterfly. Our Easter project was a centrepiece for the table.

We finished the term with an Easter party and everyone brought along some food to share.

Lynn and Sharon



MARYBOROUGH ROAD SOCIAL HOUSING

Cooking Project

In partnership with both Austin Health and Knox City Council, MDLC has been given the opportunity to work with some of the residents in the Maryborough Road Social Housing complex in Boronia.

The cooking project is the successful result of generous funding from Austin Health and Knox City Council Community Development.

Every Thursday between 12.30pm and 2.30pm MDLC meets with residents in the Community room at Maryborough Road to enjoy cooking a meal that is healthy, and predominantly uses fruits and vegetables that have been grown by the residents themselves in their community garden space.

Workers create menus with the residents based on what is growing in the garden, as well as other budget friendly ingredients.

Workers and residents work together to share knowledge and a delicious, cooked meal.

So far, we have made dishes from around the world such as Indian potato and chickpea curry, Greek lamb souvlaki's, Asian chow Mein, baked potatoes with all the trimmings, American style burgers on the BBQ, vegetarian quiche, tuna casserole, sausage rolls and many more!

Here are some photos of our creations, as well as the recipe for our delicious quiche! Enjoy!

Rachel and Luise and the residents of Maryborough Road Social Housing.



MARYBOROUGH ROAD SOCIAL HOUSING

Quiche Recipe – Maryborough Road Style

Ingredients

1 store bought savory pie base, baked as per instructions on pack and allowed to cool before adding egg mix

- ◆ 20 grams butter
- ◆ 1 brown onion or small bunch spring onions finely chopped.
- ◆ 4 bacon rashers finely chopped.
- ◆ 4 eggs lightly whisked.
- ◆ ¾ cup thickened cream.
- ◆ 1/3 cup milk.
- ◆ ½ cup grated cheese
- ◆ Mixed fresh herbs
- ◆ Salt and pepper.



Method

Melt butter in medium fry pan over low heat. Cook bacon until fat is rendered, add onions and cook until onion is very soft and translucent or spring onion is just wilted. Allow to cool slightly off the heat.

Whisk the egg, cream and milk together, season. Arrange onion and bacon mix, and cheese over the pastry base. Pour over the egg mixture.

Bake 25 – 30 minutes or until just set. Let sit before cutting.

For vegetarians, replace bacon with vegetables of your choice. This can also be made in muffin tins for quick snacks. Use sheets of pastry to line your muffin pan & grease well.

WOMEN ON THE MOVE

January the 29th was our day to once again front up to Harry and show him how agile we are from all the exercise we have attempted over the holiday break (OOPS I think I fibbed). Anyway all the ladies are reasonably well and were raring to go.

We have welcomed to the group, 2 new ladies, so we are now pretty much at capacity for the amount of people the hall can accommodate while exercising. Two of our members had big O birthdays while on holidays, Iris and Carol, and another this month, Diane, so we are aging gracefully as we exercise!!

Our reliable and friendly volunteer chauffeur Peter is once again ferrying our ladies on Monday mornings, to and from their homes so they can continue exercising with everyone.

He is now carrying 4 ladies Maria, Isabel, Iris and Elizabeth each Monday which is very much appreciated by all. Thank YOU Peter!!!!When

Peter is not available we have Sharon, our Isabel's lovely daughter, who fills in when possible as driver which is a wonderful help. Thankyou to them both.

I and all the girls thank Rachel for being there for us as a back stop when needed. Our last day for this term will be Monday the 25th March and after exercise we will wander down to Crave restaurant in Boronia and enjoy a light lunch together for a wind down to the term. We will be back on the 15th April for the start of 2nd Term and get on the band wagon again with our friendly tutor Harry. Thank you from all the girls Harry, for your very informative guidance and instruction at all times.

Gwen White



Ferntree Gully Newspaper

‘As time goes by . . .’ Celebrating anniversaries

‘We had the experience, but did we miss the meaning?’ Historians say it takes forty years before people can write with real perception about experiences. The same is true for organisations and that’s why we seize on anniversaries to remember, question and evaluate what we are doing and why.

Reporting anniversary celebrations and stories is the bread and butter of local newspapers. The April edition of Gully News introduces plans for the 50th anniversary of MDLC - to be celebrated in August. More stories to come in the next issues.

This year sees the 80th anniversary of Ferntree Gully Arts Society, one of the oldest regional arts societies in Victoria - their story in the June edition. The FTG Film Society is coming up for a 70th anniversary and the Community Bank is preparing to celebrate next year their 25th anniversary.

In Ferntree Gully, the importance of gathering community news and reflections at anniversaries is well understood.

Anne Boyd



Gully News website manager, Meg Hellyer, reading our newspaper at Hobbiton NZ, the site of filming *The Lord of the Rings*, the great story of a journey there and back again.



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MDLC SOCIAL FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Every Wednesday between 1.00pm – 3.00pm

Events & Activities – January to June 2024

| <i>JANUARY</i> | <i>FEBRUARY</i> | <i>MARCH</i> |
|--|---|---|
| <p>10th – Welcome Back! Cuppa & Chat 17th – Hangperson Games 24th – Aussie Day Fun & Food! 31st - Board Games</p>  | <p>7th – Chinese New Year Year of the DRAGON 14th – Wear Red for Valentine’s Day 21st – QUEEN Music Theme 28th – Reminiscing/Show & Tell</p>  | <p>6th – Chair Yoga 13th – Wear Green for St Patricks Day 20th – LIZARD WIZARD!!!! 27th - Reminiscing/Show & Tell</p>  |
| <i>APRIL</i> | <i>MAY</i> | <i>JUNE</i> |
| <p>3rd – Word Games 10th – B.Y.O Picnic at the Arboretum. 17th – Reminiscing/Show & Tell 24th – Visit to the RSL (tbc)</p>  | <p>1st – May Day Craft Day 8th – Mothers Day High Tea 15th – Guest Speaker – TBC 22nd – Greek Week – Opa! 29th - Reminiscing/Show & Tell</p>  | <p>5th – Kings Birthday 12th – Brain Training Trivia 19th – Happy 9th Birthday Friendship Group!!!!!! 26th – Reminiscing/Show & Tell</p>  |

*All Activities are subject to change.

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