

OAKE TREE

HOLYOAKE NEWSLETTER ISSUE 1 2018



I am pleased that Innovation is now one of the five key organisation values at Holyoake. We are constantly exploring ways to enable lasting change for individuals, families and communities.

The *My Wellbeing Mate* app is another example of this commitment. This free gateway app provides links to a wide range of mental health resources. We are grateful to the Mining Emergency Response Competition (MERC) community for co-developing and funding this resource.

This issue of Oake Tree features two inspiring testimonials from people who have experienced our holistic approach in a safe and caring environment. I hope their journeys will encourage others to seek help when required.

I am also delighted to welcome Noongar Elder Marie Taylor to the Holyoake team. Marie is our Elder in Residence and you can read about her on page 4.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue.

Angie Paskevicius
CEO

Introducing a free wellness gateway app

Mental health in Australia is under stress – 1 in 5 people are impacted. While many wellness resources are available, they are scattered.

Holyoake and the Mining Emergency Response Competition (MERC) community have developed a free app that offers convenient access to these resources.

The *My Wellbeing Mate* app is like a wellness hub in your pocket. It is a quick and convenient gateway to wellness resources such as helplines, websites, guides, videos, talks, apps, self-checks and more.

It is designed to help you enhance your own wellness, and to help you support others on their wellness journey. The resources are categorised in four main sections:

1. Mental Health
2. Family Support
3. Emergency Responders
4. Aboriginal Health



Use the four filters to refine your search and

click on the stars to favourite resources that are most relevant to you. You can also send your comments and suggestions through the feedback section.

CEO of Holyoake Angie Paskevicius said the app is an express gateway for people seeking help. “The help can come in the form of quickly finding out where to go for counselling, self-help, family support and mental health checks.”

Director of Red Earth Health Solutions Jen Pearce, who coordinates the MERC event, agrees. “We’re hoping this wellness app will be the first port of call for people seeking help so they realise they aren’t alone and that many resources are available.”

This free app has been developed by Holyoake and funded by the MERC community. Download it from the App Store or Google Play, and share the mental wealth with your family and friends as well. More details at:

www.holyoake.org.au/wellbeing-mate-app/



At the Launch (L to R): Simon Paull - CEO of Paull & Warner Resources, Jen Pearce - Director of Red Earth Health Solutions, Angie Paskevicius - CEO of Holyoake, Julian Pace - Founder of Happiness Co

*"My Wellbeing Mate app helped me connect to a helpline when I needed it most. It is free and so easy to use. I now have all this information on my mobile phone." - Ben**

*"We all have some degree of pain in our lives. Holyoake helped me to overcome my pain and gave me the courage not to give up." - Pete**

"The Child Parent Relationship program taught me some simple ways to get closer with my daughter."

*- Sue**

"I had lost all hope for my son - until he went to Holyoake. Now we are all picking up the pieces as a family and learning to move on."

*- Ray**

"It's great that Holyoake Connect continues to support me even after I completed my counselling sessions."

*- Rita**

Shaken, but not stirred

Resilience against all odds is an underlying theme of Suzzanne's journey. She and her husband have overcome multiple setbacks to emerge stronger each time. She shares her story and some valuable advice in this interview.

A house fire almost claimed the life of your husband?

Yes, many years ago I almost lost my husband in a devastating house fire. He survived, but had to endure years of intense pain, endless skin grafts and depression. Unfortunately, he turned to alcohol to escape the reality and soon became dependent.

How did he overcome the alcohol dependency?

At some point my husband acknowledged he needed help, and turned to Holyoake.

He joined a group program along with a mate. It wasn't easy, but the patient counsellors helped them through the process. To this day, he is grateful to Holyoake for their non-judgemental approach and also the life skills he continues to draw on.

You decided to come to Holyoake as well...

Yes, I felt quite overwhelmed by the fire and the traumatic after-effects. Holyoake had an excellent program to support people like me who were impacted by someone else. This program highlighted the futility of self-blame and taught me some valuable coping skills. I realised it was easier to change myself rather than battling to change someone else. It helped make me far more resilient.

How did alcohol impact on your life?

When my husband and I stopped drinking, our social circle shrank significantly and we felt left out. We decided to explore new friendships with like-minded people who didn't believe alcohol was essential to celebrate life. He became a triathlete and I evolved into a successful business coach.

Do you have any advice for someone hesitant to seek help?

From my own experience, I encourage you to look after your mental health. If you feel stressed, overwhelmed or helpless, reach out and don't worry about how other people may react. Think of it as going to a gym to improve your mental wellness. Holyoake will never judge you and their services are free, so you have nothing to lose.

Singing my way to a better life

Three years ago, I returned to Australia after living overseas for a year. My family was so excited to see me, but I had changed... I had developed a dependence on drugs.

I started to spiral which resulted in me leaving home and eventually becoming homeless. After being homeless for over a year and badly damaged from my drug use, I decided enough was enough and took myself to rehab.

At around the same time, my family had been going to Holyoake for counselling and support. It was there that my mum heard about the Holyoake choir.

After coming out of rehab, my counsellor suggested doing a weekly activity with my mum as our relationship was rocky. Since we both have a passion for singing, mum signed us up to the Holyoake choir.

In the beginning it wasn't easy for me

going every week. I had terrible anxiety and my self-esteem was so low that I doubted I'd ever get through my recovery. However, this choir changed everything for me. Every week I would sing my heart out for two hours and let all the emotions and self-doubt go. It was overwhelmingly empowering to listen to how terrible a song could sound at the start of the night, but by the end, feel confident enough to perform it.

As I became more comfortable, I began to socialise and this is where I really began to understand how beneficial these activities are that Holyoake run. Not one single person cared about who I was in my past, no one asked why I was at Holyoake. Everyone just wanted to get to know me for me. It was the best thing to ever happen to me.

Now I'm into my second year in the choir. During this year I have stayed clean and

I have gone back to studying. I have my own rental and am now best friends with my mum. Without this choir, I doubt my relationship with mum would have strengthened so fast.

Thank you, Holyoake. Forever grateful.



Programs@Holyoake



Alcohol and drug issues affect not just individuals, but their families and friends as well. This is why Holyoake offers a range of customised programs for people of all ages who are impacted directly and indirectly. So if you or someone you care about needs help, please contact us for confidential counselling and support.

Holyoake welcomes Marie Taylor - Aboriginal Elder in Residence

Holyoake is committed to meaningful reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Following the successful implementation of our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), we will soon launch our Innovate RAP.

As part of our Innovate RAP initiatives, we recently appointed Marie Taylor as our Aboriginal Elder in Residence. Marie brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to Holyoake. She will:

- Support staff in their work with Aboriginal clients through the provision of formal and informal cultural guidance
- Network with Aboriginal Elders and Aboriginal agencies in order to build relationships and develop safe and secure referral pathways to Holyoake, for Aboriginal people
- Provide cultural wisdom, knowledge and support in the development of Holyoake programs
- Support the implementation of our Reconciliation Action Plan
- Provide cultural training for Holyoake staff
- Support the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal staff at Holyoake.



Noongar Elder, Marie Taylor is a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and has been a junior state hockey representative, a course author and Associate Lecturer at Murdoch University. She helped establish an Aboriginal cultural centre and has produced programs that are taught in schools across the city.

Marie's past employment involves both Government and non-Government agencies. She is currently Chairperson of Yelakitj Moort Nyungar Association Incorporated, and Cultural Corridors Incorporated.

We welcome Marie Taylor to the Holyoake team.

Holyoake welcomes feedback from clients

Please let us know about the quality of our programs, suggestions for improvement, additional services we could provide, and anything else. Call 9416 4444, or email clientservices@holyoake.org.au or visit our website.

We reach out to thousands of people affected by alcohol and drugs issues. You can help us continue our mission by including Holyoake in your Will. For more information please call Angie Paskevicius, CEO on 08 9416 4444 or email apaskevicius@holyoake.org.au

For more information on any of our programs please go to www.holyoake.org.au

Men's Program

Women's Program

Parent's Program

Relationships in Focus

Childhood in Perspective (for adults)

Couples Counselling

Child Parent Relationship Training

Adolescent Program

Young People's Program

Art and Play Program

Prison & Justice Programs

Building Resilience Through Play

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