



Providing Heartstrength
to Adult Survivors of
Childhood Sexual Abuse

Inside this
issue:

CEO Report

Page 2
Testimonials from
past participants

EOI for Men's
Therapy Group

Page 3
SEEK Volunteer
Graphic Designer

Family and
Friends Seminar

Save the date

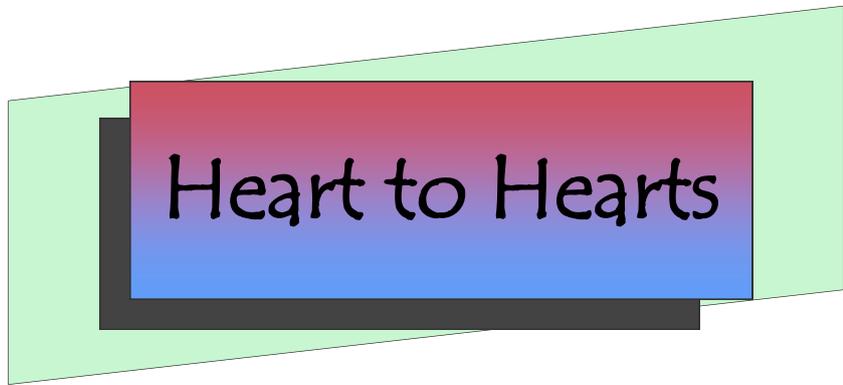
Page 4
A survivor's story

Page 5
Education From
The Heart

Page 6
Board Report
Thank you!



Find us on
Facebook



Issue 51

March 2020

A Message from our CEO...

Welcome to our latest edition for 2020. It has been a productive start to the new year and we are excited to share our latest news.

*Our 44th Group *Silver Moon Ray Raising*, started their 18-week journey of healing and self-discovery. We stand by these six strong, courageous, brave and resilient ladies! We welcome Cathy, our new group facilitator who is presenting this group with Vanessa, our program development facilitator. *We also welcomed Angela and Tania who will be joining as facilitators for future groups, and we've had to say a sad goodbye to Natasha but hopefully she will be back with us soon.

*We will be presenting our Supporters Seminar, *Eyes Wide Open* for family and friends on Tuesday 12th of

May, more information is on page 3 of this newsletter.

*Heartfelt House will have its 15th birthday on the 19th of April. We are proud of our achievements and the work we do to support survivors and their families in our local community.

*And lastly, some news of my own. A few weeks ago I made a tough decision to resign from my position as CEO, effective of 9th April. It has been an honour to share my services with you these past three years and from my humble beginnings as a volunteer facilitator to group facilitator over the past twelve years. I have been given some amazing opportunities to travel and meet great people in our field. Some of my favourite experiences include attending the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, being successful in receiving our Federal Funding, being a Finalist at the NSW Regional Woman of the Year Awards 2019, and a Finalist at the Southern Cross University Alumnus of the Year Awards 2019. Receiving 1st class Honours for my thesis on the impact of *Taking the First Steps* group therapy program on participants' social network, and welcoming our first

HFH Patron, Her Hon. Margaret Beazley. These are not accomplishments a CEO makes alone. These are achievements that require a committed team of gifted, tenacious individuals who come together to work for a common goal. I thank you for encouraging and helping me along the many challenges we faced and celebrating the many triumphs we shared. I could not have asked for a more supportive team who bring passion and wisdom into making this a wonderful organisation it is today.

I feel confident that Heartfelt House will continue to grow and flourish as it reaches new levels of providing unique, trauma-informed, evidence-based group therapy programs for adult survivors of child sexual abuse in the Northern Rivers community and beyond.

I wish *you* all well in your future endeavours, travel safe and may we meet again.

Kate Loubet, CEO 2016-2020.



Heartfelt House contact details...

301 Lismore Rd
Wollongbar NSW 2477
(corner of Sneaths Rd)



Postal Address: PO Box 904
Alstonville NSW 2477

Phone: 02 6628 8940

Email: info@heartfelthouse.org.au

Website: www.heartfelthouse.org.au

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 8am-3pm

Testimonials from past participants and Mens group

Participant's Testimonial, Rainbow Galaxy Voyagers G42, 2019

To the Brave Woman who is reading this,

First of all, I am sorry for what happened to you and led you to Heartfelt House. You are a survivor in pain, but you are in the right place now. Heartfelt House is a safe, embracing space for you to start taking the first steps to understanding yourself and to being kind to yourself.

When I arrived at Heartfelt House I felt that I had no future in which I wasn't permanently sad and full of self loathing. Through the classes each week I have gained a little piece of myself back each time, and now I am in a situation where I can show myself real compassion and I can envisage a brighter future.

The course is hard, challenging and exhausting but the rewards are that you will have new skills and strategies to face your new life. I am grateful to have met the other beautiful women in my group and growing with them. The facilitators of the group are amazing, I feel I have blossomed under the sun of their knowledge and compassion, as you will too! This is life changing.

Best wishes for your journey ahead, L x

'Participant's Testimonial, Dancing Topaz G43, 2019

The care and support of everyone who keeps this innovative, and incredibly supportive organisation going is incredible. I feel so completely blessed and so grateful for the opportunity, which would not be possible without everyone who works so hard behind the scenes. From the bottom of my abused heart that is on a healing mission - I THANK YOU

Expressions of Interest– Male CSA Survivors Group Therapy Program

Heartfelt House is currently seeking expressions of interest from adult male survivors of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) to participate in a weekly therapeutic support group designed to provide a safe environment toward recovery and healing.

The course is scheduled for mid to late this year and would be facilitated by qualified professionals.

For registration and more details please contact Vanessa, our Group Development Facilitator, on 02 6628 8940 (please leave a message if office unattended) or info@heartfelthouse.org.au

We are seeking a Volunteer Graphic Designer who can provide a range of professionally designed digital marketing materials for a fundraising campaign to be launched in mid 2020. A few hours a week are required onsite or at your home.

- ♥ Tertiary qualifications (or working toward them) or work experience in Graphic Design
- ♥ Print and digital design, and production knowledge and/or experience
- ♥ Experience developing creative design solutions across digital and print platforms for a variety of campaigns
- ♥ Ability to create effective visual communication pieces from creative concept stage through to finished product
- ♥ Demonstrated ability to articulate, create and direct a high-quality design approach
- ♥ Able to use InDesign, Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop
- ♥ Implement marketing tactics that support organizational objectives
- ♥ Prepare marketing and advertising strategies, plans, and objectives
- ♥ Attention to detail
- ♥ Good communication skills
- ♥ Design portfolio of work

For more information and how to apply please See SEEK Volunteer

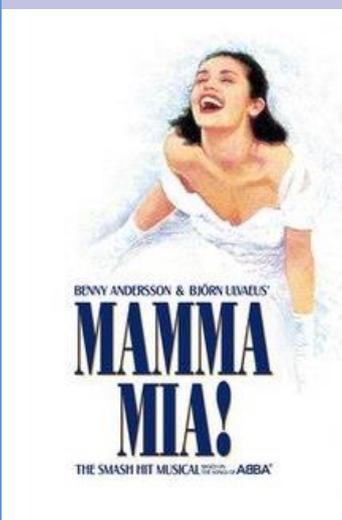
<https://www.volunteer.com.au/volunteering/opportunity/149008/graphic-designer>

SAVE THE DATE! WEDNESDAY 02 DECEMBER 2020

The Ballina Players have generously given us a Charity night for the famous, fun musical Mamma Mia!

Details will be released later in the year.

Pop this in your diary now as seats will sell fast!



EYES WIDE OPEN

Seminar for Family and Friends of Survivors

- ✓ Learn about the impacts of child sexual abuse
- ✓ Gain knowledge about the grooming process
- ✓ Understand how to best support a survivor in your life

Date: Tuesday May 12th, Time: 9.00am-12.30pm

Cost: \$65 includes light morning tea and all resources

Registration is essential as places are limited. Please contact Vanessa on info@heartfelthouse.org.au or call 02 6628 8940

See our website for more information

A survivor's story

Hello, and congratulations!

Obviously you have come to that point in your life where somewhere inside you there is a tiny weeny little spark that is telling you that you are worth more, you matter, and you need (probably for the first time) to finally put yourself first. Even if your premise is the fact that you want to improve relationships with others, and to be a 'better person' - at least you have seriously thought about it and can now start those first steps with an amazing supportive community of women.

You will want the quick fix.... we all do.... but every week you will build inner strength, challenge old thoughts, learn to be kinder to yourself, build healthier relationships and ultimately really gain a sense of who you are (although it will be with weeks of scrambled brains and thoughts....). It is by no means an easy journey. BUT YOU WILL SURVIVE. Every week you will challenge your self, but learn so much. Sometimes it is quite a shock, to recognize within myself, to be having different reactions and thoughts about situations that previously would incite anxiety, shame and isolation.

All I can stress to you is DON'T GIVE UP! Make that commitment to go every week to the group, (no matter how hard) and to take in as much as you can handle - YOU are the only one in charge of your destiny!

My favourite quote that gets me (LITERALLY!) through every single day (since I found it...) is :

"A unhealed person can find offence in pretty much anything someone does. A healed person understands that the actions of others has absolutely nothing to do with them.

Every day you get to decide which one you will be."

Be proud of yourself, be ready to start a new chapter.

YOU DESERVE IT!

Much love and support Josie x



HEALING FROM TRAUMA - neuroplasticity

The footprints of trauma can be long lasting. They are etched deeply into the survivor's physical and mental health, stretching from youth to adulthood, and can trigger a range of reactions that have the potential to escalate into crisis. Of particular interest to those involved in the field of trauma recovery is the area of neuroplasticity. This refers to how the brain is wired and its extraordinary capacity to rewire neural pathways.

Your brain is constantly adapting and rewiring itself. Your thoughts and behaviours influence this process. If certain thoughts and behaviours are repeated often enough, a strong connection, also known as a neural pathway, is created. Just think of your brain as a dynamic, connected power grid, with billions of roads and pathways lighting up every time you think, feel or do something. Some of these roads are well travelled. These are your habits; your established ways of thinking, feeling and doing. Every time you think in a certain way, practice a particular task, or feel a specific emotion, you strengthen this road, and it becomes easier for your brain to travel this pathway.

In trauma, a similar pathway is set down; it can even be additionally engrained due to the shock or intensity associated with the trauma. Therefore, when a single trigger or set of triggers occur, the emotions associated with the trauma are revisited. However, neuroplasticity allows the creation of new pathways through changes in behaviour, environment and neural processes. Survivors can build new and better neural pathways in their brains that give them a chance to identify, support, and practice coping skills. Healthy relationships soothe people affected by trauma and promote recovery and wellbeing. Positive relationships build good connections in our brain right across our lives. These foster healthy development and functioning.

Not only is the brain capable of creating new pathways, it is designed to do so. The brain is highly resilient and flexible. The brain functions at its best when it is limber and rich with options. The incredible thing is that the human brain has a very real desire to heal itself. It requires being present and mindful, which can be challenging for many survivors, but the outcome offers hope. This process of rewiring your brain by forming new connections and weakening old ones is neuroplasticity in action.



Board Report

What a tumultuous start to 2020. Fires and floods in Australia and now the world's dealing with the implications of a global health pandemic. Anxious and uncertain times for all. It's in tough times like these that we draw strength from our connections with each other and the resilience of communities, and don't give into panic and pressure to 'circle the wagons'.

In this context, the board wants to express its deep appreciation for the enormous contribution made by our departing CEO Kate Loubet. Kate has worked in all facets of HFH demonstrating from the very beginning her compassion and commitment to our program participants, starting as a volunteer 12 years ago, then progressing to lead facilitator and head of the organisation. As CEO for the last three years she has stepped up and met the challenges of providing strategic direction enabling the organisation to grow and mature.

In her tenure as CEO, Kate was recognised as a finalist for the NSW regional woman of the year and received first class honours in Social Sciences from Southern Cross University. Kate is an exemplar of the work of Heartfelt House. We wish her continuing success in her future career.

With this significant change, the board has been busy with recruitment and also considering our direction as we move ahead.

It's been a tough time for donations, with a drop in revenue from this source over the last six months. The board is especially interested in encouraging donations and in-kind giving from local businesses and the corporate sector. If you're in business we'd love to hear from you and discuss how we could work together!

Joanna Palser
Board Chair

We Thank YOU!

- ♥ **Ballina Christian Choir**
- ♥ **Emanation Media—Rebecca Asquith**
- ♥ **The Anglican Parish of Ballina**
- ♥ **Our local community donors and generous volunteers**
- ♥ **Our participants and their family, friends and supporters**
- ♥ **The Ballina Players**