

## Pozhet October 2009

### Fertility & Pregnancy

#### From the Pozhet team

A big hello to all our clients and a special welcome to those who have recently joined Pozhet!! 2009 has felt a little like the blink of an eye, it arrived and now, quite suddenly, it is on its way out, but it has been a very full year for the team at Pozhet, and the last three months have been especially busy.

There's been a lot of planning for the upcoming Pozhet Retreat and the Annual Workshop; the usual organising and coordinating of our bi-monthly Open Houses and Rendezvous, and our one-off events like Partners Plus Dinner; and many partnership activities for the African Women's Day, Sanctuary-Pozhet Dinner Series, World AIDS Day activities/events, Tree of Hope BBQ, and the Carers' Day event. Ongoing are also the day-to-day activities around the free-call line, working to build and maintain ties with relevant service providers and organisations, research, advocacy and providing training. Phew!

On top of all that, we met with some service providers in the Lismore/Tweed Heads area, Kate and Pene have been working on their presentation for the Annual ASHM Conference, Jessica has continued her work on a Fertility Resource, and Nalini has been working with Renee (Coordinator, the Sanctuary) on a Needs Assessment. Finally, following feedback from clients, the team has started work on a brand new Pozhet website, to provide a more relevant, easier to navigate, and better looking website for our clients, with Peter taking the reins on the actual

creation process.  
Read on for more details!



Years ago the thought of having children or starting a family when HIV was a part of your life seemed an impossible dream. Today however, with so many amazing treatments and so much research being conducted, it is a very real option. More and more men and women living with HIV are starting families and giving birth to beautiful, healthy HIV negative babies. There are obviously many things you need to know before you decide to go down this road. It is important to speak to your doctor about all the different options available to you and how to keep yourself, your partner and your baby safe. Pozhet and a number of other services and clinics have heard a lot of queries about fertility, conception, pregnancy and birth.

In order to inform you and your partner, regardless of your status or gender we are currently creating a fertility resource that will focus on pre-conception psychosocial issues and methods of safe conception. Your input into this resource would be extremely valuable. We would like to hear your questions and queries so that they can be included in the resource, and in a few months when the resource is ready, we will be calling on you to help us review the resource. For any further information, please feel free to contact Jessica on 1800 812 404 or email her at [Jessica.Elkaim@sswahs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Jessica.Elkaim@sswahs.nsw.gov.au)





## Clients have their say!

In July a group of active Pozhet clients joined together to form The Pozhets Reference Group. The group will meet quarterly to provide feedback to the Service on our current programs, events, resources and to identify opportunities for further service development.

The first meeting was an opportunity to talk about the history of the service including activities of the past, changes in HIV and the service; the present, with new staff and the strategic direction of the service; and ideas for future events with a difference!

There is still the opportunity to be involved with the group and have your say. The group meets after hours on a quarterly basis. If you would like to be involved or would like more information, please call Kate 1800 812 404 or email [kate.reakes@sswahs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kate.reakes@sswahs.nsw.gov.au)

## Hello from Queanbeyan...

*By Kevin Schamburg*

Greater Southern Area Health Service (GSAHS) HIV and Related Programs Manager Michael Bolton and Health Development Program Coordinator Kevin Schamburg travelled to Sydney to meet with a range of State wide Services in October 2007. This included a discussion with Positive Life NSW to develop a plan for a range of forums to be conducted in rural NSW in the GSAHS region.

The aim was for the service providers to meet local people who are living with HIV, to improve and discuss social and service networks and to



improve communication and understanding across a range of agencies and service providers to rural communities. An important

## EAT, LIVE, LEARN

### Inner West Chat Club For PLWH & Friends

A series of topical discussions over an evening meal for those balancing work or study with life & play

**COMING SOON**

Call The Sanctuary for more info  
9519 6142

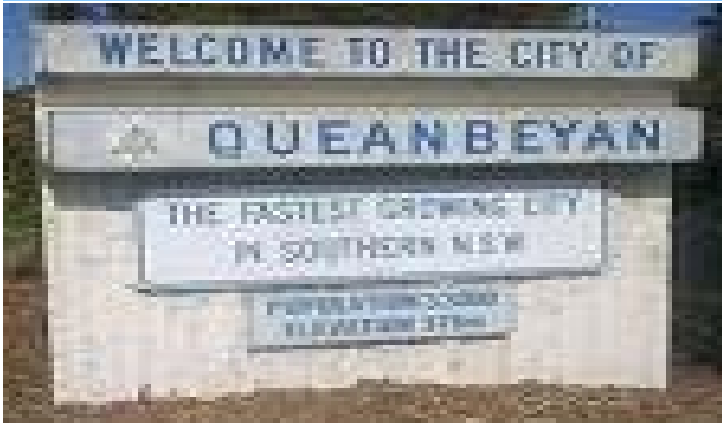
part of these forums was for the service providers to better understand regional issues and more effectively advocate for the needs of people living with HIV in the GSAHS region.

Positive Life NSW organised for Pozhets to participate in these forums with Bobby Goldsmith Foundation and ACON Illawarra. The forums were conducted in Albury in March 2009, Queanbeyan and Bega in June 2009, with HIV positive people having an opportunity to meet with representatives from the organisations.

It was decided that an informal approach as well as some formal content was appropriate. In Albury and Queanbeyan a dinner was held for everyone, and individual appointments were made for people living with HIV to meet with the state-wide services the following day. In Bega the meetings were followed by a lunch. The format was well received by everyone who attended.

Your  
**heterosexual  
HIV Service  
for NSW**





An important aspect for many people in our region was that Kate Reakes from Pozhets was in attendance and was able to meet with several people who had not been in contact with the Pozhets prior to these forums. It also gave the staff from the HARP team an opportunity to talk about service provision and to hear first hand what services they could tell people living with HIV were available to them.

GSAHS has sexual health services and blood borne virus services in Albury, Wagga Wagga, Queanbeyan, Griffith, Goulburn, Eurobodalla and Bega. GSAHS staff are committed to respecting people's confidentiality in rural areas

and advising of where and how to access services that we are unable to provide.

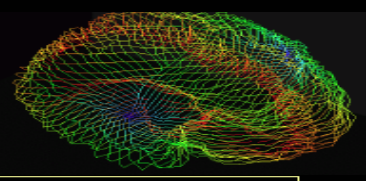
We hope more of these forums will be conducted in the future and we will keep you advised through this newsletter.

*Kevin Schamburg is the GSAHS HARP Health Development Program Coordinator and is based in Queanbeyan NSW. He worked at PLWHA ACT and the AIDS Action Council of the ACT before joining the HARP team at GSAHS in June 2007.*

**Ageing & HIV Project  
Research Participants needed**

Dr. Cysique and colleagues at the University of New South Wales / St. Vincent's Hospital are conducting a study to better understand whether HIV infection may cause increase risk for developing memory and attentional difficulties in middle-aged persons. To better understand this issue and help HIV research, HIV-negative healthy volunteer research participants are needed aged 45 and above. See *information below*.

# Helping NeuroAIDS research



**What does the study involve?**

**2 visits at 18 months interval**

**Each consist of neuropsychological testing of attention, memory, visuo-spatial and language functions as well as mood and well being questionnaires (2 hours)**

**A head MRI scanning (involves lying quietly in the MRI scanner (45 minutes)).**

*Your participation will help developing standard guidelines to understand the long-term evolution of cognitive difficulties in HIV infection*

**Contact: Dr. Cysique ph: 02-8382-4104; email: [lcysique@unsw.edu.au](mailto:lcysique@unsw.edu.au) or Professor Brew ph: 02-8382-4100 email: [bbrew@stvincents.com.au](mailto:bbrew@stvincents.com.au)**





## Pozhet Needs Analysis

In the last few months the team at Pozhet have been asking for and receiving comments and suggestions about the services and activities that you would like from Pozhet. For the most part we have only been able to get feedback through chatting to those of you who have attended recent Pozhet activities. However there are so many more of you who we don't regularly see at our events, and we would love some input about the future of our service.

We have been working with the Sanctuary on a needs analysis to gather information about the types of activities we can provide for our clients. The major part of the needs analysis is made up of three questionnaires – the first is a survey for current and potential clients of Pozhet and/or the Sanctuary; second is a survey for Pozhet clients to comment on our current services/activities; and third, a similar survey for Sanctuary clients. The surveys will be mailed out to all the clients on our mailing list in late September and early October. As part of the needs analysis two small group discussions, one with Pozhet clients and another with the Sanctuary clients, are also planned for later in the year.

We take this opportunity to urge you to complete the questionnaires and return them using the postage paid envelope that will be enclosed. The questionnaires are totally confidential and non-identifying, so your time and honesty in completing them will be much appreciated and also

absolutely invaluable to planning our future events and activities.

**Many thanks in advance!!**



**SUPPORT  
FOR THOSE  
SUPPORTING  
PLWHAs**

**NATIONAL  
CARERS'  
DAY**

**TAKE TIME OUT**  
at the  
**TREE OF HOPE**

in the grounds of the  
St. Patrick's Business  
College  
cnr Devonshire and  
Riley Streets  
Surry Hills NSW 2010

**09.30 - 16.00hrs**  
**Tuesday**  
**20th October**



FOR INFORMATION  
CONTACT  
PAUL at Adahps  
on 8382 1810



## Client Events Update

The Pozhet events calendar has kept the team very busy over the last three months. The July Open House was well attended with Michael Dyer leading the group in a discussion about spirituality and the role of faith in wellbeing. In August we held our second social night, Rendezvous @ the Sanctuary. Staff members from the HIV/AIDS Legal Centre (HALC) were around on the night to inform people of their services. There wasn't an Open House scheduled for September as all of our energy has been directed towards the Pozhet Retreat. The phonedlines were running hot as soon as the details of the Retreat were announced and we received registrations of interest from many of our long-term clients and some more recent Pozhet clients. Unfortunately, due to the amount of interest, not everyone could go, and names were pulled out of a hat and the lucky 20 were informed a few weeks ago. The Retreat should be taking place as we go to press with this edition of the news-

letter, so take a look at the website in early October or the next newsletter for news on how it went!

The Phoenix Workshops (a partnership between Pozhet and BGF) began in early July and ran for six weeks. It was a well attended series of workshops, and participants found some of the topics, including dealing with depression, resilience and managing treatments, particularly useful. We greatly appreciated the feedback from participants about the workshop, and hope to run a similar series next year, taking on board the comments from this year.

The Partners Plus Dinner event held in August was a HIT! After a long process of planning and preparation, the couples who attended had a great time, enjoyed the food and the show, and most importantly, had the opportunity to connect with other couples to talk, laugh and have a great night out!

*...change of venue and a more intimate occasion was very welcome...*

## Pozhet Annual Workshop

All day event  
on  
Saturday 14th November

## Pozhet X'MAS Party

7.00 to 9.00 pm  
at the Tree of Hope  
on  
Friday 4th December

**Keep an eye out for information on Pozhet's end of year events...**



*...it was different from any other event previously held ... refreshing and exciting, so why not have some fun in a fun environment instead of the same old routines. It was a great event...*

We were very pleased with all the positive feedback we received after the event-some of the comments we received have been included here. We look forward to facilitating more fun and exciting activities in the future!

The monthly African Women's Days have continued to be a great success, providing the ever increasing group of women with a jovial space to connect with each other, receive information and discuss their concerns. Dr. Virginia Furner from the Albion Street Centre was there in August to answer questions (and there were many!) about health related matters; and exercise was the theme for September with Positive Central physiotherapist, Stella Di Laudo.

That's all for past events, we look forward to seeing you at a Pozhet event very soon!

**When?**

**7.00 to 9.00 pm**

**Friday 2nd October**

**Where?**

**Tree of Hope,  
Surry Hills**

## Healthy Mind

**Dealing with depression, stress & every day life**

**With Special Guest: Alison Cowell, Social Worker,  
Positive Central SSWAHS**



**Tips to:**

**Stress less**

**Beat the blues**

**Overcome problems**

**Develop coping skills**

**Change your thinking**

*As courtesy to the guest speaker & all other participants, please ensure you arrive no later than 7:10pm*

**For further information call us on 1800 812 404**

**or email [pozhet@pozhet.org.au](mailto:pozhet@pozhet.org.au)**