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## Introducing our New Project Officer... Maxine!

*Hi Everyone*

*I'm the new Project Officer with Pozhet and will be here 3 days per week (usually Tuesday - Thursday).*

*Some of you may remember I worked for Pozhet a few years ago and left when I moved to country NSW (Lismore). I'm back in Sydney now and very happy to be here.*

*Over the years I've worked for ACON, ASHM, NAPWA and Positive Life NSW in Health Promotion, and been involved in HIV services for the last 15 years.*

*I've also worked in education, care and support with people with physical and intellectual disabilities, aged care, women's health, drug health and been an English teacher to international students.*

*I will be working on the Pozhet Annual Workshop coming up in November, Pozhet's contribution to World AIDS Day, a new resource about Serodiscordant Relationships (pos-neg relationships) as well as raising awareness with other HIV organisations about heterosexual issues and client support.*

*I attended the Pozhet/ACON Women's Day in May and it was a great opportunity to talk with a large group of amazing women about health, sexuality, treatments, disclosure and other interesting topics.*

*I look forward to meeting you at one of our events soon and am always happy to talk on the phone (our Freecall phonenumber:1800 812 404) or you can email me at [pozhet@pozhet.org.au](mailto:pozhet@pozhet.org.au)*

*Maxine*



## EVENTS WRAP-UP

### OPEN HOUSE - HIV & Treatments

The Open House project has been a popular and stable project of HHAS for over 15 years. They are an opportunity for heterosexual people with HIV, their partners and family and friends to connect with peers and service providers and discuss relevant topics.

The first Open House of 2011 was held on the 25<sup>th</sup> March at the Tree of Hope and was co-facilitated by Margaret Pirotta from the Tree of Hope.

A panel of speakers (Dr Virginia Furner, Albion Street Centre; Jae Condon, ACON and Adrian Ogier, NAPWA) were invited to provide expertise on the topic of HIV and treatments.

The all male group provided an excellent opportunity to have a relaxed discussion, where participants were able to ask questions and discuss issues related to treatments and side effects. Many of the group have been living with HIV for many years and were able to discuss with the panel and other participants the side effects related to living with HIV long term and a variety of treatment regimens. Afterwards many participants, particularly those who were more recently diagnosed said they felt reassured listening to the advances in both treatments and the managements of side effects.

The small group environment provided a positive and relaxed atmosphere. Topics for discussion included;

- Ageing and cardio vascular disease
- Side effects such as peripheral neuropathy and lipodistrophy
- Co-infection with hepatitis C and treatment options
- T cells and what they mean

Thanks to the panel for providing their time and expertise and thanks also to Margaret for co-facilitating and providing the venue.

**A big thanks to all the participants who contributed openly in the discussion.**



## African Women's Group

The African Women's Group has been running since 2009 and is a partnership project facilitated by the Lemongrove Unit at South West Sydney Area Health Service, ACON Women and Families Project and Pozhet.

On the first Friday of every month at 10.30 am, a group of African women living with HIV meet for support, information sharing and a social lunch. Groups are held at St Marys and women and their children are welcome. The groups this year have involved lots of enthusiastic discussion.

Susan, Elizabeth & Jodie are attempting to contact all women who have attended the group to get their feedback about a range of issues to improve the group further; things like: suitability of time/day group session held, travel, venue, childcare and topics for the remainder of 2011.

So far this year we've had two guest speakers present to the group.

Angela from the Paediatric HIV/AIDS Service at the Sydney Children's Hospital spoke about disclosure, particularly in the family context. This was a popular session and was an extension of a similar presentation by Angela in 2010.

Angela, the Dietitian from Positive Central presented on healthy eating and physical activity including basic exercises which can be done at home.

The groups are fun and participants are always enthusiastic and welcoming. There is lots of singing and dance and laughter! We encourage all African Women with HIV to come along.

**For more information contact Susan on 1800 812 404**

## Berry Retreat

The first Retreat for 2011 was held in March at the Sport and Recreation Centre in beautiful Berry. It was facilitated by Susan from Pozhet and Leo Baretto, from the HIV Community Team. There were thirteen participants including quite a few people who were new to Pozhet events. There were even two young children who behaved wonderfully ....in spite of all the enthusiastic and excited chatter late into the night!

Everyone arrived on Friday evening and after a meal there was an introductory session about the weekend and Leo facilitated the first activity which got the weekend off to a great start.



This year canoeing and kayaking were replaced by raft building. This was a team effort and 15 participants jumped on board and started paddling. There was much hilarity as the team went in circles / people jumped overboard / had a water battle with another group and all got very wet! In between Paul, the facilitator from Berry, calmly taught us to paddle and shared some local history.

After lunch we headed to the archery range. The bullseye was hit a few times as well as a few branches 20 foot up a tree. Some participants may have spent more time searching for arrows in the grass and trees but everyone had a great time and as usual it proved a very popular activity.

After the BBQ on Saturday night people continued the conversation from the night before. Some of the issues discussed included:

- stigma
- disclosure
- strategies for coping with HIV
- depression
- taking medication and how it makes you feel

Sunday was ropes day. Many needed a challenge and did the ropes blind -folded which did require absolute trust in the person below who was guiding them across the course. Leo guided a few brave souls through the high rope course.

All in all everyone had a go and challenged themselves in some way or another.

At the final session, participants reiterated how they enjoyed the interaction with their peers and the sharing of stories and experiences in a safe environment.

Participants also said they enjoyed all the activities, being challenged and overcoming fears and that their expectations were more than met on the weekend.

The scenery at Berry was beautiful, the Sport and Recreation staff were flexible and helpful and there was lots of time for people to chat and connect with others.

Thanks to all attendees for participating fully and for making the retreat a success. A special thanks to Leo for staying up late both nights to chat and for using his experience to help guide people through the ropes and other challenges of the weekend.



## Women's Day at the Haven

The Western Suburbs Haven has a regular ladies day every two months. Pozhet and ACON (Women and Families) participate in this event twice a year. The first combined women's event was held in February with 10 participants; many who were clients of both the Haven and Pozhet. It was a great opportunity to discuss further Pozhet and ACON events as well as meet some new people.

A wonderful lunch was cooked by the volunteers and most of the women had a massage. There was a discussion about future activities and the participants wrote down all their ideas, which will be taken up by The Haven in the future.

These days are a great opportunity for Pozhet to meet up and stay in touch with Pozhet clients from western Sydney.

**If you want to attend the next combined event, have lunch and a massage and learn more about the Haven contact Susan at Pozhet.**

## EVENTS COMING-UP

### ANNUAL WORKSHOP - Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2011

Book the date into your diary for another great Annual Workshop for men and women living with HIV, their partners, carers and family.

Have fun, meet friends and relax in a comfortable, private space where you can be yourself.

There will be large group activities as well as sessions for men, women, partners and family.

We'll be talking about issues such as Disclosure, Transmission and Building Resilience.

**Stay tuned for more details and don't forget...accommodation scholarships are available to people living in rural and regional areas, so keep the weekend free!**



## CALENDAR – July to December 2011

<p><b>Consumer Reference Group:</b> HHAS believes in the value and strength of consumer participation. This group consists of people who are interested in becoming more involved in the direction of the service.</p> <p><b>If you want more information or are interested in participating call Pozhet on the freecall number or email us.</b></p>		<p><b>JULY</b></p> <p><b>Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup></b> <b>HHAS Consumer Reference Group</b></p>	<p><b>AUGUST</b></p> <p><b>Saturday 13<sup>th</sup></b> <b>Women's Information and Support Day</b></p>
<p><b>SEPTEMBER</b></p> <p><b>Friday 9<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 11<sup>th</sup></b> <b>HHAS Retreat</b> (men, women, partners, family &amp; friends)</p>	<p><b>OCTOBER</b></p> <p><b>Friday 14<sup>th</sup></b> <b>Open House</b></p> <p><b>Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup></b> <b>HHAS Consumer Reference Group</b></p>	<p><b>NOVEMBER</b></p> <p><b>Saturday 12<sup>th</sup></b> <b>Annual Workshop</b> (men, women, partners, family &amp; friends)</p>	<p><b>DECEMBER</b></p> <p><b>Friday 2<sup>nd</sup></b> <b>End of Year Event</b> (men, women, partners, family &amp; friends)</p>

## COMMUNITY ORGANISATION SPOTLIGHT - Job Futures

### Are you thinking about returning to work?

BGF are pleased to introduce their Job Futures Programme. Job Futures is a partnership with Inner West Skill Centre (IWSC). Inner West Skills Centre is a non-profit community based employment, training and recruitment organisation committed to providing services to assist the most disadvantaged by creating opportunities.

Sue Wood from BGF is working with IWSC and will be working with you if you are considering returning to work in some capacity to create an employment pathway plan. The plan will work out your skills and strengths and what training or study you will need to help you towards your plan to return to work.

Sue and IWSC will then assist you in searching for the job right for you; enhancing your resume and helping you submit job applications.



This programme will:

- Refer you to vocational and motivational short courses which will increase your labour market competencies.
- Provide ongoing job search mentoring and support.
- Prepare you for job interviews and doing reference checks.
- Negotiate with employers on your behalf to increase your opportunities to gain permanent employment.
- Offer employers incentives and information about traineeships and apprenticeships to give you a long-term career path.
- Provide ongoing post placement support for up to six months of having gained employment.

**If you are interested in enquiring about your options you can contact Sue Wood on 9283 8666 or [sue.wood@bfg.org.au](mailto:sue.wood@bfg.org.au)**

## **‘TALKABOUT’ - Positive Life NSW**

‘Talkabout’ magazine has a new editor, a new look and a new section called ‘Everyday Life’.

Everyday Life is a new regular feature dedicated to real-life stories. Check it out for info about the next topic.

You can write under a made-up name if you like, and make it as personal or as general as you want. ‘Talkabout’ needs stories from a range of people, and it’s important to have straight people’s views included!

**Susan Ardill, the new editor, can talk with you about any stories you may want to contribute. Call Susan on: 1800 245 677 or 9361 6011 for a chat.**

**Happy writing!**



## UPDATE YOUR CONTACT DETAILS:

So that Pozhet can stay in touch and send event updates we would like to make sure we have your correct contact details.

Please complete the information below and send to:

**HHAS PO Box 3159, Redfern 2016** or email [pozhet@pozhet.org.au](mailto:pozhet@pozhet.org.au)

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Postcode:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Is it ok to leave a message? Yes/No** *(please circle)*

**Mobile phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Is it ok to leave a message? Yes/No** *(please circle)*

**Is it ok to send a text message? Yes/No** *(please circle)*

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_