**AUTISM COMMUNITY NETWORK**

**MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING**

**22 APRIL 2016**

Present: Warren Thompson, Steve Drakoulis, Dick Goodfellow, Liz Diab, Erin Normoyle, Terry Lynch

Apologies: Jane Tzakos, Magdalena Oszywa

Minutes Taken By: Steve Drakoulis

Quorum was reached and meeting commenced at 7.01 pm

**Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Motion to accept minutes of last meeting, held in March 2016 was proposed by Terry, seconded by Dick. Motion passed.

**President’s Report**

* NDIS – Warren eager to set up a committee to help the ACN advance our position towards getting ready to work within it. No volunteers have stepped forward, Steve will post a notice out to the network to seek suitable volunteers
* Finance/ Banking –
  + New bank account – to assist ACN with separating our committed funds from our available operational funds, we have this month created a second account with the Commonwealth Bank.
  + Debit card – As we have set up our account to require two signatures for all authorized payments, we are not about to use a credit card or a debit card. This has created operational limitations for us as the Australia Post Visa Debit card we’ve used to date is not available for online payments. Seeking the best solution, we are asking the Board to authorize Steve Drakoulis and Elizabeth Diab to create personal debit cards through the CBA for the sole purpose of using them for ACN business. The cards would be used in the same way as the Australia Post have been operating. The motion was proposed by Warren, seconded by Erin and approved unanimously.
* We have now completed the creation of a Sensory room for Marrickville High School, with funds provided by the state government. We would like to thank Claudia Walters and Dick Goodfellow for all their hard work in creating this valuable asset for the community.
* Sutherland & St George Transition Expo Events – coming up, Steve to promote throughout the community, and will attend to seek out information and network opportunities.
* Fund raising committee – the continuation of this committee is critical to our future and a new venue and date suitable to all was decided. The committee will now meet at Marrickville Metro every second Wednesday.
* iPad Communicate update – the Lions clubs are on track to raise $30,000 towards the next phase of this project. Warren played two short videos from past recipient families, which will be used to further promote the value of these resources for nonverbal children with autism.

**Treasurer’s Report**

* Treasurer Magdalena was unable to attend this meeting but forwarded her monthly report. All present reviewed it. Report presented. Motion to accept it by Terry, seconded by Erin. Accepted.

**Manager’s Report**

* Erin and Liz planned a fundraising movie day, however due to low sales we had to cancel it and issue refunds to everyone. While it didn’t cost us any money it was unfortunate that this event couldn’t raise us any funds. We will try it again on a future date outside of the school holidays.
* Funding Applications and Acquittals: Steve reported to the Board that the months of constant pressure have taken a toll on him and he has been unable to function to the level he feels is required to meet all his obligations and deadlines. The Board discussed at length about how they can further support him to allow him to manage the organisation effectively and this conversation will continue. We remain behind schedule on our commitments on grant acquittals as well as funding applications at this time. Warren and Terry will assist Steve with acquittals.
* Autism Awareness month: We launched our schools awareness campaign at the end of the month but the response has not been very good. While a small number of schools embraced the opportunity to use the resources we provided to educate their students on autism, others have asked us to unsubscribe them. Most have not responded.
* Blacktown Facilitator Briana has now completed social stories for the Australian Museum and Featherdale Wildlife Park, to help children on the spectrum prepare to visit them. She is now speaking with the management of Sydney Opera House who are also interested in a social story for their visitors.
* Bully Proof Kidz: We have had confirmation that this Martial Arts program for kids on the spectrum will run at Carlton again, as well as starting in Gymea this year. We have promoted it and are receiving application for the Assessment Day.
* Parramatta council: Steve completed the acquittal for Parramatta council and has submitted this.
* Following Steve’s recent Talk at a Lions event, the Lions clubs of Parramatta, Hills, Balgowlah and Manly have expressed interest in supporting us to run programs in their regions. Parramatta have already committed a venue and $2,000 to start an Art group for that area.
* Steve has accepted an invitation to be the keynote speaker at a Lions Conference in Cessnock later this year. This will be another opportunity for us to get the message out to more clubs throughout NSW.
* I.T. support: Arun is currently carrying various maintenance work for our database and web services. Steve reported that a local I.T. business, owned by a family supported by ACN, have offered to provide free ongoing I.T. support for our equipment. We are grateful to I.T.ology for their support.
* Centrelink: Steve is completing paperwork for ACN to be authorised to accept volunteers accessing Centrelink. We will only accept volunteers directly dealing with autism experience.
* Steve has drafted a report to be submitted to Federal MP Craig Kelly to request funding support from the Federal government.

**Staff / Volunteers**

* + Jessica Filipaina: new volunteer in the Auburn area will initially be engaged under her required 100 hours community work experience as part of obtaining her degree in social work. We look forward to having Jessica on board.

**Events & Projects**

* Carers group to meet with Minister: Steve will complete an application to join a committee which consults with the State Minister for Disabilities
* Parramatta Magic Mania: thanks to Lions Clubs, we have given away tickets to a family event in Parramatta for May.
* Donation tins: More tins have been put out in the community to help collect funds. We have nine across different businesses.

**Support Group updates**:

* + - Cooking Club is to return on a monthly basis in St.George
    - Sydney social group has been working well, with different activities each fortnight.
    - Drama Club finished in the inner west has now been completed, we will apply for more funding to run it again
    - The official launch for the new Auburn support and social group will be held in May.
    - Our new group in the Leichhardt area is confirmed and will be run on the first Thursday evening of each month.
    - Thanks to a commitment of financial support from the Lions Club of Parramatta, we are to start a new Art group and a Youth club in that region.

**Outstanding Action Items**

* Steve to check on status of Liz Diab re ability to be paid for running activities while also being a Director
* A policy needs to be drafted to cover the Operations Manager’s leave procedures. Steve proposed to hand it to a new volunteer who has governance experience, to be done ASAP.

**General Business**

* Dick: Lionesses looking at putting on fundraising event for ACN
* Terry spoke about Men’s shed wanting to work a workshop for kids. Suggested Youth club to speak to kids there.
* Dick offered to sell bird boxes he builds to donate funds to ACN.
* Dick has received a certificate as a food safety supervisor following completion of a course in April.
* Lugarno Lions may be able to give us their bbq trailer.
* Liz wants to purchase a suitable esky for ACN fundraising BBQs. Terry to look into it being donated by Bunnings or by Lions club.

**Next Meeting**

20 May 2016 7 pm in ACN office