



# The ING Centre for Conductive Education Newsletter

189 Allambie Road, Allambie Heights N.S.W. 2100  
Phone: (02) 9972 8124 Fax: (02) 9451 0248

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This year has seen some changes in the organisational context for the ING Centre for Conductive Education. Conductive Education is now part of a wider service called Community Links, which sits within the Community Development Unit of The Spastic Centre. Community Links has a range of programs that aim to work cooperatively with families, young people and children to strengthen and build helpful connections, resources, skills and knowledge.

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The range of services that currently come under the Community Links umbrella include the Links programs (group work and networks for parents/carers of children or young people with disabilities in Sydney and regional NSW), the Y-Connection ( a support and advocacy network for young people aged 17-30 years with a disability – see [www.yconneccion.org.au](http://www.yconneccion.org.au) ) and the Intensive Family Support Options program – IFSO (an intensive home support service for families with a child or adolescent with a disability who are experiencing a high level of stress, see [www.thespasticcentre.org.au/services/ifso/index.htm](http://www.thespasticcentre.org.au/services/ifso/index.htm) ).

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These changes do not affect the day-to-day management of programs offered by Conductive Education. If you have any queries or want further information about any of the programs within Community Links please contact me or for information about the Conductive Education Program contact Ros Twohill.

### Recent Visitors to CE

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Joan Bratel — Manager Community Links Programs  
CE Website: [www.tscnsw.org.au/services/conded](http://www.tscnsw.org.au/services/conded)

## ING Update

For the third year running, the ING Foundation Corporate and Business Leaders' dinner was held at the NSW Art Gallery. The event raised \$90,000 for Conductive Education. A highlight of the evening was a sneak preview of the Archibald entries at a private showing.

VIP's at this year's dinner included **Vaughn Rich-  
tor**, CEO of ING Bank Australia Limited, and **Cherry Hood**, the 2002 winner of the Archibald Prize. Prized auction items included an auto-graphed shirt and football of **Peter Schmeical**, world renowned goalkeeper, a baseball cap signed by Formula One Championship driver **Michael Schumacher**, **Collette Dinnigan** lingerie bags, spa treatments at the Four Season's Hotel and a session with expert kitchen designer and columnist, **Jenny James**.

The event was an overwhelming success, which raised much needed funds to enable The Spastic Centre to continue providing services for children and adults with cerebral palsy.



## Rotary Update

We are delighted to report that the Rotary Club of Pittwater has donated \$11,320.00 to Conductive Education. This will enable the purchase of much needed equipment for our program, particularly a digital camera and ancillary equipment. This is particularly beneficial to the students participating in the CP Perspectives in Print project.

This event provides students with the opportunity to capture a moment in their life on film and to display their work in an exciting and professional manner. Last year's inaugural event was held at the Powerhouse Museum and excellent feedback was reported from photographers and viewers alike. Our sincere thanks to all Pittwater Rotarians for your generous support.



Bernard Makewell

A huge thank you to Rotarian **Bernard Makewell** for his assistance in finishing the equipment for our new adult groups and for assisting with other projects — your help is very much appreciated.

## News from the Early Development Unit

Dear Families,

I hope you all had a relaxed Easter. Our March Parent Morning Tea was great! I would like to thank everyone for coming and participating. The next one is scheduled for 24 May and I will send around information prior to the event.

The children went through a massive growth period in April, with their shoes and AFO's needing to be replaced with larger sizes. Please let me know if you are happy to donate the shoes that your child grew out of, if still in good condition, as I can circulate them and other students can benefit. A big "Thank You" to **Nadia** for donating some small sized shoes as I was able to swap them and as a result one of our pre-school students made his very first independent steps. Thank you also to **Miriel, Khoukha** and **Rhonda** for their donations.

Recent America research stated that children under three who watch television for more than an hour a day were more likely to develop attention deficit and behavioral problems. I have also heard from families that for some children the television is the only activity during the day where they are "able to concentrate for hours and hours..." and I wonder if it is the other way around for some children, with behavioural issues emerging at home and the parent may find or think that television is the "only" equipment or activity to settle their child down.

Either way, I agree with the fact that as parents we need to control what programs our children watch and how long they spend in front of the "box". What amazes me is that this time is unfor-

unately too long in some cases. I believe it is wrong to let a toddler sit for long periods as I am sure that "watching" is not the best word to describe this as they are unable to concentrate for long times in front of the television.

The age appropriate attention span for a two to three year old is a maximum of 10 minutes for lead-play activities. Staring at a television or computer screen gives the same effect to our brain. That is, it gets tired.

My theory is that if a pre-school age child gets tired, then they often have difficulty coping. And with the lack of sleep or a sleeping routine, their body and system just gets more and more exhausted and the children will be more and more irritable which will affect their emotions and behaviour. Like an avalanche - one thing can cause a whole lot of problems and can even affect eating habits and their daily routines.

**"The age appropriate attention span for a two to three year old is a maximum of 10 minutes for lead-play activities."**

It is important to keep pre-school children active and engage them in AGE APPROPRIATE play activities. We also need to teach them how to learn to wind down. Paying attention to the child's mood and calming them down with soft conversation and gentle cuddles will help achieve this.

"The best way to make children good is to make them happy." (Oscar Wilde)

**Rita Schwerlichovszky**  
Early Development Unit

## Drums in Motion Workshop

A successful drumming workshop was held in McLeod during March by drummer **Andrew Hewitt**. Andrew who has cerebral palsy, has played in bands at the semi-pro level since the 1980's, and he shared his enthusiasm and love of music with a very receptive audience. After an initial presentation, participants had the opportunity to play on numerous drum sets and also to try a great variety of percussion instruments. A huge thank you in particular to: **Andrew Hewitt, Alison McGuire, Drum City**, and to the students and their families / carers for attending.



Andrew Hewitt rocks McLeod

The event was made possible by the assistance of many Spastic Centre staff across different programs, thanks to **Jill Maginnity, Richard Marreiros, Saul Nightingale, David Valla, and Gabriel Pinter** for making it happen. Sincere thanks also to **Grant Denyer** from Channel 7's Sunrise Show, **Alison Carmichael-Rulten and Kate Henshall, Penny Clarke, Paul Lebb, Louise McCormack and Lyn Kerslake** (for the percussion instruments), and **Sue Bailey** for the venue.

For further information on drumming tuition contact **Andrew Hewitt** on 0419 560 695.

## Intermediate Program News

Dear Parents, Students, Colleagues and Friends!

I hope you all had a peaceful Easter break. 2004 is racing by, hard to believe that we are already in School Term 2. It has been a very successful year so far; three of my students have started using walking sticks more and more instead of their walker. Two children have undergone surgery and are gaining physical strength day by day. Another two students are taking some unaided steps for the very first time in their lives. Keep up the good work children!

The Intermediate Program is running at three separate venues again this year. I am running Conductive Education classes in **Truscott Street Primary School**, North Ryde every Friday. Currently 10 students are attending there. I am also teaching at **Roselea Primary School**, Carlingford with three students every Tuesday.

The rest of the week I am at Allambie Heights where currently another ten students are accessing my classes. The age range for Intermediate classes is between 6 to 12 years. Please ask your Pathways coordinator for more information on placement availability. During the Easter school holidays I also ran half-day morning Holiday Programs for small groups of children at Allambie.

Our e-pal system is finally up and running. Our e-mail address is: [ce\\_classroom@yahoo.com](mailto:ce_classroom@yahoo.com) Every child has their own subfolders with their own letterboxes. The students are encouraged to practice using electronic communications through family and friends. We welcome any letters, stories and pictures but please keep in mind our 4 Mb limit.

The "Drums in Motion" workshop was a huge success. We had about twenty children and young adults attending. It was a very noisy afternoon with lots of hands on experience on the drums. Thank you very much for all those people who came and volunteered on the day. We couldn't do it without their help. You are most welcome to borrow our videotape if you have missed the event or if you would like to see it again and again and again...

Thanks and see you in our classroom! Our doors are always open to visitors.

**Gabriel Pinter** - Senior Conductor

## Adult & Teenage Program by Lisa Gombinsky

Dear Participants and Families;

The past few months have seen lots of action in the teen and adult program.

The teen mobility group has put together a plan of action to ensure a program tailored to meet their needs. This plan includes a learning contract to be signed by all, including me, with a planned trip to Luna Park as one of our incentives at the end of the next session.

The adult program has blossomed from one participant to nearly thirty. It includes specialty sessions for people:

- with athetoid and ataxic movements,
- recovering from surgeries,
- continuing to regain mobility following traumatic car accidents,
- preparing for childbirth,
- learning to drive,
- working on general movement and fitness, and,
- working to maintain mobility as they start to deal with the effects of aging on their bodies.



Channel 7's Grant Denyer drumming with Andie



Darrell Bennett

Special thanks go out to Pittwater Rotarian **Bernard Makewell** and to **Natalie Dives** (sister of Angela) for their work to help get our furniture and equipment ready for use.

And, finally, after months of talk and preparation, we are proud to announce the start of our first programs for people with Parkinson's Disease and Multiple Sclerosis. Please enjoy the poem written by Don Willcox (on the next page), one of our participants with Parkinson's Disease, as we celebrate this new direction for the Centre for Conductive Education!



The McLeod Centre  
189 Allambie Road,  
Allambie Heights NSW 2001

PO Box 184  
Brookvale NSW 2001  
Phone: (02) 9972 8124  
Fax: (02) 9451 0248

Email: [jbratel@tscnsw.org.au](mailto:jbratel@tscnsw.org.au)



### Recent Visitors to CE include:

From ING:

- Paul Bedbrook** - CEO, ING Australia Ltd
- Steve Rouvray** - General Manager, ING Holdings Limited
- Vaughn Richtor** - CEO, ING Bank (Australia)
- Jane Clapcott** - Communications Manager
- Monique Keighery** - ING Foundation Coordinator
- Jan Richtor**

Also:

- Andrejs Dalins** - American Express
- Sony Foundation** members
- Yumi Schaeffer**/students - Wesley Institute
- Miss Amy Tao** - Principal and staff, Caritas Jockey Club Lok Yan School, Hong Kong
- Two groups from Japan
- Henner Wenkhausen** - Physio from Malaysia
- Claire Azzopardi** - CE worker from Malta
- Rachael O'Brien** - Conductor UK

### **\*\*Stop Press\*\***

The Conductive Education Centre requires spare clothes for students. Particularly in the 0 to 3 year, and, 4 to 7 year age groups. If you have any clothes that your child has grown out of and would like to donate them to the program we would be very happy to receive them. With Thanks.

### Conductive Education By Don Wilcox

The thing begun in Budapest,  
And over years has stood the test  
Of time, with use on children spastic,  
And Parkinsons is much less drastic

Its called Conductive Education  
Throughout every earthly nation,  
And to Australia Lisa's come  
To boost the cause and bang the drum

And plug the use of this technique  
For Parkies with brains up the creek  
So now in Spastic Centre's spaces,  
She's putting us folks through our paces

For we've got off our behinds,  
To train our bodies and our minds,  
And our faces' smiles all gleam  
As we form Conductive Team

We girls and guys are all so keen  
As we go through each routine,  
We've overcome our brain's great flaw,  
And move more freely than before

In this happy cheerful place  
Parkies move with style and grace  
People walk about quite brightly,  
Very brisk and very sprightly.

We're counting numbers with our lips,  
As we stand with hands on hips  
Then suddenly away we go  
Our movements seem somehow to flow

With a bold and measured trend,  
We resolutely move ahead  
Our limbs we know what to do with 'em  
Because, for sure we dudes have rhythm

We bid farewell to aches and pains,  
As we re-educate our brains  
We also bid farewell to stress  
As with tasks we make progress

We're all standing much less bently  
And moving far more confidently  
We're taking much less time to dress  
And facing lives with hopefulness

We've somehow lost our movement block,  
Striding to our chanted clock  
New networks in our brains we're forming,  
As our movements we're performing

New techniques and skills we're learning,  
As praise from Lisa's lips we're earning  
The happy smiles are on our dials,  
As Lisa checks our walking styles

For of our band she's the conductor,  
A keen and eloquent instructor  
Such sweet notes she has us playing,  
As our skills we are displaying

A lovely melody we're making,  
As our shackles we are breaking  
Our band performs so well together  
Through the hot and humid weather

A fare and fortunate conjunction  
Of folk engaged in orthofunction  
Within ourselves we feel brand-new  
For what's changed is our point of view

Each of us is now a fighter  
With mind that's clear and face that's brighter  
As our horizons now enlarge  
Of our illness we're in charge

So to this method we're inducted  
As we are so well conducted  
And further points we hope to earn  
As throughout our lives we learn.