

## NEW FACILITIES FOR MHS TRAINING & EDUCATION

Murray Human Services Inc. (MHS) Training and Education is excited about the new building they will soon be moving to. The move will allow extra space and additional courses to be offered.

Students will be able to come into the relaxed study area and have resources, internet access and trainers available to them at all times.

Students can enrol at any time of the year, and the individualised approach allows students to study at their own pace, in the way that suits them.

The one to one support allows students of all ages to develop skills in their area of passion in the community services sector and provides nationally accredited Certificates and Diplomas.

Murray Human Services Training and Education has been a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) since August 2006 and has provided great support to all its students.



The RTO is now embracing the concept of 'Student for Life' with great new facilities at High St including a vast course library.

"Completing my Cert IV in Disability has enabled me to have a better understanding of People with Disabilities, and has allowed me to hold a great position within Murray Human Services." - Jody Clifford

For information, contact Sari Batson, Training and Education Manager on 5480 6611 or 0439 331 272.

## Cosgriff Orchard Legal Charity Golf Day

**COSGRIFF ORCHARD LEGAL**

Thank you to the following sponsors for supporting the charity golf day on February 29th 2011.

All funds raised will go toward purchasing equipment for people with disabilities in Echuca.

**Diane Williams Solicitor**  
**O'Neils Body Works**  
**LJ Hooker**  
**Stubberfields Group**  
**Steven Oliver Plumbing**  
**Campaspe Glass & Glazing**

**Dawes & Vary Legal Insurance House**  
**Mayes Tyre Power**  
**Brandrick Architects**  
**Echuca Moama Dairy**  
**Tippy Pak Rubbish Removal**

**Kennaughs Growmaster**  
**Peat's Office Supplies**  
**Carpet Innovations & Blinds**  
**Echuca Mitre 10**

**Westside Auto Electrics**  
**Bennett's Sports**  
**Lenards**  
**Echuca Independent Floors**



## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

ECHUCA

KERANG

KYABRAM

SWAN HILL

ROCHESTER

COHUNA

TONGALA



## CHAMPIONS



**Kyabram Free Press**

**KANYANA AUXILIARY**

**ROY OGDEN FOUNDATION**

## CHAMPIONS



**The Guardian**



Funded by the Percy Baxter Charitable Trust, managed by Perpetual



**COLLIER CHARITABLE FUND**



# Murray

WINTER EDITION 2

## NUNZIO'S STORY

"He has no voice, *I must be his voice.*" Maria shrugs her shoulders kindly and gestures to me, "It's just the way it is."

She then focuses her attention back onto her son, Nunzio, sitting beside her in his wheelchair. He is unable to talk or move his arms and legs but his eyes are bright, and it is clear that the lack of movement in his body is in no way a reflection of his active mind or sense of humour. Sitting on the other side of Maria is Nunz's sister, Clem, who begins to explain the history of their family.

Nunzio was the first-born child of Italian immigrants, Don and Maria Savino in May 1963. He was very small and was in hospital for several weeks after his birth. The doctors told Maria that her son would probably have a disability but did not explain how this may impact on Nunz. Italian was the family's first language and this communication barrier meant that Maria was left in the dark about what the future held for her son.

Maria took her infant son home and, for some time, Nunz developed quite normally. Home was a converted garage on the corner of McCormick Rd and Gillespie St. Kyabram, whilst the family house was being built. Over the next three years Maria would have two more children, Clem and Nick. These were obviously happy times, Maria recalling with pride and affection the new life they were building for themselves.

Apart from the fact that Nunz did not walk until he was 18 months old and fell over easily as a preschooler, Nunz was an active, talkative toddler. He loved his toy cars and his younger brother and sister. But Maria was concerned

about his lack of balance and took Nunz to a doctor. The doctor's advice was simply to "wait and see".

In 1968, aged five, Nunz began his school life at St Augustines in Church St. Kyabram. The next year Maria continued to search for a medical reason for Nunz's lack of balance and took him to the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne for further assessments. The doctors diagnosed a hearing impairment as part of Nunz's problem and arranged the fitting of hearing aids.

Nunz was referred to Glendonald School for the Deaf in Kew and at only ten years of age, he began as a boarder during the week, returning home to Kyabram every weekend on the bus. Unlike many boarding school experiences, the family reflects positively on this time. Nunz had good friends and the many happy school photos of him show a boy who was comfortable in his environment.



Unfortunately when Nunz was fifteen years old, his balance had deteriorated to such an extent that he had to use a wheel chair. This had tragic ramifications for Nunz because Glendonald could not cater for students in wheel chairs. Nunz had to leave the school he loved.

On advice from professionals, Nunz was then placed into a sheltered workshop run by Yoralla, and followed the same routine of returning home each weekend on the bus. Maria describes Nunz as a "strong silent type" who never complained; so when he no longer wanted to get out of bed for work nor returned to Melbourne each week with his normal enthusiasm, the family knew something was wrong. The family tried a sheltered workshop in Mooroopna but this wasn't the solution for Nunz either.

Fortunately in 1981, when Nunz was 18 years old, life improved for him and his family. They moved into a new house in Corrigan Avenue, Kyabram, and the Royal Children's Hospital suggested that Nunz take up a placement at Tehan House in Echuca. Nunz especially loved the camps and outings but also enjoyed doing ceramics, woodwork, drama, music, gardening and sport. Maria and Clem commented that some of the staff at Tehan House became like family or close friends. Once again Nunz was starting the day with a smile on his face, and the family settled back into a happy routine.

However, only two years later Maria and Clem noticed that Nunz's general functioning was gradually deteriorating. They took him to a visiting specialist in Echuca for further tests. For the first time since he was born the doctor gave a diagnosis - Spinocerebellar Degeneration. Maria and Clem were told that Nunz may not live beyond forty-five and to expect a gradual deterioration of his condition. In the past ten years, Nunz's condition has deteriorated more rapidly and his symptoms are increasingly debilitating.

*Spinocerebellar degeneration is a rare neurological disorder of the central nervous system characterized by the slow degeneration of certain areas of the brain and spinal cord. Typically balance and coordination are affected first. Walking becomes more and more difficult and tasks requiring fine motor control, such as the use of the hands and fingers, can become impossible. As time goes on speech and swallowing can also be affected. There are many different causes of spinocerebellar degeneration and currently there is no known cure. The disease is progressive and irreversible and can cause from mild to severe disability. (www.scars.org.au)*

Nunzio has never fussed with the changes to his body. He has taken them all in his stride and focused on the things that he loved; his family (especially his nieces and nephews), the Essendon football club, cricket and most importantly women! Nunz's Italian good looks and his sense of humour were a magnet for female attention. Many photos of Nunz have women sitting on his lap, hugging him and generally enjoying his company.



Some of Nunz's happiest memories include meeting James Hird, Lou Richards, Viv Richards and the West Indian cricket team. Then there are two holidays in particular - one to Barossa Valley where he loved the local wine and another to the Mooloolaba. Maria and Clem light up when they talk of the Mooloolaba holiday. They found the access for wheelchairs was so good that Nunz could truly experience everything they did, including the sand on the gorgeous beaches and all the tourist attractions. Nunz also used to love playing pool on the family's full sized table, and there was many a dual between him and his brother Nick. When Nick moved away to join the air force, Nunz's interest in pool was never the same but Maria learnt to play so he could at least play the occasional game.

Now in his 40s, Nunz's condition doesn't allow him to enjoy all of his old hobbies. He has still kept his passion for footy and cricket and he loves to go to the pub to watch games of pool or watch the pokies. With the assistance of Maria and a carer he enjoys and benefits from swimming. Nunz also loves "The King of Rock" and listens to Elvis' music often. But there is one wish that Nunz dreams of fulfilling and that is to be in the Essendon rooms after a big game and meet with James Hird and Matthew Lloyd.

Nunz communicates with eye movements, subtle facial gestures and, when the occasion calls, a smile or laugh. It takes time and effort for him to move his eyes in the deliberate way needed to answer a question, but his eyes sparkle when someone gives him the time to allow his 'voice' to be heard. A little extra time can also enable Nunz to enjoy a joke and his effortless laugh brings his face to life. Luckily he has his mum and sister who are so tuned into Nunz that they only need to see the slightest (perhaps imperceptible to others) movement of his eyes or the turning of the corner of his mouth to understand what he is saying.

Nunz has had to overcome many obstacles throughout his life but has been blessed with personal courage and a loving, devoted family. Maria is thoughtful about her son's situation and her full time commitment to him. "If I wasn't with him who would be his voice? I must be strong, if I'm not strong for him, then....what?"

## COMMUNITY ACCESS IMPROVES FOR ECHUCA & KYABRAM

Community access for people with disabilities in Echuca & Kyabram has recently improved with MHS taking delivery of 2 new buses. The buses are a result of a significant grant received from the **Percy Baxter Charitable Trust** managed by **Perpetual Trustees**, combined with funds donated by:

- Tatt's Pokies
- FRRR & the McEwen Foundation
- Kyabram Club
- Nordens Bodyworks
- Charity Golf Days supported by the Valley View Golf Club & Rich River Golf Club
- Both the Echuca and Kyabram communities gave generously to bus fundraising appeals.

The generosity of everyone involved has made a meaningful difference to the lives of many adults with disabilities their families and carers. **THANK YOU.**

You are invited to attend a BBQ lunch at a community Day at Kyabram Memorial Gardens on Wednesday 20th July, or Echuca's Alton Reserve on Wednesday 27th July at 11am to acknowledge the kind community support for these buses.



## MY JOB

My name is Celeste Rumble, I am employed by MHS. I have been working 2 days a week in Administration since October last year. Coming to work has helped me improve my confidence. I get to see lots of different people with my job and have made great friends with other staff. I also meet people in the community which is great.

At work I am trained in lots of different tasks including OH&S. My main goal is to work in open employment in an office and move to Echuca. Being here at MHS is helping me to improve my skills to be able to do this.

My duties include Filing, Faxing, Photocopying, Word Processing, answering the telephone and general Administration duties

## NEW PATRON & AMBASSADOR FOR MHS

MHS recently announced Anthony Stevens (owner of Perfect Party Hire and former AFL footballer) as Patron, and Paul Weller (Member for Rodney) as Ambassador of the organisation.

Anthony, renowned for his courage, loyalty and leadership, says that he wants to be part of creating something the whole community can get behind. "We are all equal, and I am really looking forward to my new role", said Anthony.

Paul is well known for his care and concern for the community, and his strong partnerships and networks. He already has a strong relationship with MHS, his Ambassador title is just making things official. Paul believes that we all work and play together in one community, and is happy to be contributing to a community where everyone is valued.

MHS is looking forward to working with both Anthony and Paul, building on the relationships to benefit people with disabilities in the community.



I feel and know I am a valued member of staff and it is great for me when other staff and supervisors tell me what a great job I am doing.



## COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR

**Fishers SUPA IGA** plus LIQUOR

**Carpet Innovations & Blinds the WoolSet** QUALITY CARPETS

**DESIGN EXPERTS**



**ECHUCA TOYOTA**  
Working for your business.

**Independent floors**

**sg** Stubberfield Group  
Accounting & Taxation  
Lending & Financial Advising

**Kennaugh's Garden Centre**

**Ky Steel & Fabrication**

**MURRAY DOWNS**  
GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB  
SWAN HILL