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Technical Aid to the Disabled (SA) Inc.

NEWSLETTER NO. 159
 (Summer Edition)



TADSA's VISION

To be a leader in developing unique and innovative equipment for people with disabilities in South Australia.

TADSA's MISSION

To improve the lives of people with disabilities, the frail, the aged and those who care for or assist them through the development of unique and innovative equipment, using the skills of volunteers and staff.



Accredited at Certificate Level of the Service Excellence Program

SERVICE EXCELLENCE CERTIFICATE ACHIEVED



*To All Our Readers - we extend to you
 Our Christmas Greetings
 And Best Wishes
 For the New Year too*

Seasons Greetings

A special *"Thank You"* also to our volunteers, donors and supporters for the help given in 2011

TADSA Office will be closed from Wednesday 21st December and re-open on Monday 9th January, 2012

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We gratefully acknowledge the sponsorship of this issue of our Newsletter by the Lions Club of Blackwood Inc.

TADSA INFORMATION



Technical Aid to the Disabled (TADSA) Inc is an Australia wide voluntary organisation, with TAD branches in every State. Technical members are people with skills in many fields, who give their time to helping people with disabilities and elderly people with practical problems for which no completely satisfactory commercial solution is available. This may require modifications to existing equipment, or the construction of new, specialised aids. Sometimes we can provide the means to overcome difficulties that had seemed insurmountable.

Technical Aid to the Disabled (SA) Inc.

Is based at The Royal Society for the Blind, Gilles Plains, on site with The Royal Society for the Blind, Disability Services SA and Disability Services SA-ILC. Our members work, where necessary, in close cooperation with health professionals. If you have a problem for us to solve, or if you know someone who has, contact us at the TADSA office. No referral is necessary; cost is normally only that of materials used, service charge and expenses actually incurred (usually small).

Volunteers Needed - If you have skills such as mechanical, carpentry, electrical or electronic fields, good handyman etc, you might like to use some spare time on this challenging and most rewarding work. TADSA is always seeking more volunteers. If you would like to know more about how you could be part of our team, please telephone the Office on 08) 8261 2922.



Freedom Wheels Program is a national program involving all state TADs working with TADNSW using a range of standard add-ons that fit on a range of modified bikes. This means that an Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist can "prescribe" the attachments needed to correctly support a child. The bike set up by TAD technical volunteers to suit is delivered to the child.

For further information contact the TADSA Freedom Wheels Program Manager, Tony Scully, at the TADSA office.

Page-Turner Loan Program – New eReader Loan Program

TADSA is in the process of updating this program. Thanks to a kind donation from the Glenelg Rotary Club we have purchased 2 eReaders. These are locally designed and we have the opportunity to work with the designing company to incorporate special switching to suit the most severe disability. We are hopeful these devices will eventually replace the existing page-turners. A small loan fee will still be requested. Contact Julie in the office for further information.

Electric Wheelchairs Program –

Rugged terrain wheelchairs – TADSA has two electric wheelchairs available for loan to people with severe disabilities living in rugged terrain.

Fold up electric wheelchair – This chair has been added recently to our loan pool of equipment and is available to anyone seeking short term loan of a chair to be used in standard conditions. It can easily be transported in the back of a car.

For further information, contact Julie in the Office.

Home Phone Numbers for Urgent TADSA Business –

<u>Chairman</u>	– Richard Jackson 08) 8294 8591 or 0412 895826 (mob)
<u>Secretary</u>	– Tony Scully 70000022 (H)
<u>Office Manager</u>	– Julie Peak 0411 240 118 (mob)

Supported by



Government of South Australia
Department for Families
and Communities

TADSA Annual General Meeting

TADSA's Annual General Meeting was held at the Independent Living Centre, Blacks Road, Gilles Plains on 27th September 2011 and was attended by about 20 members and visitors. Honorary Life Membership was awarded to one of TADSA's inaugural members Michael Wooley (see below).

We were delighted to also welcome Sue Samsome, Project Officer of the Service Excellence Program, Dept. for Families & Communities. Sue officially presented TADSA with our accreditation at Certificate Level.

At the conclusion of the meeting Megan, (Occupational therapist from the Independent Living Centre) gave an informative talk about their services, this was then followed up by a tour of the Centre. We appreciate very much the use of the ILC's facilities and our thanks also to Megan for her talk and the tour.

Newly elected committee members consists of –

Executive Committee: Chairman - Richard Jackson
Secretary - Tony Scully
Treasurer - John Harmer

General Committee: John Williamson, Joe Tieste,
Craig Stace, & Sam Lin



Sue Samsome (SEP Project Officer) with Chairman Richard Jackson



Megan (Disability SA-ILC) with TADSA Technical Members during the tour of the Centre



Honorary Life Membership

It was with great pleasure that Michael Wooley was presented with Honorary Life Membership. Michael was an original TADSA member back in 1978. He served on the Management Committee for 10 years before becoming TADSA Chairman from 1988 to 1992. His ongoing support to our Organisation is much appreciated and his Honorary Life Membership is well deserved. Congratulations Michael and well done.

New Honorary Life Member – Michael Wooley

Men's Shed Meetings

Morialta Shed meetings are continuing to be quite successful with a regular group attending. These meetings are proving to be quite beneficial, providing the opportunity for technical volunteers to chew over ideas, discuss any problems with projects and in general enhancing better communication between technical volunteers and the office .

A request has gone out for an expression of interest to form a southern shed group, but to date we have had only minimal response. We are seeking a suitable venue for our southern volunteers, if you have any ideas or contacts please advise Ralph Drage from the office. In the meantime, the regular Morialta Shed Meetings will continue on the first Wednesday of each month. Please contact the office if you would like more information.

Letter from a Satisfied Client

To Whom it May Concern,

In 1996 I was involved in a road accident that left me partially paralysed in all four limbs. For the first ten of those years I could with some effort, get myself from bed to wheelchair and in the reverse, independently. For the past five years I have been using a bed pole to independently transfer, but in the past six months it became obvious that if things didn't change, I was going to have a bad fall. I had become increasingly dependent on my family and carer to get me out of bed, a situation which led me to spending longer periods in bed, waiting for them to come home and help me.

All that extra time in bed gave me plenty of thinking time and I realised all I needed was a more solid and better designed standing frame to regain my independence. I had a design in mind, but when I tried to explain what was in my head to my family, they looked at me as if I was dreaming.

So I gave TADSA a call. I had heard of them in my rehab time at Hampstead. They were out the very next day and finally someone knew what I was talking about! I kid you not, my idea was improved upon, designed and installed within two weeks. I can now transfer safely, and with half the effort, completely independently. Thanks to Ralph and Eric (TADSA) my life is back on track. TADSA thank you, you are a marvellous organisation and I hope you receive the recognition you deserve. I am eternally grateful.

(Name withheld for privacy)

Safety Advice – Energy Saving Bulbs – WARNING!



Energy Saving Bulbs will come in different shapes on the market with different ratings in terms of voltage or watts and they will definitely save our pockets especially that we are buying electricity in our respective houses. However, these types of bulbs, if broken, cause serious danger –

- If one breaks, everybody will need to leave the room for at least 15 minutes, because it contains mercury (poisonous) which causes migraine, disorientation, imbalances and different other health problems, when inhaled. Take extra care not to step on the shards of glass littering the floor.
- It causes many people allergies, severe skin conditions and other diseases just by touching this substance or inhaling it.
- Do NOT clean the debris of the broken bulb with a vacuum cleaner, because it would spread the contamination to other rooms in the house when using the vacuum cleaner again.
- It must be cleaned up with a normal broom or brush & dustpan, and placed into a sealed bag, (wear rubber gloves) then placed in a bin for hazardous materials, right away from the house, preferably into a municipal recycling bin for batteries, which also contain mercury, or take it to a council dump where it can be disposed of safely. and disposed of right away from the house in a bin for hazardous materials. Ensure you wear rubber gloves.

A Terrible Accident – a true story

On the 10th February 2011 the energy saver globe fused at a person's home. He did not wait for the globe to cool down. Standing on a chair with a piece of cloth he removed the energy saver globe. Due to the heat of the energy saver globe he dropped the globe. As the globe fell on the floor it "exploded". He then stepped into the broken glass and exposed mercury powder.

The person was admitted to hospital for treatment of the cuts. He spent two weeks in ICU and at one stage it was feared that his foot would need to be amputated. A very long road of recovery is now awaiting him.

Editor's note - The photos of this accident are too graphic and repulsive to include in this newsletter, but suffice to say – **“Currently his foot is connected to a vacuum pump to remove continuously dead tissue.”**

Warning: Mercury is dangerous, more poisonous than lead or arsenic!

TADSA Projects Assigned to Members

1st August – 31st October 2011

(*tp = technical project ap = assessment*)

<u>Project No.</u>	<u>ap/tp</u>	<u>Project Title</u>
2012-022	tp	TV controller with audio prompts
2012-024	tp	Keybox - supply & install
2012-025	tp	Workstation Height
2012-026	tp	Tee handle arrow stick
2012-027	tp	Toilet Frame
2012-028	tp	Electric wheel chair modification
2012-029	tp	Kitchen gate & window guard
2012-030	tp	Wheel chair ramp
2012-031	tp	Make stand for QuokkaPad
2012-032	tp	Call system
2012-033	tp	Telescopic Dressing Stick
2012-034	ap	Cutlery etc to suit robotic hand
2012-035	tp	Shutter control unit
2012-036	tp	Hand rail in bathroom
2012-037	ap	Remote controls - TV
2012-038	tp	Move wheelie bin from w/chair
2012-039	tp	Recliner chair footrest actuator
2012-040	tp	Dual channel door release
2012-041	ap	Reading stand
2012-042	tp	Recliner chair footrest actuator
2012-043	tp	Repair electric over-way table
2012-044	tp	Walker - one hand braking
2012-045	ap	Device to get out of bed
2012-046	ap	Improve ease of door openers
2012-047	tp	Attach handrails to wall
2012-048	tp	Repair record player
2012-049	tp	Wheel chair ramp
2012-050	tp	Attach Quad sticks to walker
2012-051	tp	Over-way table to suit chair
2012-052	tp	Cutlery etc to suit robotic hand
2012-053	tp	Restraint release device
2012-054	tp	Gate Locking device
2012-055	ap	Care alert, bed controls & drink tube
2012-056	tp	Jelly Bean button
2012-057	tp	Writing aid
2012-058	tp	Car door holder
2012-059	ap	Sturdy bed and computer chair
2012-060	tp	Orientation board
2012-061	tp	Secure bed pole to bed base
2012-062	tp	Device to get out of bed
2012-063	tp	Repair 2 toys
2012-064	tp	Writing aid for client in Thailand
2012-065	ap	Tricycle repair & reinforcement
2012-066	tp	Timber box (step) - 2
2012-067	tp	Chair raising platform
2012-068	ap	Phone aid
2012-069	ap	Feet flexing device

How it was Done

Please Note – Personal names have been altered to respect client's privacy

Project No. 2012.030
Technical Volunteer

- **Wheelchair Ladder**
- **Joe**



Jim is a young lad with cerebral palsy. He uses a manual wheelchair for mobility but cannot easily get in and out of his chair himself.

An Occupational Therapist at Novita was aware of a "ladder" that TADNSW had made that seemed suitable, with some modifications to suit Jim's new

chair.



TADSA received drawings from TADNSW and Technical Volunteer Joe set about making one to suit the need. Removable wheels were fitted to make it easier to move around. As the picture shows, it is easy now for Jim to get into and out of his chair.



Technical Volunteer Joe ready to deliver his project to his young client

The ladder was so successful that we were asked to make a second one for Jim to use at his school.

Total Design/Construction Time: 64 Hours

Project No. 2012.010
Technical Volunteer

- **Key-Guard for Laptop**
- **Graham**



Joan uses a laptop computer as a communication device with her husband. Due to severe arthritis in her fingers and the size of the computer keyboard, Joan would sometimes hit the wrong keys.

Technical Volunteer Graham made a key-guard from aluminium that fitted neatly onto the laptop keys. Holes were drilled to give client access just to the keys she needed to use – the letters, A large cutout at the bottom

return, back-space and on/off. enabled her to use the mouse pad.



Total Design/Construction Time: 27 Hours

Project No. 2011.117 - Remote Control Holder
Technical Volunteer - Wolfe

Jim is a teenager who had a number of electronic devices each with its own remote control and had much trouble handling all of them.

Technical Volunteer Wolfe was asked to make a holder for one remote that could be programmed to control all of his equipment.



The new remote was supplied by Novita and Wolfe made the holder to suit. It sits on a stable base on a table beside Jim's chair and can be adjusted to just the right position and angle for him to use.



Total Design/Construction Time: 20 Hours

Project No. 2012.029 - Light Switch Guards
Technical Volunteer - Bob

Robert is a young boy with autism. TADSA was asked to help his parents in a number of ways, one of which was to find a solution to overcome Robert's fascination with light switches. He loves to turn them on and off. The only way they could overcome this problem was to switch off the power at the main switch – not a practical solution for the rest of the family.

Technical Volunteer Bob tried a number of ideas. One was to cover the light switch with some white sheet rubber in the hope that Robert would not realise that the switch was there.



In the end however, Bob glued short lengths of PVC pipe over each switch. The hope was that Robert would not only forget that the switches were there, but not be able to easily reach them down the tube if he did try.

Every switch in the house was adapted – we have yet to do client follow up to see if this has been successful.



Total Design/Construction Time: 8 Hours

Community Information and Promotion Program

TADSA participated in the recent Wellbeing Fiesta hosted by Carer Support held at West Lakes on 16th October 2011. (see article below). Our TADSA display area also included Freedom Wheels which generated much interest.

Other Talks given and Expos attended include –

- Tea Tree Gully Inner Wheel Club
- Rotary Club Modbury Kiwanis Club of Prospect
- PROBUS Club of Elizabeth
- Men and Ageing Expo
- Leisure and Health TAFE students
- Hampstead Rehabilitation Centre Occupational Therapists
-



Office Manager, Julie Peak ready for action at the Carer Support recent Wellbeing Festival

National Seniors Foundation Trust - TADSA received a donation of \$2,640 from the Trust. These funds will be used to assist us to build ten projects for clients aged 50 and over. We thank the Trust for the donation and the Adelaide North-West Branch for nominating TADSA as a recipient.

(Pictured are Trevor Molde from the Adelaide North-West Branch, TADSA Public Relations Officer Ian Beaton & Rosalind Weaver National Seniors Australia Branch Manager-SA).



Grants for Seniors The Department for Families and Communities has provided a grant of \$5,000 for an information campaign for Seniors. The grant will allow us to print and provide brochures to 100 organisations/clubs which assist Seniors (eg PROBUS, Senior Citizens, National Seniors etc). We will also give talks to at least 10 of these organisations. Through this campaign, it is hoped that more Seniors will either volunteer with TADSA or seek assistance from us. We thank the Department for these funds.

Carer Support

Are you finding it difficult to find services for yourself or the person you care for? The Information team from Carer Support can help you through the maze of South Australian services and their various criteria. They listen to your individual situation and link you to appropriate services, their eligibility guidelines, advise on any assessments required and provide you with contact details. Services such as household help or meal provision are out there! Give them a call.



Information service is provided by the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre, housed within Carer Support. It exists to assist people who are frail aged, who have a disability or a chronic illness to remain living independently in their own home. **Call 1800 052 222 during business hours.**

Occupational Health, Safety, Welfare & Environment

Petrol Safety (part 2)

Small engines and Petrol Powered Equipment - Small engines and petrol powered equipment, such as those found on power mowers, weed eaters, personal watercraft, chain saws etc. require special filling methods. It is suggested using a portable container to fuel these engines. The petrol flows slower from the portable container and therefore less static electricity is generated. Consumers who choose to fill such equipment on a truck or trailer directly from a dispenser should make sure they keep the dispenser nozzle in contact with the fuel tank fill tube. Failure to do so can result in the possible build up of a static electrical charge and may ignite the petrol.

Static Electricity and Petrol – Fires initiated by sparks can be prevented if static electricity is not allowed to build up, particularly on conductors. One defence is to dissipate electrical charge by creating paths that allow it to flow to ground. Placing a container on the ground makes it easier for electrical charge to escape. Cement or dirt are better conductors of electricity than asphalt and, therefore, better grounding surfaces. While vehicles that are driven to a service station may not appear to be grounded, they are. Tyres are good enough conductors to allow electrical charge to escape to ground. Keeping the dispenser nozzle in contact with the container at the inlet or with the fuel tank fill tube creates another path by which electrical charge can escape. This is because the dispenser is grounded and the nozzle is bonded to the dispenser hose. When a vehicle or other equipment can't be placed on the ground, a second defence is to fuel more slowly. The slower petrol flows, the less static electricity is generated. This is why petrol companies suggest using a portable container to fuel petrol powered equipment (motorcycles, personal watercraft, lawn mower etc.) being transported on a truck or trailer. People usually pour fuel more slowly from a portable container than is delivered by an automatic dispenser.

Home Safety Tip – Bathroom Safety A Split Second and You Are Out of Action

It was a beautiful Sunday morning, my wife Jean and I were going out to lunch. I went into the shower, practiced my tap dancing, sang a song or two, finished my shower and stepped out onto a “non-slip” mat with my right foot. Bang!- the next thing I knew I was on my back. I had hit my head on the wall, my left leg is in the shower, my right foot is against the shower screen and looks bent.

Hearing the commotion, my wife tried to get into the bathroom, but I'm jammed up against the door. I eventually managed to lift my right foot off the shower screen and move myself so the door could be opened, allowing my wife come in. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry, not a pretty sight.

An ambulance was called, I was dried off, jocks and tee shirt put on, then taken to hospital. Emergency surgery was required, a plate was inserted to join the break. I was well looked after at Modbury hospital to which I give my grateful thanks. One thing I must stress, if you have diabetes please look after your feet and lower legs. The wound from putting the plate in went pear shaped and I had to spend another week in hospital to improve the healing. I was out of action for about 8 weeks and have only just recently returned to my volunteer duties in the TADSA office. **Editor's Note – Now is a good time to refer back to a previous Home Safety Tip -**

Excerpt taken from Newsletter No. 142 (Autumn 2007) - BATHROOM SAFETY

- Grab rails provide a safe means of support for transferring in/out and while using the shower. It is important to consider the location of the rail and to ensure that it is installed securely and with the appropriate fasteners. A variety of slip resistant rails are available.
- Slip-resistant flooring, mats or tiles placed on the shower floor assist in preventing falls. It is important to ensure that all loose corners are secured to prevent tripping.

And a new tip to add –

- If possible, door to open outward to the room rather than inward – this will ensure the door cannot be blocked if someone falls against it.

– By TADSA Technical Member - Tony Scully

Disability SA – Independent Living Centre

Scooters: Safe Use Within the Community (Part 1)

When using a scooter in the community there are important factors to consider to ensure the safety of the user and other members of the public. Under the Australian Road Rules, Motorised Wheelchairs and Scooters (also referred to as *Gophers*) are given the same consideration.

Scooter users are classified as pedestrians:

If the scooter is not capable of travelling faster than 10km per hour (on level ground), and is being used by a person who has difficulty walking, then the same road rules as a pedestrian must be observed. This means:

- Travelling on the footpath/nature strip if one is provided and in good condition
- Following the same rules as pedestrians if having to travel along the road, namely, keeping to the far left or far right and giving way to traffic as required
- Crossing the road at traffic lights and pedestrian crossings. Choose open areas, and avoid crossing from behind parked cars or other obstructions.

For more detailed information, refer to the section for pedestrians in the *Australian Road Rules* which can be downloaded at www.ntc.gov.au.

What if the scooter can travel at a speed greater than 10km/h?

If the scooter is capable of travelling faster than 10km per hour it can only be used on a public footpath if:

- It is not driven at a speed faster than 10km per hour
- The scooter has an unladen weight which does not exceed 110kg
- The user has a physical condition with a reasonable need to use the scooter.

Is registration or a licence required to use a scooter?

A scooter user is exempt from registration and licensing requirements as long as:

- There is a physical condition which requires the use of a scooter to maintain independence
- The scooter is specifically designed and constructed for the transport of a person with a physical disability
- The scooter has seating for one person only
- The scooter is capable of short, low speed journeys only
- The weight of the scooter does not exceed 250kg.

Users of scooters with an unladen mass over 250kg are not exempt from requirements to hold a driver's licence, vehicle registration or insurance.

What if the scooter is going to be driven at night time?

A number of lights need to be fitted to use a scooter at night time, including:

- A white light at the front
- A red light at the rear (red reflectors at the rear are also recommended).
- Wearing bright or light coloured clothing will also help improve your visibility.

Does the scooter need to be insured?

Scooter users who have a legitimate need for the scooter may receive free Third Party Bodily Insurance through the Motor Accident Commission. No prior registration is required. This covers any injuries sustained by another person as a result of an accident involving a scooter user. It does not cover any injury that the scooter user may sustain or the cost of any damage to the scooter or the other person's vehicle or property. For insurance cover for damage to property, the scooter, or injuries sustained by the scooter user, it is important to seek advice from an insurance company.

For further information, or to make an appointment to visit the display, please contact the Independent Living Centre. The Independent Living Centre offers free advice on equipment and techniques to help you with everyday tasks.

Independent Living Centre 11 Blacks Road Gilles Plains SA 5086

Phone: 1300 885 886 (SA & NT callers only) or (08) 8266 5260

Fax: (08) 8266 5263 **Email:** ilcsa@dfc.sa.gov.au **Website:** www.disability.sa.gov.au

DISABILITY GUIDE

Friedreich's Ataxia

Nicholaus Friedreich was Professor of Medicine in Heidelberg, Germany, when he first described the disease which bears his name. He wrote a series of articles about nine patients with Friedreich's Ataxia between 1863 and 1877. By the end of the nineteenth century a considerable number of similar patients had been diagnosed as having the same condition and the disorder was first discussed at the Medical Society of London in 1880.

What is Friedreich's Ataxia? - Friedreich's Ataxia (FA), is an uncommon, slowly progressive disease of the nervous system, causing an inability to co-ordinate voluntary movements. Control of the muscles is severely impaired, and unsteadiness of walking, clumsiness and tremor of the hands, a tendency to trip and slurring of the speech soon become prominent. Intelligence and the special senses are unimpaired. In the majority FA may affect other parts of the body apart from the nervous system. About two-thirds of people have an abnormal electrocardiogram (ECG) indicating an abnormality of the heart muscle. Nevertheless, this rarely causes symptoms apart from occasional palpitations in a small proportion of people with the disease. The heart muscle usually manages to work normally, although heart failure occurs earlier on average than it does in the rest of the population. Diabetes is more common amongst people with FA; it occurs in about 10 per cent of cases.

At what age do signs of Friedreich's Ataxia appear? - The age at which people develop FA varies considerably. Symptoms usually start between the ages of 4 and 16. By their early twenties most affected people may need a wheelchair, and by their mid forties nearly all are unable to walk.

Does the rate of progression vary? - The symptoms of FA are slowly progressive. The unsteadiness usually results in the inability to walk within 8 to 10 years following onset of symptoms. During the course of the disease, leg muscles continue to weaken, and a wheelchair is the only sensible means of getting around when this stage of the disease is reached. People can then maintain general independence for a considerable time. The time however varies greatly and some people remain mobile for much longer. As arms and hands become increasingly unco-ordinated, the person may experience difficulty in self-feeding, and as the disease advances, handwriting and articulation may become progressively more difficult. In general terms, people who are physically disabled tend to have a life expectancy somewhat shorter than average, and this also applies to those with FA.

Is Friedreich's Ataxia always inherited? - FA is inherited as a recessive gene from both parents (who are unaffected), and may occur in several children in a family. Many people with FA do not have any similarly affected relatives.

Abnormalities in this kind of gene possibly cause many of the known "inheritable" disorders, eg FA. For more information about the genetic implications for FA, please contact the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

What causes Friedreich's Ataxia? - It is known that FA is caused by an abnormality of the genetic code; the exact nature of this abnormality is unclear. A considerable amount of research is currently directed towards establishing what is the basic defect in FA.

Is there any treatment for Friedreich's Ataxia? - Although, at this time, there is no treatment to alter the progression of the disease, physiotherapy, orthopaedic aids and appliances may be prescribed to assist affected people and their families. At present, there is no test for 'carrier detection', but discoveries indicate that the cause of FA and the possibility of carrier detection are both within the reach of science.

For more information contact Muscular Dystrophy Association –

Business Address: - 36-38 Henley Beach Road, Mile End SA 5031 **p:** (08) 8234 5266 **f:** (08) 8234 5866
e: info@mdasa.org.au



Disability Information & Resource Centre (DIRC)

Information Sessions -

The Disability Information & Resource Centre forums provide information sessions on issues within the disability sector. They have proven popular and brings together a diverse group of people who are interested in learning and sharing their experience and knowledge and for others seeking answers to difficult questions.

If you have an interest in issues facing the disability sector these forums provide an excellent opportunity to network with other sector workers, parents and health professionals.

The forums are held monthly at DIRC, 195 Gilles Street, Adelaide in the first week of the month, 10.30 – 12.30. The next forum will be on the 2nd February 2012. For information and costs for this session and future forums please contact DIRC on 8236 0555.

Pod casts of previous forums are available from the DIRC website www.dircsa.org.au

Christmas Cards

*I have a list of folks I know, all written in a book,
And every year when Christmas comes, I go and take a look.
And that is when I realize that these names are a part,
Not of the book they're written in, but of my very heart.*

*For each name stands for someone who has crossed my path sometime,
And in that meeting they've become a rhythm in each rhyme.
And while it sounds fantastic for me to make this claim,
I really feel that I'm composed of each remembered name.*

*And while you may not be aware of any "special link"
Just meeting you has changed my life a lot more than you think.
For once I've met somebody, the years cannot erase,
The memory of a pleasant word or of a friendly face.*

*So never think that Christmas cards are just a mere routine,
Of names upon a Christmas list, forgotten in between.
For when I send a Christmas card that is addressed to you,
It's because you're on the list of folks I'm indebted to.*

*For I am but the total of the many folks I've met,
And you happen to be one of those I prefer not to forget.
And whether I have known you for many years or few,
In some way you have had a part in shaping things I do.*

*And every year when Christmas comes I realise anew,
The best gift life can offer is meeting folks like you.
And may the Spirit of Christmas that forever endures:
Leave life's richest blessings in the hearts of you and yours.*

Author unknown

