

MEDIA RELEASE

18 November, 2011

Hip hip hooray! Local HIPPY participants celebrate graduation

UnitingCare Burnside's HIPPY program in Bidwill will be celebrating its first group of graduates next week.

HIPPY – the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters is a home enrichment program, which focuses on developing a child's love of learning from an early age and supports parents in preparing their children for school.

HIPPY Bidwill began in January 2010 and next week its first group of graduates – 12 children aged five years old – will celebrate their completion of this two-year program.

“These children started kindergarten at the beginning of this school year. Their parents have been able to support them with their schoolwork by using HIPPY activities, skills and knowledge,” said HIPPY Bidwill Coordinator, Joanne Colquhoun.

“The HIPPY activities encourage parent-child interaction, positive bonding and having fun during daily learning activities. Learning becomes a natural part of the family's life, and children and parents grow more confident in their skills, making the transition to school easier.”

The HIPPY Home Tutors are parents who have enrolled in HIPPY with their own child. They are employed by UnitingCare Burnside to deliver the program to other parents. Training and support is provided by UnitingCare Burnside's HIPPY Coordinator and HIPPY Australia, providing a wonderful opportunity for parents to re-enter the workforce and gain employment skills.

Ms Colquhoun explained the home tutors delivered workbooks to the parents in their home and/or at group meetings.

“The parent and home tutor practise doing the activities so the parent becomes familiar with the ideas and concepts they will teach to their child. The parent will then be more comfortable in doing the activities with their child,” she said.

“It is a very positive way of learning, as parents learn to teach their child in a fun and non stressful way. The HIPPY process empowers parents to be their child's first teacher, and in areas of disadvantage, feelings of empowerment and confidence are a great asset to break the cycle of negative school experiences.”

HIPPY Bidwill will be enrolling a new group of four-year-old children in 2012. To put your name on the waiting list, please call 9628 0897.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY: UnitingCare Burnside welcomes the media to attend the graduation of participants in the HIPPY Bidwill program. The festivities are only open to HIPPY families enrolled in the program and on invitation.

When: 3.30pm to 5pm on Friday 25 November

Where: HIPPY Bidwill, 30 Myrtus Crescent Bidwill

What: Join UnitingCare Burnside staff in celebrating the graduation of its participants in the HIPPY program. Activities include a jumping castle, sausage sizzle, formalities and distribution of graduation certificates.

RSVP: To advise of your attendance and for all media enquiries, please call Emma Napoli on (02) 9768 6818/ 0408 262 316 or email enapoli@burnside.org.au

About UnitingCare Burnside

UnitingCare Burnside is one of the largest providers of child and family services in NSW. In 2010, UnitingCare Burnside worked with 13,000 children, young people and family members.

UnitingCare Burnside's services work directly with children and young people, as well as with families in programs for early intervention and child wellbeing, child protection and out-of-home care. UnitingCare Burnside works in disadvantaged communities across rural, regional and metropolitan NSW.

UnitingCare Burnside is a member of the UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families Service Group of UnitingCare NSW.ACT.