

GSNV Update

August/September 2007

GSNV NEWS

Welcome to the August/September edition of the GSNV Update! Thanks to everyone who braved the very chilly first week of July in Melbourne to attend GSNV events for Genetic Awareness Week. A variety of events had something for all, from a Coffee Morning in Glen Waverley to a Family Day in Maribyrnong and a Seminar held in partnership with Genetic Health Services Victoria at the illustrious Melbourne Town Hall. See stories and photos from these events on page 3. We are pleased to include two Feature Articles on Advocacy issues. See pages 7 & 9. You are welcome you to reprint in part or in full Leah Lonsdale's article on **Self-Advocacy**. We would also welcome your comments on how useful providing articles for you to reproduce are for you and/or your group and what topics you are interested in. Enjoy!

GSNV AGM

Please come along to the **GSNV AGM** to be held on **Monday October 15 from 6.00pm – 8.00pm**. *see flyer attached or enclosed with this newsletter for details.

GSNV CALENDAR

Friday October 12	Coffee Morning in Altona
Monday October 15	GSNV AGM
Friday October 5	GSNV Committee Nominations

GSNV Committee Nominations

Would you like to make a difference in the lives of people with or affected by genetic conditions? You may like to think about becoming a committee member. This is a great opportunity to contribute to the direction and activities of the Genetic Support Network Victoria (GSNV), and to be part of a terrific bunch of people committed to 'overcoming genetic challenges' and having fun (whenever appropriate)!

Nomination forms are attached/enclosed with this newsletter. Your nomination needs to be returned to the GSNV by Friday October 5. If you don't have someone to second your nomination please contact the GSNV office and we can organise this for you.

The GSNV Committee meets on the first Monday evenings each month from 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm at the Royal Children's Hospital. To make attendance at meetings more accessible future meetings will be held via teleconference. This means that you can now attend committee meetings from the comfort of your home – in you pyjamas if you so wish! (Don't panic - No plans for web cam conferencing at this stage!) This is

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also a great way for GSNV members living in remote locations to consider becoming committee members.

GSNV Committee Membership Criteria

80% of the GSNV Committee must be made up of people who have or are affected by genetic conditions. Please contact Leah Lonsdale, GSNV Coordinator or Carly Meyers (nee Weber), GSNV President for more information on Ph: (03) 8341 6315 or email to info@gsnv.org.au

GSNV Membership Renewal

It's not too late to renew your membership.

Cost: Individuals/Families - \$22/\$11 (concession) year & Support Groups - \$22/year

Membership Rewards

What does membership offer you (I hear you ask)? You don't need to be member of the GSNV to access our services, but membership does entitle you to:

- Free attendance at GSNV Family Days & Coffee Mornings
- Free/discount registration for GSNV events including workshops, seminars & conferences
- Automatically receive our newsletter, the GSNV update
- Representation on genetics issues at government and service planning levels
- Access to GSNV Small Grants scheme of up to \$400/year, for projects that benefit people affected by genetic conditions. (Support Groups only)
- SG News, an information-packed newsletter specifically for support groups
- Access to nominate for committee positions

More questions about membership? Contact Penny at GSNV Ph: (03) 8341 6315 or email to Penny.Dodds@gsnv.org.au or visit our website at www.gsnv.org.au

GSNV *New* DHS FUNDING

Exciting news on the funding front with DHS committing (yes we have it in writing) additional recurrent funding to further support the work of GSNV. Many thanks to Leah Lonsdale and Sharon Lewis for all their efforts in pursuing this and a big thank you DHS! This will help to assist the growing numbers of people calling the GSNV. Stay tuned for more news on this.....

GSNV *New* Administrative Support Officer

Let me introduce myself! My name is Penny Dodds and I have recently commenced in the role of Administrative Support Officer at GSNV. My background is in university/hospital administration with a more recent foray into the world of PR as a publicist. I am delighted to be part of the GSNV. I am the parent of a gorgeous 6 year old boy who has Angelman Syndrome (one of those random genetic conditions!). My days in the office are Monday to Wednesday.

If you have any comments, suggestions or contributions for the GSNV Newsletter we'd love to hear from you. Please contact me on phone: (03) 8341 6315 or via email to penny.dodds@gsnv.org.au

GSNV Morning Coffee in Altona *New* (kids welcome)

Our next Coffee Morning (tea also supplied), will be on **Friday October 19 from 10.30 to 11.30am** at the **Louis Joel Arts and Community Centre, 5 Sargood Street, Altona**. Please come along and bring a friend or two. See flyer on the back of this newsletter for more details.

Review of GENETIC SUPPORT AWARENESS WEEK

Genetic Support Awareness Week strives to raise awareness of genetic conditions and to support people affected by genetic conditions. GSNV held several very successful activities including a family day, seminar and coffee morning.

Family Day

While it was cold outside, the atmosphere inside the Maribyrnong Community Centre at GSNV's Family Day was very warm and inviting! (And the hot potatoes were delicious). This day was all about bringing together families affected by genetic conditions. Special thanks to the RACV Foundation for the grant to assist with this event.



Kids of all ages had the chance to uncover their inner artist, with the gingerbread person decorating and craft activities. And of course, it was great to catch up with long-time friends, and welcome new people.



We thought the giant Snakes and Ladders would be popular with the kids, and many were amused to see some of the adults involved in very friendly rivalry.



Kids – and big kids - were thrilled by the storyteller Andy Wright's breathtaking tales and expressive personality. Several children had the chance to assist Andy tell the stories, acting out animal parts.

Family Health History Seminar

At the Family Health History Seminar held at the Melbourne Town Hall Dr Tiong Tan and genetic counsellor, Lisette Curnow, both from Genetic Health Services, talked

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about how the health of our relatives provides an insight into what we might expect for our own health, what information to look for and how to record this information for future generations. GSNV President, Carly Myers, brought this valuable information to life as she spoke openly as a person affected by achondroplasia (a short stature condition, also known as dwarfism). Carly spoke about some of the challenges that she and her husband face as they consider their options for starting a family. The seminar was proudly presented by the GSNV and Genetic Health Services Victoria. Thanks to the City of Melbourne for waiving venue and door attendant fees.

If you have some suggestions for and/or if your support group is thinking about hosting or co- events for Genetic Support Awareness Week in 2008 we'd like to hear from you. Please contact Leah or Penny at GSNV on Ph: (03) 8341 6315 or email to info@gsnv.org.au

More GSNV News

We're going up the country! Albury/ Wodonga Road Trip!

Our intrepid Coordinator Leah is planning to visit the Albury/Wodonga district. The date is yet to be confirmed, but we hope to include a joint seminar/workshop with Genetic Health Services in the Albury/Wodonga region. If you live in Albury/Wodonga (or in towns nearby or along the way) and have or are affected by genetic conditions, Leah would be delighted to meet with you (especially if a cuppa is on offer). Contact Leah by Ph: (03) 8341 6315 or email to leah.lonsdale@gsnv.net.au

Shop to Support GSNV

Would you like to help GSNV raise money when you shop? Thanks to Self Fundraising, you can now buy books, gifts, flowers, clothes, and even holidays online – and 5% or more of the price will be automatically donated to GSNV. There's an excellent range of products and shops – visit the website at <http://www.self-fundraising.com.au/cause/gsnv>.

CONNECTING PEOPLE

1p36 Deletion

Kerry's 20-year-old daughter has recently been diagnosed with 1p36 Deletion Syndrome. Kerry is keen to contact other parents who have a child with this deletion. To contact Kerry, please email kerrychloeferguson@aapt.net.au or phone (02) 6056 3323. (Kerry notes that it's cheaper to phone her after 7pm).

GROUP EVENTS

CMMA Cardiomyopathy Association of Australia – AGM will be held on Sunday August 26 at the Epworth Hospital commencing at 10.30am. Guest Speaker is Prof. Franklin Rosenfeldt, Cardio-Thoracic Cardiologist at the Alfred Hospital.

Refreshments and a light lunch will be provided following the presentation. To assist with catering arrangements, please advise of your intention to attend by telephoning Joan on (03) 9848 7082. The CMAA holds meetings, provides educational

material and a quarterly newsletter. To find out more visit the web site at www.cmaa.org.au or phone Kathy Whelan (National Secretary) on (03) 5688 1400 or email kathleencw@dcsi.net.au .

Haemophilia Foundation Victoria AGM will take place on Thursday September 6 at the Palais Theatre Brighton commencing at 6.00pm. A screening of "Fracture" will follow the AGM. For more details contact Pamela Punch Ph: 9555 7595

Mental Health Week – October 8
Mental Health Week Launch 2007 -
Mental Health: What Do You Know? @
Federation Square on Sunday 8th
October, 11am - 12pm, Everybody
welcome! Interactive activities,
performances, displayed artwork and
presentations see the Mental Health
Foundation Vic website for more
events mhfvic@pacific.net.au

**Haemophilia Awareness Week –
October 8** Haemophilia Awareness
Week will be celebrated from October
7-13 2007. The theme - Haemophilia
~ One Community, Many Faces aims
to portray that haemophilia affects
people of all ages and experiences. If
you would like to receive a promotional
package or run an event to coincide
with the week contact HFA on 1800
807 173 or email
ncoco@haemophilia.org.au

Kabuki Victorian Support Group is
seeking interested members for a new
group. Please contact Stacey Mc
Keirnan on Ph: (03) 5275 1542 or
email: dsmckiernan@dodo.com.au
Kabuki Syndrome website at
www.sakks.org.

**Great Strides Walkathon – Cystic
Fibrosis** – is on October 21 at Princes

Park. Check out the Cystic Fibrosis
Victoria website for details closer to
the date at <http://www.cfv.org.au>

VCOSS Transport Survey Meeting
VCOSS is looking for people with
disabilities to do a survey about the
accessibility of the various public
transport services. WDRN are looking
for 10-20 people from the North and
another 10-20 from the West to attend
an information session and complete a
survey on Friday 24th August from
10am-12 noon. Contact Helen Adams,
Western Region Disability Network on
Ph 9687 7066/0422 3044 25.

The Marfan Support Group has
been functioning since 1989 and is
proud to announce the launch of their
website celebrating ten years
since becoming incorporated as the
Marfan Association Victoria in 1997.
See the official website for the **Marfan
Association Victoria Inc.**
www.marfanvic.org.au

Fabry's Support Group Inc is
holding the FSG Inaugural Conference
on October 27 & 28 at the Oaks
North Quay Hotel. Speakers include,
Professor Jack Goldblatt; Professor
David Sillence and Dr Phillip Juffs. For
more information see
www.fabry.net.au.

**OzED Family Camp – Sunshine
Coast, 25-26 August**
OzED (Australian Ectodermal Dysplasia
Support Group) is holding their Annual
Family camp at Camp Tukechoi on the
Sunshine Coast on the weekend of
August 25-26, 2007. There are
programs for children, young adults
and parents. Visit the OzED Website
at
[http://www.news.ozed.org.au/family_c
amp](http://www.news.ozed.org.au/family_camp).

Porphyrria Association Inc. AGM will be held on Monday September 24 at 1.30pm at the Nerve Centre, 54 Railway Road Blackburn. Enquiries contact: Nerve Centre: Ph: (03) 9845 2737 or Mob: 0408 337 173 or email to porphyria@mssociety.com.au . Website address www.porphyria-australia.org

Parent Support Network (Eastern Region)

The Parent Support Network provides support and information to parents/carers of people with disabilities and special needs who reside in the Eastern Region of Melbourne. Expressions of interest are wanted to take part in a 12 week program in creative art called Coloured Emotions. To find out more, phone Rachael Veal on (03) 9259 4312 or email psn-emr@bigpond.net.au or visit their new website www.psn-emr.com.au.

Carers Association Victoria will be promoting **Carers Awareness Week in October 14 – 20** with opportunities for carers to come together, support one another and share information. Check the Carers Week Victoria Website for events that are happening in your local area. See www.carersvic.org.au

MY TIME groups provide local support for mums, dads, grandparents and anyone caring for a young child under school age with a disability or chronic medical condition. "My Time" program has two more sessions available in September 2007 and would like to hear from interested people. Please contact Eleni Matskarofski by phone on

1800 889 997 or email Eleni.Matskaraofski@tweedle.org.au or visit www.mytime.net.au

Lymphoedema Association of Victoria Ph: 1300 852 850 can refer those with or affected by this condition to a support group nearest to their home town.

Cystic Fibrosis Victoria Library has an extensive library including resources such as books, journals, CD ROMs, dvd's, videos and articles on many relevant topics. Members of CFV are able to borrow from the Southbank office during business hours for free or to photocopy articles from the resource files for minimal cost. Queries about the Library and resources available can be directed to Martina on (03) 9686 1811 or email meaton@cfv.org.au Congratulations to CFV Library successful recipients of a GSNV Special Project Grant towards the purchase of books for their library.

'Capsule' by Weave Movement Theatre

Weave Movement Theatre is an inclusive company of performers with and without disability, combining dance, physical theatre and improvisation. *When you bend something out of shape, it doesn't break; you might just create something more interesting.* Performances scheduled for September 13, 14,15 at 8PM and on September 16 at 5PM. Tickets \$15 &\$10. Bookings: Dancehouse 03 9347 2860. Dancehouse 150 Princes Street Carlton 2007.

For more information on anything you've read here, or to have your group's event advertised in the GSNV Update, please contact Leah or Penny on Ph: (03) 8341-6315 Fax: (03) 8341 6390 or *e-mail* info@gsnv.org.au

Conferences

2007 SSPA National Convention – NSW September 29 - October 5

2007 marks the year when the Short-Statured People of Australia (SSPA) will celebrate its 40th birthday, therefore the National Convention will be going back to where it all started in Port Macquarie, NSW. The convention week will run from Saturday 29 September to Friday 5 October 2007 at the Bonny Hills Conference Centre, which is approximately 20 minutes drive south of Port Macquarie and about 10 minutes walk from the beach. Please contact Rosemary Hobbs on 03 5976 1864 for further information.

ASA 8th Biennial National Conference "Angels in Sunshine" – Brisbane, 5-7 October

The Angelman Syndrome Association (ASA) of Australia is holding their 8th National Biennial Conference in the state of Queensland on the weekend of 5th – 7th October 2007. The conference will be held at the [Virginia Palms International](#), Boondall, Brisbane. Expressions of interest from professionals and anybody wishing to be a presenter at our conference are being sought at this time. Please contact Megan Moore by email: MMoore@stpatricks.qld.edu.au if you are interested.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Communication: It Takes Two to Tango

Communication between you and your health professional is vital if you are to have practical information about what your medicine is for, how and when to take it and what side effects to watch out for.

However, good communication is about much more than this. Understanding your illness (or genetic condition) and treatment possibilities gives you the knowledge you need to make decisions about your health, and feel comfortable about doing so. It can also help you feel more confident about being able to cope with and manage your illness and treatment.

Two-way Street

Good communication is a two-way street, and you have a crucial role to play. Honestly telling your health professional about your condition, and the effects of any treatments gives them a more complete picture of you and your condition.

When deciding on treatments, your choice may be influenced by how much the condition affects your life, how much the treatment will cost, the effect the treatment will have on your family, how much time you will need off work, and what you have read in the paper or on the Internet. All these considerations are legitimate, and you need to tell your health professional about them, so they can take them into account.

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Asking questions when you don't fully understand or need more information is not disrespectful. Rather, it is essential if you are to make good decisions and avoid mistakes and misunderstandings.

Preferences for Involvement

Some people want to be more involved in making decisions about their health than others. Whatever your preference, you have a right to receive enough information to understand your illness and your treatment options to the extent that you desire and in a way that you understand.

For more information about communicating with health professionals, obtain or read the National Health and Medical Research Council's 2006 booklet Making Decisions about Tests and Treatments. Ring 02 6269 1000 or email nmm@nationalmailing.com.au or visit www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications .

Tips for getting the most out of a visit to your health professional

- Think about the questions you want to ask and things you want to say before your visit
- Ask for an interpreter if necessary
- Consider taking someone with you to be your second set of ears or advocate
- Ask your health professional to repeat any information that you missed or did not understand
- Ask your health professional to write down any important information or instructions
- Ask your health professional to tell you where you can find more information
- Tell your health professional if you need time to think or discuss something with family members.

(Source: Medicines Talk Autumn 2007)

RESOURCES

12 Medicare Rebates per calendar year to visit the Psychologist!

A GP Mental Health Care Plan allows people to access up to 12 Medicare rebates per calendar year for focussed psychological strategies or psychological therapies. Your GP will need to coordinate and prepare a Mental Health Care Plan. For more information contact your GP or Medicare on 132 011 or visit www.health.gov.au

Roadside Assistance for Wheelchairs & Scooters

RACV Emergency Wheelchair and Scooter Breakdown Service can assist if your wheelchair or scooter is immobilised through a mechanical failure, flat tyre or even flat battery. This is 24 hour service. For more information, visit the RACV website at www.racv.com.au or phone 13 7228.

If you don't have access to the Internet, the GSNV staff can print information and post it to you. Please phone GSNV on (03) 8341 6315.

ADVOCACY

FEATURE ARTICLE

Self-Advocacy

Leah Lonsdale, Coordinator, Genetic Support Network of Victoria

Published in Down Voice, Winter 2007 (*Author's Note – this article was written for Down Syndrome Association Victoria, but relevant to many who have or are affected by genetic conditions*)

Advocacy is key to improving services available to people affected by genetic conditions. Politicians and the general public may not be aware - or may only be partly aware - of the issues faced by people affected by genetic conditions, the sorts of services they need, and what services are available.

Teachers, leisure activity organisers and health professionals may also not be aware of the issues and problems.

People affected by genetic conditions (such as Down Syndrome) are often well informed about the condition in their life, and know first-hand what it means to be affected by that condition. We are also aware of the individual needs of the person with the genetic condition and how the condition impacts on daily life. This means we are well placed to advocate on issues that affect us, our child and/or the person we love who has a genetic condition.

This article is about advocacy, and how we can effectively advocate.

What is advocacy?

Last year we did a quick poll around the GSNV committee table as to what 'advocacy' means to us. Most of our committee members are either people with genetic conditions themselves, are parents of someone with a genetic condition, or represent a support group. Our answers were therefore very practical:

- having someone speak with the school before the student starts,
- having a friend attend an appointment with us,
- making a phone call on behalf of someone else,
- paving the way for a child with special needs to participate in sports,
- writing a letter to members of Parliament.

All the points above are examples of advocacy. But what is it?

One author said advocacy was "to stand beside^[1]" while another defined advocacy as "helping yourself or somebody else to acquire increased control over you/their own life^[2]." It's also about raising awareness of the issues so that they may be addressed.

It's not silly to...

- ***ask questions***
- ***expect answers you can understand***

It may also help to...

- ***speak with friends and family about a problem***
- ***if you aren't sure what to do, it may help to have further discussion with your healthcare provider or get a second opinion***

The issue may affect one person or many people. The individual may act as their own advocate, or someone may represent them. There are some wonderful resources on advocacy. A selection is listed at the end of this article.

Having Someone Advocate for Us

Sometimes we need or want someone "to stand beside^[3]" us, to advocate for us. We may invite the Down Syndrome Association to speak at the school, ask the GSNV to address an issue facing people with a range of genetic conditions, or perhaps simply asking a friend to come to an appointment as a witness and an extra set of ears.

There are several agencies that can advocate on our behalf including the Down Syndrome Association, GSNV, VALID (Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with a Disability), and the Association of Children with a Disability. Each has its own specialty, so check to see which is best placed to address the issue at hand.

What can I do?

There are a lot of ways in which we can act as our own advocates, or as our children's advocates. It might be as simple as making a phone call to the school or a sporting club, or providing filling in a feedback form. Or perhaps speaking with the person in charge, writing a letter to the organisation, or writing to a local member of parliament.

The first step

Because others may not be aware of the issue, the first important step is to let people know that there's a problem. For example, a problem at school could be raised with the teacher or principal, or a treatment issue could

be raised with the treating doctor. In many cases, a phone call or raising an issue at a meeting can be effective.

When a problem has been endured for a while, it's easy to think that "they" don't care and feel angry. However, others may simply not be aware of the problem. When the issue is brought to light, they could agree with you! This person may become a useful ally in resolving the problem.

The next steps

It's possible that the initial contact person may not have the authority to address the problem, or perhaps the problem is with that person. If this is the case, ask to speak with their supervisor, whomever is in charge, or with the person with the authority to address the issue.

If the issue still cannot be resolved, write to the Head Office or Regional Office. Copies of the letter could also be sent to the Local Member of Parliament or the relevant Minister.

Policies & Laws

Sometimes the issues relates to policy or law. A letter to a Member of Parliament may be effective as they have a responsibility to take up matters on behalf of their constituents.

Members of Parliament should send a response to each letter they receive. Some have contacted the GSNV as part of their background work, which is a positive sign that they are interested in what people say.

Issues that involve policies and laws probably affect others too. Using our collective voice can be highly effective. Organisations such as the Down Syndrome Association can help coordinate efforts on behalf of people affected by this condition. Where the issue affects people with a range of

Network of Victoria is a useful ally. As the peak Victorian organisation representing people and families affected by genetic conditions and their support groups, the GSNV is able to advocate on genetic issues with a larger presence utilising our networks.

Groups are not aware of problems until someone raises it...so let people know!

General Tips for Effective Advocacy

Whether we're ringing a school or writing to a local member of parliament, there are some things we can do to make our advocacy more effective.

- Stay calm
- Be positive
- Be clear about what you want
- Be assertive (but not aggressive)
- Be informed
- Gather relevant facts or documents that support your case
- Use facts to counter arguments
- Take a problem solving approach to conflict
- See the other person as your collaborator rather than as opposition
- Avoid personal attacks
- Ask questions
- Listen to what is said
- If you're worried you may miss something or are worried about how you may be treated, take a friend as a witness and an extra set of ears
- Be patient. Be persistent. Some things take time
- If you're on the phone, note the name and position of the person you speak with so you can contact them again
- If the problem is on-going, record what's happened, the dates they occurred and the names of the people involved. It will help you remember later.
- Ask for important issues and decisions to be formally recorded in writing
- Provide information and/or contacts if this will help...a Down Syndrome Association brochure, or the Association's phone number
- If follow-up is necessary, try to reach an agreement as to what will happen.

More Information

There are a number of advocacy resources. A few that were used in preparing this article are listed below. More advocacy information can be found online, or by contacting one of the agencies listed below.

Advocacy Resources

Through the Maze, Association of Children with a Disability

Helping You & Your Family, Association of Children with a Disability

To Stand Beside – The Advocacy for Inclusion Training Manual, VALID Inc.

More advocacy information can be found online, or by contacting one of the agencies listed below.

Agencies with an Advocacy Service

Association for Children with a Disability

Suite 2, 98 Morang Road Hawthorn 3122

Phone: 03 9818 2000

Fax: 03 9818 2300

Freecall: 1800 654 013

Email: mail@acd.org.au

Web: <http://www.acd.org.au/>

Genetic Support Network of Victoria (GSNV)

10th Floor, Royal Children's Hospital, Flemington Road, Parkville Victoria 3052

Phone: 03 8341 6315

Fax: 03 8341 6390

Email: info@gsnv.org.au

Web: www.gsnv.org.au

The Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability (VALID)

235 Napier Street, Fitzroy Vic 3065

Phone 03 9416 4003

Fax: 03 9416 0850

e-mail office@valid.org.au

Social workers, health professionals, teachers and others may also be able to advocate.

If you think this article would suit your Support Group Newsletter, you are welcome to reprint this article in part or in full. Please acknowledge GSNV in author details. (See box on next page). Contact GSNV office for a Word copy of this article.

About the Genetic Support Network of Victoria (GSNV)

The Genetic Support Network of Victoria has an important role in advocacy in Victoria. As the GSNV is the peak Victorian organisation representing people and families affected by genetic conditions and their support groups, the GSNV is able to advocate on genetic issues with a larger presence utilising our networks.

The GSNV empowers people to overcome genetic challenges by providing education, information and support to individuals, families and support groups, government, and the general community. Our services are detailed online at www.gsnv.org.au .

Youthlaw: Individual advocacy at the Youth Disability Advocacy Service

The Youth Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS) has commenced providing individual advocacy for young people with disabilities between the ages of 12 and 25 throughout Victoria. Michelle Bowler is the Individual Advocate for YDAS. Michelle can support young people to access their rights in a range of areas including employment, education, housing and social security benefits, disability services and discrimination and with a wide range of access and equity issues. Michelle works on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays and is available to support young people with their individual advocacy needs.

For more information about this service, please contact Michelle Bowler, phone: 03 9267 3733 or 1300 727 176 (toll free), or email mbowler@yacvic.org.au .

Family Advocacy National Conference - 25-26 October, 2007 Sydney

Would you like to hear how people with developmental disability can live a rich, varied and secure life?, be open to the possibility of making friends and developing relationships beyond family? , experience positive learning opportunities, be recognised as part of the wider community, have constructive meaningful leisure time? , have a place to call home?

Family Advocacy's first national conference, The Odyssey...a journey of enrichment and possibility tracks the potential for all these things throughout the lives of people with developmental disability. This two-day Conference will provide an exciting opportunity to hear about real life experiences and examples from inspirational local, national and international speakers. Additionally, participants will have lots of opportunity to interact with speakers and other people attending the Conference to further share ideas and experiences.

For more information, and to download a brochure [visit the conference website](#).

Genetic Support Morning Coffee

GSNV invites you to have morning coffee with us...

When? Friday October 19
10.30am - 11.30am

Where? Louis Joel Arts and Community
Centre.
5 Sargood Street, Altona

RSVP? To Leah 8341 6315
By Monday October 15

Who? ** people with genetic conditions ** partners ** parents
**
** grandparents ** children ** siblings ** support group
representatives ** friends ** support people **



This is a great opportunity to meet others in a similar situation in your local area (even if they aren't affected by the same genetic condition as you).

Free to members or Gold Coin donation

Getting there is easy...

- *Wheelchair and pram friendly venue*
- *Melways Ref: 54 G11*
- *5 mins walk from the Altona Train Station*