

### St Augustine's Education and Training

St Augustine's Education and Training supports families, mainstream schools and other agencies in the Geelong region, in their efforts to keep children and young people connected with education and learning.

It utilises a range of responses to re-engage young people in learning and then provides stimulating, practical and rewarding educational options.

St Augustine's Education and Training incorporates two separate schools: St Helen's School and St Augustine's School.

**St Helen's School** supports primary aged children between five and 12 years who are experiencing severe difficulties at school.

**St Augustine's School** incorporates:

- **St Augustine's School** – engages 15 young people aged 12-14 who are disconnected from education.
- **St Augustine's New Street** – offers a Transition to Work Program for 25 young people aged 12-14 who are disconnected from education.
- **Primary EMU** – (Education Mobile Unit) maintains 14 at risk children aged 10-12 in mainstream education.
- **Secondary EMU** – (Education Mobile Unit) maintains 14 at risk young people aged 12-15 in mainstream education.
- **Youth Ed-venture Program** – (YEP) 10 young people aged 13-16 years.
- **Second Chance** – (first semester 2002) a program to reconnect young people not attending school.
- **Education Support** – ensures access to education for children and young people in residential care.

### Highlights

During 2001-2002, St Augustine's Education and Training achieved:

- The provision of flexible education and training options to over 100 children and young people through its various services.
- Funding to continue the Second Chance program in first semester 2002 to reconnect young people not attending school with schooling and education.
- The restructure of St Helen's and St Augustine's Schools/New Street into ELU (Early Learning Unit), MLU (Middle Learning Unit) and TU (Training Unit).
- Renewed emphasis on literacy and numeracy.
- Utilising the skills of staff to offer a more diversified and revitalised curriculum from the youngest to the oldest student.
- Publication of the Preliminary Evaluation of the Education Mobile Unit (EMU) by Christina Fersterer and Marie Joyce of Australian Catholic University.
- Redevelopment of the YEP/GoWest program.

### Mums just wanna have fun

In May this year, just prior to Mother's Day, Bayview Disability Services arranged with the Barwon Carer Respite Centre to hold a pampering morning for eleven mothers of children with disabilities at a local beauty salon. The salon, Aberdeen Cottage, kindly provided champagne and finger foods. Mothers had the choice of two different treatments and, when not having their turn, spent time outside in the salon's beautiful garden talking with other mothers. All the women had a lovely time, which is especially captured in these words of one of the mothers who attended the morning:

"Why did I do it? It isn't because I felt like nobody loved or appreciated me. I did it out of pure selfish indulgence. Why not? Everybody should immerse themselves in a bit of fantasy once in a while. It is like nourishment for the soul. Do it for yourself and no one else, but sometimes that motivation is so impossible to reach, that we don't try.

The hands on physical pampering on offer is so regal, you gently feel a little bit of your old self rising to the top. You sit around a table after your treatment sipping on pink champagne, yes with a strawberry clinging to the rim of the flute! Savouring the exquisite finger foods on offer - including yummy cakes.

You happily tell everyone your child's latest feats (good and bad) with nobody being shocked or feeling sorry for you. Nothing you say surprises any one because we have all heard it before. The general mood is buoyant and we are, after all, just a cluster of mums who just want to have fun."

**Heather O'Flynn**