

family

A D V O C A C Y

PO Box 502
Epping NSW 1710

305/16-18 Cambridge St
Epping NSW 2121

Phone: (02) 9869 0866
Facsimile: (02) 9869 0722

Record

1270

File Number

10124

Author: Dore, L

Title: A Networker at Work

Original source: The Able Cable, No.5-1999

Resource type: Written

Publication Date: 1/11/99

Publisher Info: Ability Options

Abstract

Networker Gaylene Henderson assists individuals with an intellectual disability to access local community activities. Gaylene discovers what the person's interests are, finds an appropriate group or organisation to join, then facilitates communication between the individual and the members - the goal being to create a network and make friends. In this article, we meet three people (including a woman who is close to retirement) whom Gaylene has assisted.

Keywords: Social Activities, Individualisation

A Networker at Work...

Gaylene Henderson is employed by Lifestyle Options as a Networker. Her role is to assist individuals with an intellectual disability to follow their interest and access the local community. After finding an appropriate group or club to join, Gaylene facilitates communication between the individual and the members - the goal being to create a network and make friends.

Gaylene has been working in the disability field for eight years and for Lifestyle Options for ten months. In the time she has been with Lifestyle Options, she has achieved wonderful results. One of her strengths is in building a rapport with the person she is working with and discovering his or her passion. She has a calm and professional approach to integrating a person into an interest group; boosting a person's confidence; overcoming barriers, encouraging appropriate conversation and behaviour, dealing with community discrimination; keeping records and reporting to her co-ordinator.

After discovering that Michael Nipperness was interested in bowling, Gaylene found a local mainstream bowling league. Michael joined a small friendly team. He loved it but many barriers came their way such as the cost and his low scores. Gaylene assisted Michael to overcome each of these problems which continuing to

observe his obvious enjoyment of the bowling and being in a team. Michael is now a much more confident gentleman who is enjoying the company of some young women; has won a pin for his bowling achievements; has a smile on his face, and has made some friends. The impact on Michael's life has been enormous.

Gaylene discovered a local Friendship Group for Maie Jarman, who is close to retirement and has expressed an interest in socialising, craft and bus trips. While supporting Maie, Gaylene gave her advice on socialising and group etiquette. She is now fading her support and a member of the group is picking up Maie. Maie loves the weekly meetings and outings and talks about them often. She has become friendly with a few of the members. Maie is brimming with excitement and has been boasting about her new friends.

Robert Lisson has always been a Country Music fan. Gaylene found a large country music group in Robert's local area and they both went along. He was very excited and spoke about it often but after going to a few meetings, Robert hadn't got to know anyone. People continued talking to Gaylene instead of him. Gaylene was disappointed but not discouraged. She continued to investigate and found a much smaller country music group located a few suburbs

away. This has been a great success. People are friendly to Robert and they include him in the evening stage performance. He has also been invited to have dinner with some of the members before the meeting. When the time is right, Gaylene will gradually withdraw and monitor from a distance so that Robert will eventually attend this group and chat to his friends independently. Robert is in his element singing solo on stage and dining with new friends.

In ten months, Gaylene has worked hard and has investigated many groups, integrated people and supported them in a sensitive way to develop their own networks.

Gaylene is a positive, motivated and sensitive employee who does not let obstacles discourage her from following a person's passion and assisting them create networks for themselves. The people she is working with are increasing their networks and enriching their lives.

■