

# Topics

## Summer 2009/10

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### Committee of Management

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The news/magazine of the TSA of Victoria, TopicS, is published annually. It is a Forum for communication both to and from the TSA and its members to anyone interested in TS and its attendant challenges. TSA Victoria does not endorse any particular medication, treatment, theory, method or product in this publication. Any information contained within is intended as a guide only. Please discuss any medical matters with your specialist or GP. Articles, letters, creative writing, drawings, news and upcoming events are welcome and may be sent to the editor at the address below. The TSA office is staffed by volunteers on Thursdays from 10am - 2pm. Short messages may be left on voice mail when the office is unattended.

## TSA Victoria Inc

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The Tourette Syndrome Association of Victoria is indebted to the MS Society of Victoria, Blackburn headquarters. The generous support given by staff, use of resources and facilities has enabled the Association to grow to its 19th year. We are honoured to be one of The Nerve Centre Partners.



From the Editor

Thank You & Welcome Aboard

On behalf of the TSA Victorian membership I would like to acknowledge our appreciation for the time and effort that our dedicated committee devote to keeping this association viable. Time is such a precious commodity in today's busy lifestyle and for the time and effort that you give to TSA Victoria we say thank you to all of you.

To our President Scott Coward as well as being at the helm of the Association he organises both the very well patronised Activity Days and the Adult support group meetings. Special thanks to you Scott and your family Jenny, Jess & Ben for your energy, enthusiasm and drive.

Special mention and thanks also must go to Judi Rosevear our TSA Victoria office co- coordinator.

If you have made contact with us via phone, email or letter it would have been Judi that would have attended to your enquiry and provided information or guidance to you.

Judi very diligently keeps the wheels turning smoothly here in the office, thank you.

A very warm welcome to Barbara Larpent who has just joined the committee, we look forward to working together and having another member on our team. It is very important for the survival of the association that we do get "new blood" join the committee; this can bring fresh ideas, a different approach and renewed energy to the group. Thank you to Barbara for making a difference towards a better understanding of TS by becoming involved.

*Manuela Jovanovic*

Family Days 2009

Proposed Dates 2010

- 21st February 2010 – Funfields
- 30th May 2010 – Werribee Zoo
- 29th August 2010 – Sovereign Hill
- 28th Nov 2010 – Melbourne Zoo

All the above dates are proposed dates only.

Dates and venues are subject to change depending on venue availability.



Positive Education Planning information resource for parents

A successful year at school requires planning and a positive approach towards including children with a disability by everyone involved in your child's education.

Going to school is an exciting time for children and families. Supporting children with a disability involves detailed planning by the Student Support Group, the development of a quality Individual Learning Plan and appropriate supports.

Our new Positive Education Planning booklet includes parent stories and information on the following topics:

- Parents and schools: Developing positive partnerships
- The Student Support Group
- Understanding your child as a learner
- Individual Learning Plans
- Setting goals
- Supports for students with a disability
- Measuring your child's progress
- Raising a concern
- Advocating for your child
- Advocacy organisations
- Other useful information



Our Positive Education Planning booklet is available free of charge to families in Victoria thanks to financial assistance from the Victorian Government Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). A postage fee applies for bulk orders.

The booklet and order form are available on our website [www.acd.org.au/information/education\\_planning.htm](http://www.acd.org.au/information/education_planning.htm) For print copies, contact the Association office on 03 9818 2000 or 1800 654 013 (rural callers) or [mail@acd.org.au](mailto:mail@acd.org.au)

Reprinted from NoticeBoard Magazine of the Assoc. for Children with a Disability Spring 2009

# Family Days 2009

This year the TSAV held four Family days for 2009. On all occasions the Family days have been a great success and fully enjoyed by everyone who attended.

The venues have included Funfields Toboggan Park, Puffing Billy, Scienceworks and the final day held at the Melbourne Zoo. At Funfields Toboggan Park, Puffing Billy and Scienceworks a sausage sizzle was provided as part of the ticket price paid by members. Of course I would like to thank everyone that assisted me on the day and helped cook the sausage sizzles.

With the Family days it's such a great opportunity for the kids to interact and network. But just as important it gives the parent a chance to openly discuss some of the challenges faced by us all in attempting to manage TS.

On average we get over 45 people attending each family day and an even split between adults and children. The cost to attend these days is heavily subsidized by the TSAV and with the many combinations of group booking discounts and family passes this further reduces the cost to the Association. The box below shows the average saving per

family based on a family of 2 adults, 2 children & 1 concession if they attended the Melbourne Aquarium in August 2008. The savings of \$44 well and truly cover the cost of membership for one year.

Savings to Financial Members

	2 Adult	2 Child	1 Concess	Total
Public or Non-Financial Members ticket price.	\$54	\$32	\$18	\$104
Financial members Ticket price	\$32	\$16	\$12	\$60
	\$22	\$16	\$6	*\$44



# President's Report 2009

It's hard to believe that 12 months ago I was doing the Presidents report for 2008. The positive is TSA of Vic is in its 19th year and still going strong and doing great work for the members and others. We have had a good number of old members renewing and many new members signing up. Later on in my report I will give a brief summary and some statistics.

I would like to thank my family for all the support they give me; they just know what needs to be done and do it, often keeping me on track. Thanks to my son, Ben who has to live with Tourettes and manage his life daily with this challenge. There are many other members whose help on the Members days is the key to a successful day. Whether it is cooking of the BBQ or just making sure new people are involved. One of the key people that help me and really will be missed this year is my daughter Jessie. She is my second in command on the family days and has remembered all the faces and helps direct families where to go which makes the days run smoothly. Jessie has made the decision to join the ARMY this year and on March 2nd will be going to Kapooka for her 80 days intense training. Jessie's contribution to the association has been greatly appreciated by all committee members and of course myself. I think anyone that has met Jessie on the family days will wish her well and know she will do well in representing the Australian people as a Defence Force member.

For 2009 we had 4 family days and on average we had about 45 people attend with an even split between adults and kids. The flyers highlight that if a family of 2 adults and 2 kids attend, they will generally be

subsidized the equivalent value of their membership. Most days are around 50% subsidy so it makes a cheap day to attend. On all the days (except the Zoo due to restrictions) a sausage sizzle and drinks are provided. I would like to thank George and the team from Melbourne City Meats for supplying the sausages for the sausage sizzle and I'm sure if you see George and mention Benny Coward, George will look after you.



Once the Global Financial Crisis kicked in our committee had considered the impact this would have on membership and donations. Well, our members stuck by us and our donor organizations continued their support. Following on from this report is a brief summary of those vital donations.

In conclusion I would like to thank the committee members that give up their time to make the TSA of Vic a success and a fully functioning support mechanism. For every decision I have to make I know I have the full support of all committee members and it's with that confidence that I happily continue as President. However, another key part of staying on as President is having the support of all the members and families. The best feeling is seeing the kids having a great time with other kids with TS. I have seen many friendships struck up over the years and that's what makes it all worth while.

As I have always said "A Better Understanding Makes A World Of Difference"

Here are just a few of the Donations received for 2009.

## Donations & Grants

Lord Mayor Charitable Foundation \$3500



As part of the Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation (LMCF) the TSAV has received a very generous grant of \$3500. With the Global crisis looming we were very concerned as to how our application would be received. Well the LMCF didn't let us down and we received the same amount as 2008. So of course I am currently in the process of preparing the Application Form for 2010 funding and this must be submitted by the last working day of March 2010. By using our current financial position and our forecasted needs for the Association for 2010 this will determine the amount our application will be requesting. The LMCF is a fantastic foundation and supports many needy charities and Associations throughout Melbourne. Each application is strictly reviewed and assessed and there is a rigid criteria that must be met. Please visit the website <http://www.lmcf.org.au> and see the great work the LMCF has done so far to help so many needy people.

Dept Human Services \$1500



Each year an application must be submitted to receive a grant from the Dept Human Services. Similar to the LMCF an application has to be submitted by November each year and must also meet some tough guidelines. I am currently working on finalizing the application in

# President's Report 2009



preparation for the due date. Each year a similar layout as the previous year is evolving and this will reduce the time required to complete these application forms as they will be just template format.

Air Cargo Club of Australia  
\$500

This is a very special donation and has a great personal attachment for my family. For the last four years the Members of the Air Cargo Club of Australia have donated \$500. They raise \$2000 and donate it to four charities. For the last four years in January our son is officially invited to attend a Fellowship Dinner and the cheque is presented to Ben as the representative of the TSA of Vic. All of the members make our family and especially Ben feel so welcome. For the last three years it has been held at the Douta Galla Bowls Club. It is called a barefoot Bowls night and is a fantastic bunch of people and a fantastic night. From 2009 on, this special night is now called the Ben Coward Barefoot Bowls Night.

The Monash-Aires, A Voluntary Entertainment Group for the Aged & Infirm.  
We received a very generous donation of \$500 from the Monash-

Aires in May 2009. Joe Hopkins the co-ordinator of this amazing group, explained that they receive donations and they have donated \$51,000 to charity since their inception 15 years ago. Incidentally, Joe was awarded an OAM (Medal of the Order of Australia) in the Australia Day's Honours List.

### Membership Status

It was decided this year to develop a new membership renewal notice that resembled more of a Statement. The committee decided to send the renewal out as a single mail item due to the fact that many members for what ever reason hadn't renewed their membership. It was suspected that as the renewal notice was sent with other information flyers, families were overlooking the renewal notice.

In summary we received 48 renewals on time. We had to send out 56 reminders of which we received 29. Currently we have 97 members plus

16 Honorary members. To date for 2008/2009 we have had 27 new members.

It is so important that we remember that the members are what makes the TSA of Vic. Perhaps the availability of information from the internet has contributed to the decreasing numbers of new members. When families receive the Family day flyers they will notice that there is a table that highlights the saving for families attending the Family days.

In establishing the amount that the Association should subsidise the day, members will see that for each Family day they attend, the savings is higher than the cost of being a member for a year.

Refer below for a sample of the cost table based on 2 adults, 2 kids & 1 concession.

The savings of \*\$44 well and truly covers the cost of 1 years Family membership

Finally to all members, kids, parents and of course committee members thank you for 2009 have a safe and happy 2010.

Take Care

Scott Coward  
President-Tourette Syndrome Association of Victoria

	2 Adult	2 Child	1 Concession	Total
Public Ticket Price or Non Financial members price	\$54	\$32	\$18	\$104
<b>Financial Member Price</b>	<b>\$32</b>	<b>\$16</b>	<b>\$12</b>	<b>\$60</b>
Saving to Member	\$22	\$16	\$6	*\$44

## Letters re Jackie Gribbens Diet Therapy

Jackie Gribben  
Ph: 0421 956587

20 August 2009

Tourette Syndrome Association of Victoria  
54 Railway Road  
BLACKBURN VIC 3130

Dear Judi

When my son (now 9 yo) was first diagnosed with TS, we searched the internet frantically for knowledge. We knew nothing of Tourette Syndrome. To be told "no known cause and no known cure" was devastating. At the time, we thought his tics were severe but soon learned that they could be worse. Since then, 2 years later, we feel we have come a long way forward.

We decided to try a dietary approach as one of our options. The elimination diet had been recommended for children with ADHD etc, created by the Royal Princes Alfred Hospital in Sydney. Our son does not have ADHD but since the two seem often related, we thought we would try it. We did it under the guidance of a dietician. Mostly, so we would stick to it. It is a hard diet to stick to. The link below is for booklets on the diet.

<http://www.cs.nsw.gov.au/rpa/allergy/resources/foodintol/booklets.cfm>

We kept a diary of what he ate and of his tics. We didn't notice an improvement straight away as I think the diet was stressful for him. He didn't like it but tolerated it for our sake. After 10 hard weeks his tics became consistently less. They have mostly stayed that way since. It is a dream come true for us. He is happier too. He doesn't mind his TS but didn't like all the questions he was getting from school friends.

We don't follow the diet strictly now but we do avoid certain foods. If he has a lot of colours, numbers etc over a period of a week or so, he gets hyper and starts to tic more. I think there is a lot of trial and error involved but it is worth the effort. I am no doctor, just a mum doing her best, so I can't prove the diet works. But I do think it has, at least, contributed to reduced tics.

We have also tried other things and will always be interested in options. Hopefully other people will have the success we have had with the diet option.

Yours sincerely,  
Jackie Gribben.

Hi Judy,  
Below is the e-mail I received from a mother trying the Elimination Diet. I asked if I could pass it on to you and she gave me the go ahead. I have also passed on your e-mail so she can write to you directly.  
Thanks,  
Jackie Gribben x

-----Original Message-----  
From: Dawn McInerney [mailto:ogdawn@yahoo.com]  
Sent: Monday, 12 October 2009 9:39 AM  
To: Paul & Jackie Gribben  
Subject: Re: How's it going?

Thank you so much for putting me onto this diet!! My old son Matthew has returned to us! Not only are his tics barely noticeable but his behavior has so much improved he is becoming a joy to be around! We were so close when he was a small boy. His behavior got really difficult at four, improved at 5, and then from 6 onward has been a constant challenge! We've had a good 5 days in a row of calm and pleasant Matthew! Whew! I can't tell you enough how impressed we are about this new way of eating. (It is terribly boring though and he is feeling a bit constipated. Did you have success with figs for that? I'm using celery but I don't know if it's enough.) I have been cooking every night for the past 6 weeks! Gone are the take-away dinners. He is so good about sticking with it! One day, in the earlier weeks of this diet, a friend of mine took Matt home from school, they gave all the kids a bag of Doritos!! AAghhhh! Two hours later his face was twisting into the worst grimaces and he could not even speak! I was mortified! That was about 4 weeks ago and we have not has anything like that since. He now knows only to take food from his mothers' hand.

Two more weeks and then we will start some challenges. The dietician wants 5 days of no symptoms before we begin. Pretty tall order, and she's never worked with Tourette's, but we are sticking very closely with this diet so we will see how we go.  
How is Sean doing? I like his attitude toward this, and I am teaching Matt to be the same- water off a ducks' back- if people ask- just tell them this is how you are- that it's just a little problem that you have, but it's o.k. The kids are starting to leave him alone a bit more because he is quietening down, but they have "fun food Friday" which he is not allowed to partake in (chicken nuggets, party pies, sausages) and he doesn't like being left out. Any suggestions on that one?  
Thanks for caring!  
Dawn

--- On Sun, 11/10/09, Paul & Jackie Gribben <pgribben@optusnet.com.au> wrote:  
From: Paul & Jackie Gribben <pgribben@optusnet.com.au>  
Subject: How's it going?  
To: ogdawn@yahoo.com  
Received: Sunday, 11 October, 2009, 1:11 PM  
Hi Dawn,  
We haven't spoke for a while. I was wondering how everything was going with the diet therapy?  
Jackie x

We thought this article from the Mental Health Foundation of Australia (Victoria) is worth promoting there is material here for teachers, parents, our youth & young children to explore. Reprinted from Mental Health Foundation of Australia (Vic)

## Embrace the Future

Embrace the Future is an important project of the MHFA. This program has been developed in collaboration with young people up to the age of 24 to educate them in skills and strategies to assist in the development and maintenance of positive mental health and well-being.

Resiliency is the capacity to cope with and bounce back from adversity. Psychologists began to study resiliency when they noticed that some young people did well in their lives despite being faced with many hardships and problems. A lot of research was done to work out what made these young people different. The researchers identified things like problem-solving skills, social support and optimistic thinking as important factors.

Resiliency Resource Centre - [www.embracethefuture.org.au/resiliency](http://www.embracethefuture.org.au/resiliency)

The Embrace the Future Resiliency Resource Centre is a website for teachers, parents and other people who work with or care for children. It provides information about resiliency and how to foster it in children. Although much of the information provided here will be relevant to adolescents as well, the focus of this site is on primary-school age children.

Here you can find:

- An overview of current research in the area of resiliency.
- Information about what makes a child resilient.
- Detailed ideas for teachers about how to develop programs that help to create resilient children.
- Tips for parents and carers about how to interact with children in ways that promote resiliency.

- Information for schools about how to implement resiliency-promoting policies and practices.
- Links to other resiliency-related websites.
- Youth Site - [www.embracethefuture.org.au/youth](http://www.embracethefuture.org.au/youth)

This site focuses on the ability to solve problems which is an important skill for resiliency. Life always brings new problems, These problems can take many forms: they may be relationship problems, problems with work or study, health problems or social problems. Without a way of solving these problems as they arise, it is easy to feel overwhelmed and helpless. Fortunately, although some problems may be harder to solve than others, good problem solvers usually apply the same approach to solving any problem. Once you learn this approach, it can easily be applied to any type of problem,

Kids Site - [www.embracethefuture.org.au/kids](http://www.embracethefuture.org.au/kids)

This website was created for younger children and this is cross-linked to the Embrace the Future website, which offers resiliency information, games and other resources for primary-age children.

You can participate in the EMBRACE THE FUTURE PROGRAM to raise awareness of the importance of positive mental health and wellbeing.

For more information contact:

Embrace the Future

270 Church Street, Richmond, VIC 3121

Email: [projectofficer@embracethefuture.org.au](mailto:projectofficer@embracethefuture.org.au)

Phone: (03) 9427 0407

## Important Telephone Numbers and Web Addresses

Adverse Medicine Events Line 1300 134 237 Mon to Frid 9am to 5pm

Anxiety & OCD Helpline 9886 9377 or 1300 269 438 [www.arcvic.com.au](http://www.arcvic.com.au)

Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636

Carelink Counselling Inc. 9419 9118

Kids Help Line 1800 55 1800 [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)

Life Line 13 11 14 [www.wesley.org.au](http://www.wesley.org.au)

Medicines Line 1300 888 763 [www.nps.org.au](http://www.nps.org.au)

Parent Line 13 2289 [www.parentline.vic.gov.au](http://www.parentline.vic.gov.au)

SANE Mental Illness Helpline 1800 18 7263

[www.sane.org.au](http://www.sane.org.au)

Suiceline Victoria 1300 651 251 [www.suiceline.org.au](http://www.suiceline.org.au)

Teen Challenge Careline 1300 889 288

Lifeline's Just Ask 1300 131 114

(Rural mental health information service)

The Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority has published the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) Students with Disabilities Guidelines. For more information visit <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/>

For rebate opportunities for psychological consultations.

[www.psychology.org.au/medicare](http://www.psychology.org.au/medicare)

## Agnes at the ABC



It was an early morning start on this crisp but sunny Saturday morning in June.

My car heater was purring warmly as I entered the Eastern Freeway at Doncaster on the way to my interview to talk about TS with Tracy Bartram at the ABC studio on Southbank Boulevard.

The interview was scheduled at 9.15. Being the weekend, parking my car did not create the usual headache. Instead, I was able to pick from any of the designated car parking bays in front of the large imposing building where the multitude of small studios of the ABC is housed. The place looked completely deserted, there was not a soul in sight and I wondered how I will be able to enter

the closed front door without the required security swipe-card. To my rescue came the security officer whose sedentary Saturday morning routine was interrupted by my desperate and loud banging on the glass door panel. After a few seconds of animated verbal exchange he graciously allowed me to enter the building, pointing to the next level and instructed me to take a seat up there and wait for the producer of the show who appeared soon after. She quickly ushered me into one of the small studios and I got introduced to Tracy a tall attractive woman.

Tracy opened up the talk-back show by telling listeners that a couple of years ago her teenage son was diagnosed with TS. My brief outline

of symptoms of TS followed, touching on the diagnostic criteria as well as medication used for treating TS. As we continued talking about the problems people living with TS have to deal with in their lives, Tracy opened up the switchboard and the flashing lights indicated several callers already on-line waiting to be heard. Because time was limited unfortunately only the first four calls got through. Each caller was a mother of sons diagnosed with TS and not surprisingly their stories had a ring of similarity; each expressing the importance of early diagnosis and praised also the value and usefulness of the free TS information package they received from the TSA office.

# Anger Management

reprinted from UK newsletter Tourettes Action Summer 09

This article is reprinted as there are many suggestions which may be helpful to our young sufferers.

On 28 March 2009, Tourettes Action held the Research into Action conference in the Welcome Centre in Coventry.

There was a separate programme for under 18s, where drama teacher Sarah Lee and psychologist Dr Tara Murphy led sessions to get us thinking about how we deal with the tricky situations that TS can present and how we can manage our anger.

We had a great group of young people there, who came up with some fantastic ideas to deal with some of the problems that TS can present. We decided to get their ideas on paper, so that others can benefit from their experiences and suggestions.

## Dealing with TS

Here are some of the ideas that were suggested:

Make sure your friends understand TS and are ready to stick up for you if needed, or help you to explain what TS is.

Memorise a handy phrase to explain TS, so that it rolls off your tongue easily when you need it.

Camouflage the tics that tend to get you into trouble. You could pretend you are coughing, or make a different movement to distract people, for example.

You could carry a card that explains what TS is.

Make sure your teachers know about TS. You could bring in information for any teachers that don't get it. Bring in a book or get some leaflets from your Tourette Syndrome Association. Don't wait for new teachers to misunderstand tics, but tell them at the start of the lesson. If you are getting a hard time from a teacher, tell your parents, or another member of school staff.

Use deep breathing or massage to help relax mind and muscles.

Remember that if someone is giving you grief, it's they that have the problem.

If all else fails, remove yourself from the situation.

## How does anger feel?

We talked about anger - how it feels and what effect it has on us and those around us.

We also talked about the consequences of getting angry and losing control. Losing control of anger can have many negative consequences. If we want to get anger under control, it's important that we are able to recognise it early.

We talked about what parts of the body feel different when you get angry. The group listed all these signs:

headache	jaw clenches	butterflies in your stomach
pupils dilate	breathing fast	feel sick
crying	hands clench	tics worsen
eyes hurt	heart beats fast	legs stiffen
face goes red	sweating	stamp feet

## Stopping the volcano

We talked about all these feelings building up until anger explodes - like a volcano. We discussed how you might be able to stop the lava from over-flowing.

Pressure builds up inside a volcano until it erupts, causing lava to burst out and damage everything it touches.

How could we release the pressure that anger creates without letting our lava do its damage?

The group came up with the following ideas:

- do some exercise (eg go for a run)
  - take some deep breaths
  - count to 10
  - use a punch bag
  - punch a pillow
  - listen to music
  - get away from the situation
  - think about the consequences of getting angry
- challenge negative thoughts - find a thought that calms you or cancels out the bad feeling

The group had some great ideas for thoughts you could concentrate on. Picture yourself in that situation. What thoughts might calm you down?

## TSAA Online Forum access for TSA of Vic members

Members of the TSA of Victoria can now sign up to access the online forum recently set up by the TSAA (TSA Australia) Please contact the TSA of Victoria office by email [tourettes@mssociety.com.au](mailto:tourettes@mssociety.com.au) stating your full name as registered with the TSA of Victoria. Information regarding access to the website address will be forwarded to you by reply email as soon as possible. An annual membership payment of \$10 via Paypal (administration costs for TSAA) will then allow access to the online forum.

# The life of Rileagh

By Brad Lester

A SMILE spreads across Rileagh McLean's face when he talks about snakes.

The Arawata boy's research has shown the black mamba is the most aggressive snake in the world, the reticulated python the longest, and the most poisonous of all is the King cobra.

The 10-year-old's face beams again when he tells of the new lizard he is getting as a friend for his red phase bearded dragon, "Carmilla".

Rileagh dreams of becoming a herpetologist, a scientist specialising in reptiles, and working at Currumbin wildlife sanctuary in Queensland.

"I went there last year and loved the way it was spaced out for all the animals," he said.

A boyhood aspiration it may be, but this kid overcomes challenges every day with the motivation required to fulfil one's goals.

Rileagh has Tourette syndrome, a neurological disorder causing him to experience days and nights filled with up to six involuntary and repetitive tics which leave him stressed and exhausted.

Without warning, his head will flick from side-to-side with a whiplash-like sensation, often creaking his neck and inflicting pain.

At other times, his eyes will squint, his fingers clench and toes curl, and he feels a pressing need to clear his throat. To allow his toes to curl, Rileagh wears size six shoes on his size four feet.

The tics must be heeded, otherwise tension accumulates, and the tics, once expressed, can last for up to half-an-hour. The only escape is relaxation - becoming totally immersed in a hobby or seeking a massage.

"When I get home from school, I'm absolutely knackered," Rileagh said.

According to the Tourette Syndrome Association of Victoria, the condition is a neurological disorder, distinguished by involuntary and repetitive tics, including repeating obscene language.

But while swearing is often a Tourette stereotype represented in the media, only five to 10 per cent of Tourette sufferers do so.

"People should not pick on people with Tourette," Rileagh said.

The condition is caused by a chemical abnormality that disrupts messages between nerve cells in parts of the brain. While symptoms come and go, they typically worsen during the teenage years.

Tics can include eye rolling, facial grimacing, finger tapping, foot dragging, hair tossing, hand clenching, hitting self/others and knee knocking.

Sufferers are also prone to bouts of barking, blowing, clicking, gasping, grunting, snorting and throat clearing. Tics can be caused by stress and anxiety, fatigue, excitement, some TV shows and computer games, preservatives and negative thinking.

The cause remains unknown but the association believes the condition can be hereditary.

Rileagh used to rub his head on his shoulder, causing blisters on his neck and requiring his hair to be worn long to reduce the pain.

"One time he fell out of a tree and had to wear a neck brace and wasn't able to rub his head on his shoulder. Stress can trigger the tics and falling out of the tree did just that, so when he finally took the brace off, he rubbed his shoulder for half an hour," mum Leanne said.

Rileagh was initially misdiagnosed as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, as kids with Tourette's are often hyperactive, full of energy and obsessed with their interests. As such, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder is also often diagnosed.

"It's not just like when we love an interest. Rileagh will go into great depth where he will look into everything about the topic. You can ask him questions about reptiles and he will be able to tell you the answers," Leanne said.

He has been known to watch all six *Star Wars* movies consecutively and recite nearly entire episodes of cartoon shows.

During a family holiday to Queensland, Rileagh heard a recorded Chinese translation and after just one listen, was able to recite the passage verbatim. His multilingual talent once turned heads amongst Chinese shoppers in a supermarket.

And his amazing level of concentration has had musical benefits. Rileagh has learnt to play a range of tunes on the guitar, by ear.

"When he plays guitar, he has to play all six songs he knows. It's his compulsion. Once he's played all six, he can relax," Leanne said.

Living with a child or sibling with Tourette's is tiring for other family members, but still their support does not wane.



**Strong willed:** Rileagh McLean, with his pet dragon "Camilla", may live with Tourette syndrome but he doesn't let the condition stop him from indulging in his interests of reptiles, motorbikes and guitar.

Rileagh's sister Tayla, 14, testifies: "I find it stressing when I see him sitting there with his neck tic, watching him in pain, trying to get it out. You can't give him any help; you just feel useless."

Rileagh came to grips with how his life was to be after joining the Tourette Syndrome Association of Victoria and attending a social outing at Science-works museum in Melbourne, with other like children.

Surprisingly, there he met another boy from Leongatha Primary, whom Rileagh was not aware also had the condition.

"I was watching Rileagh's face and I could see that he thought, 'It's okay, there are other Tourette's kids too'," Leanne said.

"On the way home, he burst into tears and said 'It's the first time that I felt okay with who I am'.

"The more we can get other kids, teachers and the community understanding about Tourette's, the more awareness about, the better."

## Treatment Programs and Clinics for Anxiety Disorders

Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria

Anxiety Disorders Recovery Programs

42 High Street Road, Ashwood

ARCVic Recovery Programs are aimed at supporting participants to gain knowledge, skills and strategies that will assist them to recover from their anxiety disorder and achieve a better quality of life. The programs are conducted in a group setting. The sessions combine cognitive-behaviour therapy, anxiety, management, relaxation training and self-help techniques. The focus of the programs is on anxiety symptoms and the range of other issues which affect recovery-self-esteem, social and conversation skills, relationship and communication difficulties, beliefs and negative thinking. Phone on 03 9886 9233 or 03 9886 9377 or email: arcmail@arcvic.com.au for further information.

Swinburne University

Psychology Clinic

Swinburne University Hawthorn Campus, 34 Wakefield Street, Hawthorn

The Psychology Clinic established in 1990, provides a range of low-cost psychological services including individual and group treatment services to the general community. The Clinic provides a high level of quality assurance with all work being supervised by experienced psychologists who are registered with the Psychologists' Registration Board of Victoria. Services provided by the Psychology Clinic are devised from empirical research and evidence-based practice. The quality of its services is also ensured by drawing upon the research skills of its practitioners, who continually assess the effectiveness of programs. Based on these findings, programs are revised on an ongoing basis, to ensure clients receive state of the art treatment. Further information is available online at [www.swin.edu.au/clinic](http://www.swin.edu.au/clinic) or by contacting the Clinic on 9214 8653 or email: [psychclinic@swin.edu.au](mailto:psychclinic@swin.edu.au)

University of Melbourne

Psychology Clinic

Level 7, 14-20 Blackwood Street, North Melbourne

The University of Melbourne Psychology Clinic specialises in the treatment of anxiety disorders and depression. The Clinic operates on a fee-for-service basis (based on income). The Clinic provides assessments, individual and group cognitive-behaviour therapy. Admission requires referral from a doctor or other health professional. Group programs are also available. Enquiries: phone: 03 9326 4774 or see website: [www.psych.unimelb.edu.au/clinic](http://www.psych.unimelb.edu.au/clinic)

The Melbourne Clinic

Anxiety Disorders Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Programs

130 Church Street Richmond

Treatment programs available at the Melbourne Clinic include - Anxiety and Depression Program (inpatient), and Anxiety Day Programs. Specific treatment programs include - OCD Program, Social Anxiety Program, Panic and Agoraphobia Program, General Anxiety Program, and CBT for Anxiety and Depression Program. Treatment programs are conducted in a group format and are based on cognitive behavioural therapy - (Private Health Insurance recommended)

Enquiries: 03 9420 9225

Reconnexion (Formerly PADA/TRANX)

Panic, Anxiety, Depression, and Tranquilliser Dependency Treatment Service

222 Burke Road, Glen Iris

Reconnexion provides a specialist counselling treatment service for children, young people and adults experiencing anxiety disorders, stress, depression and tranquilliser dependency. Counselling is provided by psychologists with extensive experience in these areas. Group programs are offered for social phobia, post natal depression and meditation. A fee is charged for all counselling and group services. For further information contact Reconnexion on : 03 9886 9400 or email: [info@reconnexion.org.au](mailto:info@reconnexion.org.au) or visit the website: [www.reconnexion.org.au](http://www.reconnexion.org.au)

Victoria University

Psychology Clinic

St.Albans Campus, Mckechnie Street, St Albans

Victoria University Psychology Clinic provides mental health assessment and counselling services to members of Melbourne's northern and western communities. The Clinic can provide free cognitive, behavioural, interpersonal and psychodynamic counselling services to those suffering from a range of mental health problems including anxiety and depression. Clients may be referred from a health professional or they are welcome to contact the Clinic directly to make an appointment. Group programs are also run throughout the year. Enquiries: 03 9919 2353

Reproduced with permission from Anxiety Matters: Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria, Vol.13, No.4. December 2009

## Anger Management

What works for us?

angry situation	angry thought	chill-out thought
Someone taking the tics too seriously	I want to hit them	The bigger man walks away.
Someone saying "you're dumb"	I want to get you back	There's no need for this. It's not my problem, it's yours.
At school and a teacher tells you off for ticking	Why can't I control it?	You have not done anything wrong. Don't blame yourself.
Walking down the road and someone stares at you	I'll stare back at them	I have Tourette's, but Tourette's doesn't have me.
In a park and someone starts on you	I need to take it out on someone else	Think about something that makes you happy.
Being bullied	I'm going to get my own back	It's not worth it!
Being made to feel small	I feel helpless and embarrassed	You don't know me.
Tics getting on your nerves	People are looking at me	I don't care if I've got tics. I'm really good at making friends.
Not liking lessons	What am I doing here?	I'm going to get an education out of this.
Holding in tics at school or in town	I can't let people see the tics	I can breathe to distract myself.
Not getting your own way	Why can't I have what I want?	Be proud of what you do have.
Someone shouting abuse	I'm going to punch 'em	Think about fluffy bunnies!
Getting moved into a different classroom for doing nothing wrong	I could just storm off	Imagine a really happy place
Teacher picking on you	I'm going to argue back	Recall some happy memories.
Screaming at a game	I hate losing. I'll smash my PlayStation	It cost a lot and I can't get another one. I can play it again.

## Adult Support Group meetings

TSA Victoria has had a number of meetings last year specifically for members over 18 years of age. These casual meetings are held at Pumpkins Café just across from the Blackburn Railway station and just 2 minutes walk from the Nerve Centre.

Scott Coward our TSA President has kindly organised these afternoons for both sufferers of TS and their partners if they wish to attend. The association covers the cost for coffee/tea & snack, the venue is a cosy little place not too noisy so it's perfect for having a chat with others.

Scott attends these meetings, those of you who have met him know that he is a very welcoming and friendly person so even if you don't know anyone there and it's your first visit he is sure to make you feel comfortable and welcome.

Below are some comments from James & Alex who have attended the group meetings.

*"I've attended two of the adult support group meetings this year at the Pumpkin Café in Blackburn. It's a great way to meet new people, get issues off our chest and offer advice to one another over afternoon tea. I commend Scott for arranging these meetings and providing a way for people to not only listen to each other, but to also share interests and make new friends"*

*"Thank you Scott for taking the time to organise these meetings. I know it's not easy to co ordinate dates that suit everyone and for you to give up your Sunday afternoon away from your family it's really appreciated. The café provides a very relaxed atmosphere, just chatting over a good coffee discussing issues together, sharing ideas or just meeting new people is really rewarding".*

If you are interested in these meetings please email or call the office and Judi will let you know when the next get together is scheduled for.

## APPRECIATE THE LITTLE THINGS IN LIFE Reprinted from Mental Health Association NSW

What does it mean to appreciate the little things in life? Appreciating the little things in life involves focusing our attention on what is pleasurable, nurturing, and sustaining in our lives and away from those events that are annoying, frustrating or hurtful. It means practicing gratitude for those everyday things that are easy to take for granted or miss altogether. Adopting this outlook won't stop negative events from occurring but it may help prevent us from over-emphasising their importance in our lives.

What do we know about gratitude?

Gratitude research is a relatively new, but fascinating area of study. The practice of keeping a gratitude journal, further explored below is one area that has been evaluated. Studies have been conducted in which participants who kept gratitude journals were compared to those who did not or those who kept a record of daily hassles. Those recording their daily blessings were found to do better in a range of measures of wellbeing including having a more optimistic view of one's life experiencing a generally more positive mood, showing a greater propensity to help others, and even exercising more.

How else will this build my resilience?

Developing skills in experiencing and expressing gratitude can help us connect with others. When we take the time to appreciate an act of kindness from a loved one or even a stranger we become more fully aware of our connectedness within our community, and the positive regard others have for us. Reciprocating these kind actions further cements these social bonds which we then have as a resource to draw on in times of need.

How does positive emotion relate to our mental health? Positive emotions have been shown to be linked to good physical health. According to some researchers people who experience positive emotions are likely to live longer, enjoy better immune functioning and recover more effectively from treatment for heart disease. It's not just our physical resilience that is affected by positive emotions, our psychological well-being can be assisted also. Theory has it that when we experience positive emotions we are able to think and behave more creatively and flexibly than when we experience negative emotions. This "broadening" of the way we think and act builds resources for us that we are able to use in more difficult times. Many studies have shown that resilient individuals experience positive emotions and that they use these emotions to help them cope with difficult situations. There are many things we can do to enhance and increase the presence of positive emotions for us. Learning how to appreciate the little things in life is one good way.

What can I do to appreciate the little things in life?

Here are three ideas you might like to try in order to develop your ability to appreciate the little things in life.

Keep a gratitude journal.

Spending 10 or 15 minutes each day writing down five things you are grateful for is a great way to boost your appreciation for the little things in life and indeed the big things as well. Think creatively - the little things could be a text message from a friend, hearing a joke that made you laugh out loud, a wonderful meal or even the experience of spending 15 minutes doing something nurturing just for you.

Perhaps after completing this exercise for a number of weeks you

might like to spend some additional time writing in your journal about how this daily discipline has changed your outlook and perspective on your life.

Celebrate the little things

We are generally pretty good at marking the big moments in our own and others' lives; birthdays, weddings, graduations, once-a-year family get-togethers. What would happen if we gave ourselves permission to celebrate the little things? The how and what of celebration will depend on what's important to you. Here are some ideas.

- Keep some gold stars in your desk at work. Give one to your colleague when he or she masters a new skill or completes a challenging task.
- When the sun finally appears after a week of grey skies grab a friend or loved one and go for a walk to celebrate the good weather and regenerative effects of rain.
- Pamper yourself after getting through a daunting or tedious task such as cleaning your room or writing a report by doing something you enjoy.

Slow down and savour

This idea falls into the "take time to smell the roses" tradition. Try these tips to get even more out of positive emotions when you are experiencing an uplifting event.

- Try and keep a souvenir of the experience to prompt your memory later on.
- Enter as fully as you can into a positive experience. Use all your senses. Notice the details.
- Share the experience with others as it happens or by reminiscing later on.

Sources

Emmons, Robert A & McCullough, Michael E. (2003) "Counting Blessings Versus Burdens: An experimental Investigation of Gratitude and Subjective Well-Being in Daily Life." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. vol 84, no 2. pp377-389.

Hendrickson, Barbara L. (2001) "The Positive of Positive Emotions in Positive Psychology" *American Psychologist*, March

Tugade Michele M., Frederickson, Barbara L., Barrett, Lisa Fekiman (2004) "Psychological Resilience and Positive Emotional Granularity: Experiencing the Benefits of Positive Emotions on Coping and Health" *Journal of Personality* 72:6, pp 1062-1150

Bryant, F.B., and Veroff, J.(2006) *Savouring: A new model of positive experience*. Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.

Where to from here?

For further information you might like to have a look at some of these resources:

Contact these people/organisations:

Mental Health Information Service: 1300 794 991 for services in your area.

Websites:

Changing minds [www.changingminds.org.au](http://www.changingminds.org.au)

Authentic Happiness [www.authentichappiness.org](http://www.authentichappiness.org)

The Happiness Institute [www.thehappinessinstitute.com](http://www.thehappinessinstitute.com)

Useful reading:

Martin Seligman (2002) *Authentic Happiness*, Random House, New York.

Tim Sharp (2007) *Happiness Handbook*, Finch Publishing.

Stephanie Dowrick (2005) *Choosing Happiness*, Allen & Unwin.

Stephanie Dowrick (2007) *Creative Journal Writing*, Allen & Unwin.

Dr. Tim Sharp (2008) *100 Ways to Happiness: a guide for busy people*, Penguin.

Ingrid Poulson (2008) *Rise*. Pan MacMillan.

## Movie Review - Front of the Class

On Sunday, 8th November at the AGM, we were lucky enough to view the movie 'Front of The Class', an inspiring story about the real life of teacher Brad Cohen.

We share Brad's journey as he struggles to understand what is wrong with him, with teachers thinking he is just a naughty disruptive child, finally being diagnosed with tourettes, then eventually finding an understanding headmaster who is willing to help him cope with the challenges it presents. Then there is the struggle to establish his teaching career, with the ignorance then acceptance he faces along the way.



Many tears were shed during the movie (the tissue box jumped back and forth through the seats), but I'm sure that like me, others found hope in the fact, that whilst it may be difficult for them, there can be a bright future ahead for our children.

As parents, unless we too suffer from Tourette Syndrome, it can be very hard for us to relate to and understand the difficulties and challenges our children go through. This movie showed us through a sufferers eye not only how hard it can be, but also what can be achieved through determination and hard work. If you missed the opportunity of seeing this movie I would highly recommend it to you.

*Barbara Larpent.*

## Elijah's courage shines light on the world

Jane Harper. Reprinted with permission from the Geelong Advertiser March 17th, 2009

BRAVE: Elijah Vetma's heartfelt story of daily torment at the hands of bullies touched readers the world over.

FROM the loneliest boy in the schoolyard to an anti-bullying campaigner, Elijah Vetma has come a long way in a short time.

The 12-year-old is just one of the examples of amazing courage shown by youngsters throughout our region every day.

The Geelong Advertiser wants to seek out these unsung heroes of the community, young and old, as nominations open for the Pride of Australia Medal.

Brave Elijah drew international attention last June when he wrote a heart-wrenching letter detailing



how bullying had left him contemplating suicide.

Less than a year later, it is a very different story, which has seen Elijah Vetma take his anti-bullying message to Parliament House, lead a band of 70 Geelong and Bellarine Peninsula children in an anti-bullying musical, and speak

out against victimisation in the schoolyard.

"I had been bullied a lot and had had enough so decided to write the letter," Elijah said. "I was nervous about what people would think, but I'm glad I did it.

"I'm more confident and have made friends and am glad I have helped people.

"To anyone else who is being bullied, I want to let them know they are not alone, don't suppress it and hold it in, tell someone.

"The Pride of Australia Medal is run by the Geelong Advertiser and other News Limited newspapers to honour ordinary Australians achieving extraordinary things.

## FAMILY DAY at the MELBOURNE ZOO



On Sunday 29 November we had 53 TSA members (31 Adults, 22 kids) attend the last event for 2009 at the Melbourne Zoo.

We all met at the Japanese garden which was a beautiful and tranquil spot to start our day. We were divided into groups, with two Friends of the Zoo Volunteer guides per group to escort us on our tour, both visiting the same exhibits but in reverse order. The group I was in was led by Kristy and Raquel both very informative young ladies who displayed a real love and passion for the animals especially when talking about the impending birth of the baby elephant. We visited the gorilla enclosure which is about the size of a football field; we spotted the large silver back basking away in the sunshine in his favourite spot under the rock overhang which has a heated floor for the colder months. We then visited the Pygmy

Hippopotamus, the Mandrills, the Tree Top Apes and Monkeys & the Tiger exhibits. The advantage of having a guide taking you through the areas is the interesting information that they tell you such as, the pygmy hippo looked like it had just come out of the water with her shiny skin but this was in fact her body providing a protective layer of oil to moisturise her skin. How to distinguish an ape from a monkey - only monkeys have a tail! Tigers are solitary animals except when there is a cub with her mum. At the zoo they rotate the enclosures the male and female tigers are housed in, to keep them alert and stimulated. They also put different herbs and spices around the enclosure even spraying different scents on the tree trunks to keep the tiger's mind active.

All the food for the animals at the zoo is strictly monitored and weighed; we saw one of the staff preparing



provisions for the gorillas, a mixture of fruits and vegetables. The food is first grade quality; as Raquel said, we could eat the fruit and vegies ourselves. We then moved to the Elephant Village and it did feel like we were in Thailand -the layout, the vegetation and the weather transported me to another world. These elephants are on a get fit program as the Zoo have found that some elephants were overweight . Their carers walk them many kilometres per day around the compound. Did you know that elephants walk on their toes so their carers also provide care and maintenance for their feet ...elephant pedicure anyone! The newest addition to the elephant family is due in a December and the other one sometime in April 2010.

It was wonderful to see our younger members going from one exhibit to the other taking photos of the animals and themselves, ducking in and out of the rain bursts and having a good time. Thank you to those who sent in your Zoo images for inclusion in TopicS. We finished off at the Orang-utans enclosure; it was fascinating watching them interact, they have 97% the same DNA as humans. Unfortunately, these are a threatened species as are a lot of the other beautiful animals in the zoo due to the loss of their natural habitat to slash and burn for Palm oil plantations.

Every family also received a lovely Christmas Hamper from TSA Vic. put together by Jenny Coward. Thanks for all that hard work Jenny, I'm sure the rest of the Coward family are relieved to have their dining room back.

*Manuela Jovanovic*



## Mental Health Week

## Building Resilience

2009

Reprinted from Mental Health Association NSW.

### Factsheet

#### WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Resilience is the ability to "bounce back" from stressful or challenging experiences. It involves being able to adapt to changes and to approach negative events as constructively as possible.

Everyone's life involves ups and downs. Developing a greater level of resilience won't stop bad or stressful things from happening, but it can reduce the impact the stressor has on our lives and the time taken to recover from it.

Whether the experiences are everyday events like a late train or faulty computer, or longer term stressors such as a chronic illness, relationship breakdown, or loss of job; building our resilience can help us cope and bounce back from the experience.

Resilient individuals are said to be curious and open. They do things to increase their experience of positive emotions in the face of adversity, finding opportunities in some of life's greatest challenges.

We are all different, and some people are certainly more able to cope with stressful situations than others. There are a number of factors why some people react positively to a stressful or challenging experience in their life. Some of these factors are outlined below:

**Individual health and wellbeing:** these are factors that can be developed such as having a strong sense of self, good social skills, a sense of purpose in life, self control, and an ability to regulate emotions and solve problems constructively. It also includes our level of physical health and wellbeing.

**Individual factors:** these are factors we may have been born with such as genetics, personality, ethnicity, economic background, and how close we are socially and geographically to others.

**Life history and experience:** past events and relationships in our lives have a certain level of influence on how we approach stressors in the present. This includes our family history, previous physical and mental health, previous experience of trauma, social and cultural experiences, and how we have coped with stressors in the past.

**Social and community support:** this is the

support provided from family, friends, members of our community, and work and school environments. Feeling connected to others, and drawing a sense of security and safety from these networks can buffer us during times of stress. Being able to draw on ready and available services like GPs and mental health professionals when needed is also important.

Some of these factors are outside our control. But a great many are things we can do something about, both for ourselves and for those around us. Have another look through the list. What are some of the areas you could work on to build your own resilience and that of those around you?

Building our resilience can buffer us from developing mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder. It does so by helping offset certain risk factors that increase the likelihood of experiencing a mental illness. Risk factors such as lack of social support, being bullied, experiencing trauma, socioeconomic disadvantage, and social or cultural discrimination. In other words, building your resilience can protect your mental health and wellbeing.

For people who live with mental illness, resilience can also help us to accept the setbacks and challenges of living with mental illness, developing the courage to take responsibility to manage our lives and recover, despite the limitations imposed by the condition.

#### Examples of Resilience

Strength-based research has found many common factors amongst young people in particular who have survived and thrived in the face of adversity and hardships. These studies provide evidence that resilient people draw on skills and qualities that help them cope during stress, and that these factors can be transferred to other people or situations, that is they are not unique or "special qualities".

A classic study followed up children, a third of who were classified as 'high risk' due to poverty, family conflict and parental mental illness, for three decades. It found that one-third of the children grew up to be competent and confident as adults despite the stresses and adversity they experienced at a young age.

Across resilience research, studies have found what is important are the positive internal or external factors in a person's life rather than the negative ones. These positive factors can buffer or protect a person from the negative impacts of traumatic experiences. Things like having a supportive teacher or mentor at school, having a strong engagement with sports or being able to set goals about the future are just some examples. For more examples of resilience research, see Lyn Worsley's book 'The Resilience Doughnut.'

#### Community Resilience

As we now know, resilience is something we can all develop. We can do this by drawing on our individual strengths and abilities as well as the connections and support we have from others around us like family, friends and our wider community. The sense of cohesion derived from belonging to a community can build a great sense of optimism and morale within us. Building a strong community can benefit each member of our community in times of stress, as recently witnessed during the Victorian bushfires in early 2009.

Community resilience is built by strengthening social networks, offering support to members of the community in times of need, working together on common goals, as well as ensuring safety and promoting healthy lifestyles.

An example of good community resilience might be a young single mother who lives in a suburb where there is access to childcare services, a regular bus service that allows her to take her child to and from childcare and a supportive neighbourhood, where there are other children her child can play with.

#### Factsheet

By building a community that offers support, transport, and childcare, this single mother is given the assistance she needs to bring up a child on her own. By offering the support this young woman needs, her own resilience is improved, as well as that of the whole community who have helped this woman through her hardships.

What ways can you build a stronger, more resilient community? And how can you can be more involved in your community?

# My Trip to LA 26th Nov – 4th Dec 2009

by James Rosevear

I arrived safely and hassle free, after clearing customs and after quarantine gave me the green light I immediately headed for the pickup point. LA traffic was pretty quiet due to the thanksgiving holiday, so it only took about 40 minutes to drive from LAX to my hotel.

I took a much needed nap, then had a look at the Hollywood and Highland Center which doesn't have a lot of

particularly interesting shops (in my opinion), but there is a high platform offering great views of the area. I decided to buy an MTA pass and see a bit of Downtown. I took the Red Line to Union Station, then boarded the Pasadena bound Gold Line so I could get a good view and a couple of snapshots of the River Bed which hardly has any water in it. After returning to Union, I boarded the Red Line again and got off at Civic Center Station and saw the City Hall.

The next day I took the MTA to 7th

Street/Metro Center in Downtown and walked around the Financial District, admiring the many beautiful skyscrapers. I bought an Ice Blended from the Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf and drank it alfresco style, then strolled to Pershing Square, which is probably the nicest part of Downtown, because it is surprisingly clean and well patrolled by security. Although there are a lot of homeless people sitting around Pershing Square, they actually kept to themselves (maybe the security guards had a word to them). It has a temporary ice rink for

# My Trip to LA 26th Nov – 4th Dec 2009 by James Rosevear

the Christmas season and a few food stalls and felt very family orientated. I walked to Broadway just a few blocks from Pershing, and "almost thought I was in the middle of Tijuana". It's an extremely Hispanic and bustling street, lined with one bargain store after another. I had a French Dipped Beef Sandwich at Philippe's for lunch. It was beautiful; the roasted beef filling was very, very tender. It's not the type of food you would typically expect to find in America; however it obviously has a strong cult following because the restaurant was still crowded when I walked in at 3:00PM. For dinner I had a Cheeseburger, fries and a Neapolitan thick shake from In N Out which was absolutely delicious, the best burgers and fries I've ever had. All they need to do now is expand to Australia. When I took the City by Night tour on Saturday I tried a delicious Hot Dog from Dodger Dogs at the Universal City Walk, which was actually unbeatable in my opinion. The staff seemed very professional; the frankfurts were well cooked and the bun was nice and crispy.

30th Nov. Universal Studios was exciting of course, my favourite ride was Revenge of the Mummy, which is an extremely fast indoor roller coaster in pitch black. It was ABSOLUTELY SPECTACULAR! I rode it so many times I lost count! Finally I had the time to visit Madame Tussaud's in the evening, it was really interesting as I had expected. For a place that only been open for a few months, it certainly had a generous number of statues.

1st Dec 2009 This morning at 10:00 I took a taxi (US\$28 for a 25 minute ride) to Westfield in Century City. Westfield is beautiful; it's a very clean (surprising for LA), open air mall with a good selection of gourmet eateries, no McDonald's or rowdy teenagers in sight, and most of the shopkeepers were personable. For lunch I had a delicious tub of plain frozen yoghurt topped with kiwi fruit, mango, blueberries and gummy bears from Pinkberry. The clerks were so nice; they even gave me



samples of the different flavours before I selected plain yoghurt. After lunch I caught the Metro Rapid bus to Korea town which only took about 20



minutes from Century City. The Metro Rapid is a great bus service, because it's quicker since it serves fewer stops than the normal Metro buses. Korea town is a bit rundown (similar to LA Chinatown)



and very crowded, but it is an interesting place to visit nonetheless. The Hispanic population in the area almost seems to be on par with the Koreans. PM. I've just got back from the taping of Jimmy Kimmel Live, it was heaps of fun! After passing a security screening and getting seated, a guy walked onto the stage to amuse and warm up the audience for about 30 minutes before the recording. I was no more than 5 meters from the stage. When Jimmy Kimmel eventually appeared, he spoke to a few members of the audience, and then the tape began rolling. The two guests he interviewed were Matt Dillon, followed by Nikki Reed. (Twilight) Afterwards we walked over to a musical stage where we stood and watched performances by a Rapper named Jay Sean and another one known as Birdman.

2nd December I took the bus to the Beverly Center in the morning, which has a huge selection of fashion stores. Despite the expensive stores, it didn't seem much more than an average suburban shopping center, and the food court was nothing special (KFC, Starbucks etc). The outdoor patio had nice views though. Afterwards I decided to bypass the Sunset Strip because I had already been there three times on the tours.

I headed to the Farmer's Market and The Grove which were really nice. The Grove is a very flash, outdoor shopping district with a free tram that shoppers can ride from one end to the other if they wish to. The Farmer's Market, right next door to The Grove offers a great range of food and gifts of good value. I bought some grapes, an apple, a mandarin, raspberries and blueberries there.

The day that I left I went on two tours, the Kodak theatre and then Graumann's Chinese theatre. In the late afternoon/early evening I took the train to union Station then explored Olvera Street which is the oldest part of LA. Finally, I took the shuttle to the airport for my flight home.

James Rosevear

## Mental Health Week

See our fact sheet, 'Sign up, link in, get involved' for some ideas and check out this practical guide on building inclusive and resilience communities [www.socialinclusion.gov.au/LatestNews/Pages/BuildingCommunityResilience.aspx](http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/LatestNews/Pages/BuildingCommunityResilience.aspx)

### 10 Tips to Build Your Resilience

We can all build and improve on our ability to be resilient when faced with stressful and difficult situations. Listed below are some helpful tips that you can use to build your resilience. They are adapted from the Mental Health Association NSW's popular 10 Tips to Stress Less poster and postcard resources.

Continually striving for perfection in everything you do can lead to stress. Try to aim for "not bad at all" or "really quite good" instead of "perfect".

Do you have little or no time left over at the end of the day for yourself? Are you all things to all people? Allow yourself time to do things that you particularly enjoy. If you create boundaries around your time, and stick to them, others will respect them.

Getting involved in community activities can help develop your connections with others, create skills and boost your physical and mental well-being. All things that improve your resilience. See our fact sheet "Sign up, Linkin, Get involved" for tips and ideas on how you can participate more in your community.

Being physically healthy is an important foundation for your resilience. The National Physical Activity Guidelines recommend 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a day. Play our

## Building Resilience

"Take Your Pick" paper game for some fun ideas on how to get active.

Nurturing a positive view of oneself is important for resilience. Spend time with people who help build your confidence and belief in yourself.

Laughing out loud can be a helpful way to reduce stress levels, so look for opportunities to introduce some humour into your day. Life can be truly absurd sometimes, so don't forget to laugh at it and look for the lighter side of frustrating situations.

Research shows that relationships are one of the cornerstones of wellbeing. Close relationships and broad social networks are both important. There are simple ways to strengthen these ties, such as inviting a neighbour or friend over for a quick cup of tea.

Procrastination can be a major barrier to wellbeing, leading to stress and preventing us from doing the things that are important to us and good for us. Ask your friends for their best strategies for getting motivated.

One way to build resilience is to keep things in perspective. If you can, avoid being overly negative about things that may be happening in your life. Even during the toughest times, try to keep an eye to the future and the likelihood that circumstances will change for the better.

There are many things in your life that you have no direct control over. Resilience involves being able to adapt to change with a minimum amount of stress. Instead of resisting or trying to manipulate things beyond your control, look at them as opportunities to learn and grow. Focus your attention on areas where you can make a difference.

## 2009

### Where to from here?

For further information you might like to have a look at some of these resources:

Contact these people organisations:

Mental Health Information Service: 1300 794 991 or [www.mentalhealth.asn.au](http://www.mentalhealth.asn.au) for services in your area

Transcultural Mental Health Centre: information and referral on mental health issues: 1800 648 911 [www.dhi.gov.au/tmhc](http://www.dhi.gov.au/tmhc)

### Websites and Books:

Changing Minds: [www.changingminds.org.au](http://www.changingminds.org.au)

Resilience: Build skills to endure hardships: [www.mayoclinic.com/health/resilience/MH00078](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/resilience/MH00078)

Ingrid Poulson (2008) Rise. Pan MacMillian.

Eyn Worsley (2006) The Resilience Doughnut: the Secret of Strong Kids. Alpha Counselling Services, Eastwood.

Australian Social Inclusion Board (2009) Building Inclusive and Resilience Communities (2009), Australian Government, June 2009. [www.socialinclusion.gov.au/LatestNews/Pages/BuildingCommunityResilience.aspx](http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/LatestNews/Pages/BuildingCommunityResilience.aspx)

To obtain this fact sheet and other resources in different languages (Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Hindi, Italian, Khmer, Korean, Somali, Spanish and Vietnamese) please contact the Transcultural Mental Health Centre on 1800 648 911 or visit the website at [www.dhi.gov.au/tmhc](http://www.dhi.gov.au/tmhc)