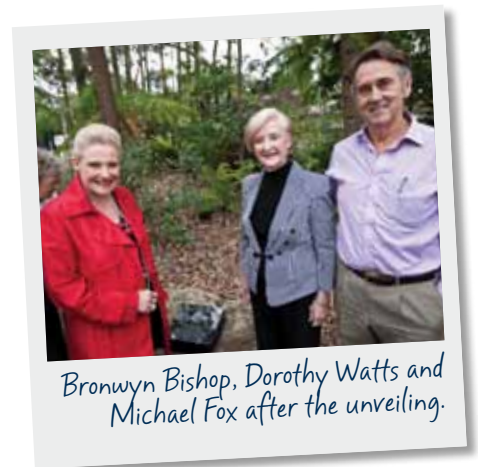


Left: The marble plaque sits beautifully atop an old rock in the garden



On 17th October 2000 the world lost an incredible man who helped to change the lives of people with a disability for the better – House With No Steps (HWNS) founder, F. Lionel Watts CMG, MBE.

In 1956, Mr Watts contracted polio and became a quadriplegic. After a long recovery, he tried to find a rehabilitation program that would enable him to re-enter the workforce. There was nothing available. He also found a sad lack of training and rehabilitation programs for people with other disabilities. Mr Watts and his wife, Dorothy, were determined to find and provide a solution to this problem ... and so began HWNS.

10 years after his passing, Lionel Watts' dream to create opportunities for people with a disability continues to be realised everyday. On Friday 15th October 2010 HWNS celebrated his life and work at the Sydney Head Office site.

VIP guests who were involved in the early days travelled near and far to pay tribute. HWNS CEO, Andrew Richardson, hosted the commanding line-up of people wanting to speak about the inspirational work undertaken by Lionel Watts.

The Hon Bronwyn Bishop MP; Michael Fox, Board Member and son of architect Frank Fox, who designed the accessible Belrose building; Paul Hardy, long standing client and supported employee of HWNS and of course Lionel Watts' wife and co-founder, Dorothy Watts OAM all had very touching stories to tell.

Following the speeches, Dorothy Watts unveiled a beautiful marble plaque set in the well-established gardens, of which Lionel Watts was extremely proud.

Guests remained after the ceremony for morning tea to catch up with people they hadn't seen for a number of years and to reminisce.

Although the day was to celebrate the life and work of a great individual, it was also lovely to be able to thank all those people who have contributed and helped make HWNS what it is today.

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House With No Steps creates opportunities for people with a disability to make the most of their abilities and live full, valued and productive lives.



Heather

Heather loves singing and has been known to break into song at any time. She also loves animals, especially horses.

Heather has an acquired brain stem injury. Her mother, Betty, recalls, "It was the month before her 16th birthday. She was walking her pony out after showing him at a carnival. I heard

the commotions and ran back to see what was happening and she was on the ground. We think the horse was spooked. He had reared up and fell back. As the horse was trying to get up he rolled over Heather."

Heather was in a coma for 4 months. When she woke she couldn't talk or walk. Heather has undergone a long process of rehabilitation but due to the brain stem injury, further complications set her back.

When we first met Heather she was withdrawn and depressed. The day program she had been attending had lost some funding and could no longer support her. Fortunately we were able to offer her a place in HWNS Day Respite Centre in Parkes so that Heather could remain close to her elderly mother.

It's hard to believe that the lady who laughs and jokes today is the same as the one that was initially introduced to us. She loves the activity and stimulation,

especially the grooming days when she gets to have a manicure and facial. She feels so special when her make up is done afterwards and she can sing a song with the air of the superstar she is. Her self esteem has clearly flourished.

Heather has found wonderful friends and people who support her to reach for the stars. Despite the adversity she has faced Heather can now look toward her future with a sense of fun and enthusiasm.



Heather loves cooking days



Alex

Alex is a cheerful and friendly lady. She loves a chat and would stop to talk to anyone about anything at anytime. Alex also loves animals, especially birds.

Alex was a cheerful little girl too. Unfortunately, when she was 4 years old she became very ill. Alex suffered very bad epilepsy and as a result of the

severity of her seizures, she developed an intellectual disability.

Alex now lives in a HWNS group home in Sydney. When she was first introduced to us she would not interact with others and wanted to spend most of her time in her room. The medication she was taking for epilepsy made her feel lethargic and moody all the time. The staff never knew what to expect from Alex – either abusive behaviour or being ignored all together.

HWNS staff were determined and tried everything to coax Alex out of her shell. They recognised that it was important to have her medication reviewed and changed, which ultimately had a major impact on her life.

After this breakthrough and with much patience and perseverance, staff were able to enter Alex's world.

The transformation of Alex was well underway and it didn't take long before she was socialising without encouragement and showing enthusiasm in all aspects of her life.

Alex now has friends, a job in a packaging business, does her own banking, travels independently on public transport and can take herself to her local park to relax and feed the birds, which she loves to do the most. Alex has achieved so much for herself just by being given the opportunity to do so.





Jamie

Jamie is a 27 year old true country larrikin. He was a Jackaroo for three years after finishing agricultural college. Jamie is a meat man and for a good time he can't go past a BBQ and a good practical joke to get the party going.

Tragically, Jamie had a motorcycle accident in 2001. He suffered severe brain injury and was left with a speech impediment and some paralysis down the right side of his body. He has to drag his right leg to get around and has very little use of his right arm.

Following a fall a few years later where he hit his head again and then an assault the year after that, he sustained further head injuries, which have led to behavioural and problem solving difficulties. He has needed 24 hour support for the past two years.

Jamie now lives in HWNS supported accommodation in Morayfield where he is learning how to do things with limited mobility, receive support to access the community and rebuild his self esteem.

When Jamie was first introduced to HWNS he was withdrawn and depressed. He wasn't interested in communicating with anyone and kept to himself.

After much patience and perseverance by all parties Jamie is back on track to becoming his old playful self again. He now delights in playing pranks on the staff whenever he gets the opportunity. He has goals once again and would like to pursue his interest in leather works.

Jamie is also well on his way to achieving his primary goal to live independently so he can move closer to his father in Toowoomba. He is doing really well learning how to cook with only one hand and can proudly prepare a mean hamburger once again.



Stuart

Stuart is such a happy go lucky man. Always positive and friendly. He loves dirt bikes and when he is not watching them on TV he has an old bike which he tinkers with in his spare time.

Stuart has an intellectual disability and some mental health issues. Unfortunately, his extreme generosity and friendliness can make him vulnerable and therefore

he requires support to access the community.

Stuart and his family came to visit HWNS Summerland House in Alstonville for a vacation together a few years back. It was then that he fell in love with the place and decided that this was the place where he wanted to live. When his parents passed away recently his yearning to be a part of the Summerland family grew even more.

Stuart tried a group home arrangement but that didn't work out. He moved in with his sister-in-law for a while but what Stuart really needed was a permanent living situation with professional care and support. Fortunately, he became eligible for emergency response funding and Stuart was placed to live in the emergency respite centre at Summerland House.

When he first arrived he was anxious and unsure. Stuart really started to shine when he was given the opportunity to gain work experience in the fruit packing

shed. He works really hard and is now one of the best workers. His friendly persona is thriving and he enjoys meeting with his co-workers at the café for a catch up and chat.

Stuart is so happy now. He has a job, friends and the opportunity to go on social outings. Stuart is also learning a variety of new tasks which have set him on the road to reaching his goal to live independently with minimal support.



Stuart loves catching up with his co-workers in the café



Joel

Joel has such an engaging personality. It's the little things that he finds so much joy in. He has a fantastic sense of humour too. His one-liners are delivered with such comedic timing and precision that the smallest and most ordinary things can seem hilarious.

Joel finds it hard to sustain this positivity and tempo for long periods of time though. Joel has Smith-Magenis Syndrome, which is a rare and complex developmental disorder that affects many parts of the body, causes sleep disturbances and sometimes makes it hard for Joel to gain control over his emotions.

Since Joel has been attending a HWNS day program at Wollongong he has really turned a corner. He used to get very distressed when he couldn't communicate what he wanted or needed. Being able to help him deal with the stress when he couldn't get his message across has been a real breakthrough. An even bigger success is that staff were able to help him prepare and transition into an independent living arrangement in a HWNS group home.

Preparation is of the utmost importance for people with Smith-Magenis Syndrome and requires perseverance and patience.

Joel can celebrate his new independent, full and valued life. He now does volunteer work for Meals on Wheels. He delights in yelling with great joy at every delivery "Meals on Wheels. You better hurry up, your meal's getting cold". We have also just placed him to do some work experience in an Auto Wreckers – his dream job. He really loves cars and is so excited to have the opportunity to be surrounded by them.

To read more about these inspirational individuals and how supporting HWNS helps many others, please visit www.hwns.com.au/personal-stories

Planning for Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH)

At HWNS we focus on an individual's abilities and what they can achieve. This positive, empowering approach has always been our hallmark. We listen to what the people we support want to achieve in their life and if possible, provide the stepping stones for them to get there.

More than just offering a service and program to support people, we enable them to take positive control over their own lives and foster self esteem and self worth.

We are absolutely committed to person centred planning. Rather than using a one size fits all approach, person

centred planning is about providing opportunities for people we support to decide how their service and support will be structured.

We use a variety of tools to gain information about the person's hopes and needs for their lives. One of these tools, PATH uses both words and drawings to map out their dreams, where their life is at now and actions which will lead them to their goals. Planning is something we all do in our lives. It's no different for people with disabilities. In fact, planning is more important when more obstacles are in the way because it helps to keep sight of aspirations and provides encouragement to keep going.



News from the Regions

Sydney

Sydney is embarking on an exciting emergency response pilot program designed to provide timely intervention where support arrangements for clients are in danger of reaching a crisis.

We have also commenced a new pilot program known as Parent Assisted Residential Accommodation (PARA) in which flexible working hours and active involvement of families in the management and service delivery will be monitored to assess the impacts on client outcomes and costs.

A new Disability Support Worker forum has been established to provide front-line staff an opportunity to share experiences and knowledge, network and provide direct feedback to management.

The Live It Up group has just returned from a whirlwind 2 week tour of Tasmania. Sixteen clients were able to participate.

Northern NSW

Summerland House has produced a new calendar featuring 13 inspirational supported employees – available now for \$10 each. The HWNS Macadamia nut range is also selling well. Email northernnsw@hwns.com.au or phone 02 66280610 to place an order for Christmas!

Work is underway to expand the growing area of our retail nursery.

Cawleys Cottage Gift Shop is halfway through their extension.

We have just been awarded a Lawns & Maintenance contract with North Coast Community Housing. This is exciting news for the establishment of this new business.

We are hosting the new Mummy's Markets (all things for kids) at Summerland House.

Turning Point Café & Function Centre hosted the inaugural 'Rockability' Concert for young adults with a disability. This will now be a monthly event due to its popularity.

The ADHC funded, purpose built Autism House in Lismore is now complete. Three young people have successfully transitioned into their new home.

An initiative prompted by our family surveys to establish better relationships between clients, families and HWNS was delivered - The Mid North Coast Family Fun Day. All that attended found it to be a great success!

Queensland

Disability Action Week was celebrated at the Logan Village Respite Centre with arts and crafts, stalls and food for all. Several local schools attended, as did Logan City Councillor Phil Pidgeon.

Post School Service Burleigh is hard at work on its end of year performance through the Drama and Movement Program. Our drama groups have developed a play and musical performance which will take centre stage at Merrymount College on the evening of December 15th.

Post School Service clients are busy creating beautiful Christmas baubles. These creations will adorn our Christmas tree before they are offered for sale toward the end of the year at the Christmas decoration stall.

Post School Service at Doonan has undergone major renovation to make the facility user friendly and accessible. In addition, a grant was received from local council to develop a sensory room, which has been suitably been

named the 'Sanctuary Room' due to the serenity that it evokes. The grounds were also upgraded with help from supported employees and volunteers. Many local businesses contributed to the development by assisting with funding, goods and services.

Gold Coast Business Service has invested in a new printer which will increase quality and production time.

Retiree Barry Maloney has organised a charity event called Santa on Bikes to help raise money for House With No Steps at Doonan. Hundreds of people are set to dress up as Santa's little helpers and ride their push bikes for a couple of kilometres to a local park for carolling celebrations. Four events have been scheduled at Tewantin, Coolum, Mooloolaba and Caloundra - to take place between December 12th-20th. We hope to raise \$30,000. To find out more, call Barry Maloney on 0412 832 832.

Western NSW

The first group home in Cowra is now open with 4 clients in residence.

The site for the second high medical needs group home in Cowra has been identified and building should commence in the next two months.

Little Learners Early Intervention Centre held its first gathering for new families who are caring for a child with Down Syndrome. Parents were given the opportunity to share their stories, ideas and ask each other questions about medical issues, developmental stages and other activities. We were also fortunate enough to have two adult HWNS supported employees who have Down Syndrome come and talk to us about their lives. Thank you Paul and Tara. The families have expressed an interest to meet on a regular basis and expand the network.

Post School Program clients entered different types of craft into the section of "items made by a person with a disability" at the Forbes show. The decorated library bags, scrap booking and handcrafted jewellery box all took out prizes.

continued overleaf



Southern NSW

Our Volunteer Program has been launched. The Wollongong Hawks successfully helped spread the message regarding the need for volunteers to work with people with a disability. We have had numerous requests from the general public since.

Corporate Sponsor, Savvyfitness, is developing a fitness program designed specifically for people with a disability. They have also agreed to develop a wellness program for staff across the region.

In addition to this they are running a fundraising program called 'Savvy

Survivor – Summer Series' from December 12th – 18th. All proceeds raised are to support HWNS Southern NSW region. This program is run over 7 days with an emphasis on teamwork, fun and participation. Anyone interested in being involved, can contact our Southern NSW office on 02 42210300.

Hunter

Intensive planning is currently underway in preparation for an exciting new pilot project - Independent Living Support Initiative. Regional HWNS staff will

work with Down Syndrome Australia to develop tools aimed at promoting independence and building and sustaining circles of support which assist individuals with a disability to live full and valued lives as part of their community.



Mustang Paulie



Jenny was delighted to tie in 1st place

House Idol 2010

Another year – another fantastic line up of stars.

Every year HWNS Sydney region hosts the much anticipated House Idol event where supported employees and clients from all regions are able to enter, show off their talents and entertain the crowd.

We rolled out the red carpet again this year on 1st October. What a show it was! Glen Street Theatre donated their performance space again – and we nearly filled the theatre!

This year we had ribbon dance, aerobics, dynamic duos, group performances and lots of terrific singing.

We always say that the judges for this event have the hardest job in the world – well this year it was especially true. That is why so many split prizes were given.

Warringah Council sponsored the medals, which each participant proudly received, and two Warringah Mayor Encouragement Awards. Mayor Michael Regan attended yet again to show his support and cheer on the participants.

Congratulations to the winners:

FIRST PLACE

- Jenny Moss singing Kumbiyah
- Community Participation Program Group singing and dancing to Mustang "Paulie" version of Mustang Sally

SECOND PLACE

Brook Crowley (Brenda support) singing Picture

THIRD PLACE

- Peter Flynn singing Fly Me To The Moon
- Charlotte Addison singing 9 to 5
- Susan Pilkington miming and dancing to Bad
- Erica Halvorsen Ribbon Dancing

RUNNERS UP

- Neil Doland singing You Raise Me Up
- Janice Coleman and Davina Wilson singing and dancing to Twist And Shout
- Jimmy Pollard singing True Colours

WARRINGAH MAYOR'S ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD:

- The Café Crew dancing to She's A Maniac
- Nick Lewis singing Age Of Reason



Making the most of our abilities

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