

get about

term 4
issue 65



[Family Camp](#)

[Senior Mobility Camp](#)

[PUPdate](#)

Note from the Editor

Dear CMSers,

In this edition of Get About we have an article from one of our regular contributors, Ella about her experiences on the Guide Dogs 101 camp. We are also pleased to introduce a new contributor to Get About – Charlotte. Charlotte is a first time contributor and has shared her short story with us that was published in the Write4Fun book 'Top Secret'. Charlotte's story was entered into a competition and won a place in this wonderful book.

You will find some great tips in an article on using public transport and for those of you that love technology, you can find an interesting article on travelling with a GPS, or the old school way of finding your way around with a Melway.

Zoron has been reading up on some scientific research and tells us about a wonderful new study that shows us how dog and human heart beats align when we pat our faithful furry companions.

We hear from a parent who attended our recent family camp and we get an insight into our City and Suburbs Senior Mobility Camp held in the September school holidays.

I hope you enjoy reading all we have in store for you and we look forward to receiving your contributions to the next edition of your Get About newsletter. ●

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Paula Foote



Dates for Diary

Saturday 10 December
All Abilities Soccer

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Format Reminder

A reminder that if this 'Get About' newsletter is not in your preferred format, or if you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, please contact our referrals officer on 03 9854 4467.

We provide standard print, Large print (font size 18), Audio CD, Braille and Email formats.

Was it all just a bad dream?

By Charlotte Dougherty

The chain tightens around my rib cage. My breathing becomes heavier every time my heart beats. I lift my head to see a young figure racing towards me and my head drops!

I wake to the sound of computer clicks, the chain still around me. A large object is heading my way. I am hanging way above my liking.

I fling my arms towards the large wrecking ball, my hands hit it and my arms drop, hitting my sides. It's getting closer and closer and when it's just centimetres away, I duck and fall out of the chain into icy cold water. I wade quickly towards the metal floor.

A large man is like an electric shock heading towards me. I fling my entire body out of the small room. I get away in just enough time, missing his hand gripping my arm. I turn up a few kilometres away, after about two hours. I can't believe just bumping into the wrong person can get you kidnapped.

I wake up with sun coming into my bedroom window and it feels like I have had a bad, very bad dream, but I just can't be sure ... ●



Published in the Write4Fun book

“ **Top Secret**

There is more information available on the Write4fun competition

www.write4fun.net

IMPORTANT CHANGE TO GETABOUT

In 2017, GetAbout will be moving to a digital format. Going digital means our newsletter will be accessible, timely and environmentally friendly. The content of GetAbout won't change: we will continue to let you know about our upcoming camps, group programs and information. GetAbout will also be available on our website.

If you wish to continue receiving GetAbout, please provide us with your email address to either CSAdmin@guidedogsvictoria.com.au or via phone 9854 4467.

Alternative formats are still available in audio CD, large print and braille. Please contact us to request these formats.

Family Camp

By Marnie Roth

On 19 August, 13 families gathered at City CYC for the CMS family camp.

We were excited to have a CBD location that allowed us to immerse parents into O&M sessions involving busy road crossings and various forms of public transport.

Families experienced how we work with their child/children to teach O&M concepts and skills in this dynamic environment while having lots of fun along the way. Parents were also given opportunities to attend information sessions to learn more about the services offered by GDV and how they can best support their children to get the most from an O&M program.

On the final day families competed against each other in an 'Amazing Race' using the skills they had developed to travel around Melbourne CBD.

“ Families experienced how we work with their child/children to teach O&M concepts

What the parents thought...

To have the chance to work with your team and our children together on the camp and learn terminology and skills that we can use was a valuable experience.

*To watch Nicole interact with other children and then to form a bond with Zoe was one of my favorite parts. For so long Nicole has felt like just the sibling of her visually impaired brothers and to finally see her be able to identify herself as a friend of other children, and make some bonds was great. **Rachel***

*Thank you so very, very much for inviting us to be a part of the recent family camp, the whole family had a fabulous time and we all learnt loads. You guys do an amazing job to keep our kids on track to independence with loads of new experiences. Now we know why Malachy comes home so exhausted from camp! **Allison***

*The camp was fantastic! It was great being with other families having the same problems we deal with having a child with a vision impairment. The staff at Guide Dogs are awesome and made the camp amazing fun. **Walsh Family** ●*



Highlights from the family camp



“City and the Suburbs” Senior Mobility Camps

By Simon McDonald-Kerr

September holidays saw the arrival of our “City and the Suburbs” Senior Mobility Camp.

Starting in Prahran, this camp provided secondary age students with a great opportunity to negotiate one of the busiest and most dynamic environments in Melbourne. For many of our students, these destinations were new and unfamiliar.

Prahran was the perfect starting place to test the student’s travel skills. It’s not only close to the Melbourne CBD but also has access to both train and tram networks. Students were also able to build independent travel skills and invaluable experience that will set students up to travel safely and independently to work, university or TAFE in the near future.

Students were given the opportunity to travel to an activity of their choice including BOUNCE Inc. in Glen Iris, Strike Bowling in Melbourne Central, ice-skating at the Docklands and Inflatable World in Oakleigh.

“Competition levels ran high and students were challenged to travel in small groups to a variety of suburbs with only the destination given.

Competition levels ran high and students were challenged to travel in small groups to a variety of suburbs with only the destination given. This required the team to work out where they needed to go and how they were going to get there safely whilst having to catch at least two forms of public transport.

If this wasn’t enough, the students had one final task to complete: a race to see how many suburbs sharing



a name with an AFL team they could travel to on the Public Transport network in under 2.5 hours! All activities required students to work together as a team to plan, research and support each other’s safe travel.

We look forward to seeing each one of the students who attended using their new found experience, skills and knowledge to start travelling to some new and unfamiliar areas in the new future.

If this sounds like a challenge you would like to take on, and if you would love to meet a great group of people with similar O&M goals to you, then look out for the Term 1 edition of GetAbout with all the details of our programs for 2017. ●

My Experience of the Guide Dogs Camp

Written by Ella

On 27 October 2016, I attended the Guide Dogs Camp with five other children where we learnt how to handle Guide Dogs if we ever got one ourselves.

On 27 October 2016, I attended the Guide Dogs Camp with five other children where we learnt how to handle Guide Dogs if we ever got one ourselves. We were divided into two groups according to our experience. I was in the group that had had more experience and there was only one other person in my group.

On the first day, I went on a long walk with Michael, who was the other person in my group. Paula had shown us a map of the route that we were to follow in preparation for the walk in the afternoon. Earlier, we had been learning how to make the dogs sit and how to control them when they were only on a lead. We had also practiced with a toileting harness. But Billie, the dog that I was working with at the time did not want to go. However, just after we had crossed the first road, Billie stopped. It was obvious what he wanted to do, so we urged him on several times.

The next day, we learnt the travel route to the Fat Penguin café. We did it in groups of three in the morning, then again all together in the afternoon. I had a hot chocolate both times. I was just craving chocolate.

The camp wasn't all about work. That night, two girls Alayna and Jasmine came to my room for a party. We had the original Grease soundtrack up as loud as it would go on my Daisy player. We were doing lots of singing and dancing. I was singing so loudly that I had no voice when I went home. All of a sudden, there was a knock on the door. It was Paula! 'It



sounds like there's a party going on in here,' she said. 'So I think you need some chocolate!' She had two bags of chocolate frogs. We got two each. It was just what I needed.

The next day, we again walked down to the Fat Penguin café together. It was the last day of the camp, but the instructors attempted to trick us. Instead of turning right at High Street, we had to cross over and find the car from there. Every one of us was able to find our way back. Ha Ha to those instructors.

When our parents came, we had to teach them how to control the dogs on a lead. I had had a Golden Retriever called Odette, but I had swapped with another girl and I was working with a dog called Tarnie. My mum said that it was different to working with a normal dog because of the different things that you had to do with it. For example, my dog at home is used to someone putting a finger up when they want him to sit. But with a Guide Dog, you check their sit by gently touching them on the rump.

All in all, it was a fantastic camp. I learnt a lot and I am sure it will help me in the future. I am extremely grateful to those who helped me learn everything that I did. ●

Making the most of GPS technology

By Danielle

Remember the Melway? Do you still have one in your car or at home?

For a long time, travelling to any place new meant researching the route by studying the Melway or other similar map. In fact, learning to make the most of a Melway was something that was often included in O&M lessons. But let's face it, most of our kids wouldn't even know what a Melway is!

GPS such as Google Maps, is an invaluable tool for both drivers and pedestrians. Drivers can use it to plan how to get from point A to point B, add in stops along the way, find the closest supermarket, calculate driving time and distance and even get the most up to date traffic conditions. Pedestrians can use it for many of the same reasons and with Melbourne's public transport timetable integrated, use it to work out the best route options on your preferred mode of transport.

Using the GPS during family outings is a great way to teach kids various concepts such as time, distance, directions and landmarks. Have a conversation about the information you are putting into the GPS (the address) and the information

that the GPS is providing (such as distance, suggested route and travel time). Make a game of predicting your arrival time, discuss why you might take a different route to the one suggested or examine what exactly does the second exit at a round-a-bout mean? When time allows, plan an outing using the GPS to get you there, or perhaps use it on a familiar route to see what extra information you can learn? Perhaps you could even integrate the GPS route with a good old fashioned map, like the Melway? ●



Travelling safely on public transport

By Danielle

Here are some valuable tips on keeping safe when travelling on public transport, provided by PTV.

- On long or curved platforms and stops wait close to the front of the train or tram so the driver can see you. Yellow or white markers on platforms indicate where the train will stop.
- Leave plenty of time for your journey so you're not rushing to meet your train, tram or bus.
- If there are other passengers on the train, sit near them, not by yourself.
- All stations are well lit and monitored by closed-circuit television cameras on platforms and at

station entrances. This footage is monitored by control room staff located at Premium Stations.

- All non-staffed stations have communication links to these control rooms via the emergency button. By using this link you can communicate directly with staff equipped to deal with incidents.
- Premium stations are staffed from the first train in the morning until the last train at night. Additional stations are staffed in the weekday morning peak and in the afternoon peak.
- Trains, trams and buses stop for a relatively short time. Be prepared to get off safely by allowing plenty of time to gather your belongings.
- Download the PTV app to make your journey smoother – get access to timetables, route planning, information about service disruptions, the ability to call PTV from the app, real time

information for trains, trams and buses and more. ●



Road crossings and kids

By Danielle

The Raising Children’s Network is a great resource and includes some valuable information on age appropriate road crossing skills.

It recommends that until children are around 10–11 years of age, they need to be accompanied by an adult to cross roads. When your child is actually ready depends on how much experience and practise they have had. You can help by talking about the decisions you are making – where is the safest place to cross the road, why it is the best place, when is it safe to cross, if it isn’t safe, why not?

As parents, you are the greatest resource your children have in learning about pedestrian safety. The Network states:

”Your child will learn about pedestrian safety by watching you, so use safe behaviour around cars, roads, footpaths and car parks. Always stop, look, listen and think before crossing a road, and use

pedestrian crossings wherever possible. Always cross at the safest point, even if you have to walk further out of your way. And if you’re crossing at the lights, wait for the green man.”

For kids who have low vision or who are blind, extra information about the road crossing environment will be required and may not be gained just by “watching you”. This may include:

- Understanding the different types of roads
- The different types of intersections
- The way the traffic moves at these intersections
- Establishing a routine to cross safely
- The different types of crossings
- What to do if something goes wrong

If you are not confident teaching your child these additional skills, an Orientation and Mobility Specialist can work with you and your child to teach you both the best way to learn more about pedestrian safety. http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/pedestrian_safety.html ●

Pupdate: improve your health by patting your dog.

By Zoron

Dogs and humans have lived together for tens of thousands of years.

We (dogs) have been useful to humans in so many ways. We have helped humans hunt, we have protected humans from predators and we have kept humans warm by sleeping with them.

“ We have also helped humans keep clean by eating food scraps and rubbish.

One of our most valuable services to humans is to be their companions. We love people! Most dogs just want to love their human family and please them.

Scientists have recently discovered something pretty amazing. They have found that when a dog and their human companion are in close proximity to each other, like when we are having a cuddle, our heart

rates lower and beat in sync with each other. How cool is that? We actually reduce each other's stress levels.

Scientists have also found that people who have suffered from heart attacks recover more quickly if they own a dog! When humans pat their dogs, they release feel good chemicals in their brains that actually reduce stress levels. So patting your dog is not only fun, it is proven scientifically to be a healthy thing to do.

If you are interested in this study, you can watch a great video on the Pedigree Hearts Aligned webpage. <http://www.pedigree.com.au/heartsaligned/>

So now you know; if you are feeling stressed, get your best doggy friend and sit down and spend some time to pat your dog. ●



CHANGES TO CAMPS AND GROUP PROGRAMS

2017 will bring about some exciting changes to camps and group programs that have come about due to feedback from students and parents. These changes are targeted at providing better opportunities for O&M skill development for each student while maintaining the great social experiences many people have told us they value so much. We hope these changes provide greater learning opportunities in a group setting that complement the skills being learnt in individual programs. Look out for our first addition of Getabout in 2017 for further details, dates and times of each program.

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If you wish to contact the CMS team or would like to ask about our programs, please ring the phone number of the instructor you wish to speak to, or alternatively you can email: cms@guidedogsvictoria.com.au

Feedback?

If you have anything to contribute to this newsletter, please feel free to contact us with your piece.

We welcome all contributions from anyone.

Please either contact or email our referrals officer with your contributions as below:

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phone: 03 9854 4467

If you wish to contact anyone from the CMS team or would like to ask questions regarding any of our programs, please ring the phone number of the instructor you wish to speak to or alternatively you can send an email to: cms@guidedogsvictoria.com.au ●

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**Wishing you a safe
and happy
festive season from
Guide Dogs Victoria**



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