

Testimonial

Will Jones

Indigenous Support Unit

Crèche and Kindergarten Queensland

Parenting from the 'Inside Out'- a Parenting Course with a Difference.....

Long have all peoples irrespective of race, ethnicity or creed honoured and valued Parents and families as children's first and lifelong teacher. Regardless of culture, parents throughout the world share the same basic goals for their children. Deep inside every parent wants to be the best parent they can, in fact they all want to be great parents.

Dr. Margie Carter and John McArdle held true to this and believed that there was way to empower these aspirations of all parents with a unique parenting program that focused not on formulas to address behaviour as if it was one long shopping list of 'how to do's', but rather a relationship and character building program of guidance and leadership for the whole family and hence whole communalities.

During the C & K Early Childhood Conference in the Torres Strait on Thursday Island in December 2006, Dr Margie Carter presented a snap shot of her and John Mc Ardle's 'Five Faces of Parenting' Program during a community forum.

At this community forum, the participants identified an interest in this new innovative parenting program that honoured parents and families as the first and life long teacher. Participants also reflected that it mirrored the traditional Torres Strait Island culture with respect to the model of leadership and guidance through 'training the next generation of Elders and 'Olders' to become leaders and guides for their successive generations.

Train the Trainer parenting program-'The Five Faces of Parenting', empowers parents and families with wise leadership in their service to their children, their family and its well being, and their engagement and aspirations for education.

The Five Faces of Parenting Program rolled out in the Torres Strait with Enid Tom an Elder from Kaiwalagal Aboriginal Corporation the traditional land owners of Nurapai (Horn Island) opened the workshops at the Wongai Hotel on Horn Island.

There were a total of 9 participants- from Child Health, Child Safety, Youth and Recreation, Child Care, Outside School Hours Care and the Kaiwalagal, and other community members representing Thursday Island and Horn Island.

It was presented by Dr Margie Carter with support from the ISU- Elders- Felicia Hancox and Eileen Williams and ISU ECECC 's [Early Childhood Education and Care Consultants] Kellie Dwyer and Will Jones, over four days with the final day bringing everyone together to discuss the outcomes, suggestions for improvement and the way forward from here.

During the week the ladies from Horn Island discussed starting the program with parents as early as possible during the weekly Women's Social Night evening and the importance of including fathers in the program.

The Model for implementation for 'Train the Trainer' the 'Five Faces of Parenting' draws on the power of the group to strengthen each other through sharing the collective 'pearls of wisdom' from shared real life experience within the trust and safety of the learning circle.

It is through combining individual community's, traditional, cultural, family and parenting practices within a framework of the Five Faces [Wise leader, Astute Manager, Teacher, Monitor, Nurturer] that empowers family engagement, well being, guidance and leadership. It is the parents not the facilitators who brainstorm challenges and aspirations of parenting.

'The program will be rolled out to Hammond Island and all of the outer islands in a series of Cluster visits starting in June.

This has been funded by a DEST PSPI project to improve parent participation in Early Childhood to improve educational outcomes.

The photo is the final day with Margie where we were all encouraged to paint our own parent's mask- with each colour representing a certain passion within our parenting style and leadership. We then discussed why we had painted the masks this way and how it reflected the parts of our parenting style, beliefs and aspirations.

Our last session together mirrored both the intellectual and spiritual context of this parenting and leadership program. The 'Five Faces' ensure there is no end to possibilities regardless of the time and space or century.....

'If you truly want to make a difference in your parent community seriously consider The Five Faces of Parenting.' (Dr Margaret Carter)