The **Linking & Learning Festival** for 2011 was held at the Mornington Racecourse on 25 August and was considered a great success by all involved.

This was an opportunity for schools and agencies from Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula to get together to share information and network on the topic of health promotion in schools. This included workshops around topics that had been identified by school staff as being of interest to them, especially young people’s mental health. **Communities That Care® has prioritised depression as a peninsula-wide prevention target.** Sessions were held on cyber safety, mental health first aid, engaging parents in the school and School Focused Youth Service funded projects.

The event was opened with an extended *Welcome to Country* which put aboriginal connection to the local land into context. Keynote speaker, Lawry St Leger, spoke about school health education and promotion, particularly in relation to positive mental health. Attendees had opportunities to attend three of the many workshops offered over the course of the day. Entertainment during the lunch break was provided by the Mornington Secondary College Victoria Police Cadet Drum Corps and participants were able to wander around the agency stalls, collecting information on services/programs offered.

The positive response to the day suggests this may become an annual event. Thanks to Peninsula Health, School Focused Youth Service, Brotherhood of St Laurence, LLEN, headspace, Department of Education & Early Childhood Development and Mornington Peninsula Shire for organising and funding this event. For further information about the **Linking & Learning Festival**, please contact Judi Adams on 5950 1655 or adamja@mornpen.vic.gov.au.
Recenty, **FReeZA** has run two very successful events with a committee of new volunteers — for some of them it was their first experience of running a gig!

Both these events were well supported by young people from the local region.

As part of their involvement on the **FReeZA** committee, members take part in various training activities which further develop their skills in event management.

**FReeZA**, an innovative youth development program funded by the Office for Youth, provides young people between the ages of 12 and 25 with the opportunity to attend affordable and accessible music and cultural events.

**FReeZA** attracts over 140,000 young people each year to events that take place in safe, fully supervised, drug, alcohol and smoke-free venues across Victoria. It addresses the peninsula-wide Communities That Care® risk factor of perceived availability of alcohol and other drugs.

When young people participate in a **FReeZA** committee, they have the chance to make decisions and lead in the staging of events, while also broadening networks within their community by connecting with local businesses, schools and other organisations.

Being part of a **FReeZA** committee also builds self confidence, creates and develops professional relationships, and provides opportunities to explore various education and employment pathways in the music industry.

For further information about **FReeZA**, contact Jackie Rickard on 5950 1692 or Jackie.Rickard@mornpen.vic.gov.au.

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**Young Parents Are Good Parents Program**

The **Young Parents Are Good Parents** Program was developed as a partnership between the Mornington Peninsula Shire’s **Youth Support** team, Anglicare, Parentzone and Mornington Peninsula Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Service.

This program was developed as a strategy for young single parents — a group identified as experiencing the Communities That Care® risk factor of low community attachment. It also addresses the protective factor community opportunities for prosocial involvement.

The program provides a supportive young parents’ group and provides these young people with opportunities to develop personal and parenting skills, build stronger social and support networks and contribute to the local community.

Participants have been offered the chance to participate in parenting workshops as well as training and skill development opportunities that assist with career development. Training opportunities from this program include responsible service of alcohol, workplace first aid and administration training.

This program has had a great impact on participants. The young people were motivated to form an advisory or steering committee which has now mobilised to broaden the program impact beyond the core group.

This group successfully applied to receive a grant from Youth Foundations (a partnership of the Victorian Government, Bendigo Bank Group and the local community) to run a free family fun day in the Rosebud community. The group is currently planning the event which is scheduled to take place later this year.

For more details about the **Young Parents are Good Parents Program**, contact Sue Hannah on 5986 3585 or hanns@mornpen.vic.gov.au.
From Friday afternoon on 2 September through to the evening of Saturday 3 September, we ran our first ever Wild Life Camp with 18 young people and a significant other—most of them were parents, but a sister and cousin also came along to join the fun.

The after-school hours Wild Life Program runs for one school term and is offered at various Mornington Peninsula primary schools. This program actively addresses the Communities That Care® peninsula-wide risk factor family conflict and Local Area Group protective factors, viz. family opportunities/rewards for prosocial involvement, community opportunities for prosocial involvement and family attachment.

The grade six students from Balnarring Primary School and Red Hill Consolidated School enjoyed a sleep-over at Shed 11 on the Friday night.

We’d commenced with preparing dinner, having a swim at Pelican Park, watching a film and then playing some games. A big breakfast for the young people and their loved ones at 8 am on Saturday fuelled them up for a bus trip to the Carlton Gardens in the city. On the way, we played games and continued the fun with team building activities when we arrived.

Some of these included: Save The World with a beach ball (see photo) and Hand Tie where the young person and their significant other had to work out how to separate themselves without untying the string that held their hands together.

Egypt was mesmerising in 3D at Imax Cinemas! Then lunch was enjoyed in beautiful sunshine in the gardens before the young people and their significant others teamed up to explore the Melbourne Museum together.

Finally, it was time to head home. This was our first camp and we have received very positive feedback from everyone that took part. All of the parents and young people enjoyed the opportunity to spend the day with each other. A comment that probably best summarised most parents’ feelings was: “Because we have such ‘busy lives’ sometimes we need to take the time out to spend quality time together”.

For more information about the Wild Life Program contact Mornington Peninsula Shire’s Youth Strategic Planning and Support’s Youth Programs on 5950 1666.
School Focused Youth Service

Radio Eastbourne

One new project was approved for funding at the most recent School Focused Youth Service Local Advisory Group meeting last month. This was for Radio Eastbourne, an exciting and challenging project put together by Eastbourne Primary School whereby they will be starting their own radio station in conjunction with the Rosebud West Community Renewal and Rosebud Secondary College.

Students will get the opportunity to prepare and present shows that can be transmitted for a radius of one kilometre from the school so that parents can listen whilst they are picking up their children. These shows will give the students a chance to increase their literacy skills and practise their public speaking.

The connections with community, targeting the Communities That Care® risk factor of low community attachment, will allow for information to be relayed by the students to the wider community promoting local events and providing a forum to discuss local issues. Stay tuned!

For more information about the project or School Focused Youth Service, please contact Judi Adams on 5950 1655 or adamja@mornpen.vic.gov.au.

ConnectYOU Photovoice Project Update

Photovoice is a methodology mostly used in the field of education, which combines photography with grassroots social action. The unique form of data gathered through the Photovoice project means that qualitative rather than quantitative data analysis methods must be employed to gain a full and deep understanding of the views and opinions expressed by participants in their photographs and comments.

At the simplest level, qualitative analysis involves examining the assembled relevant data to determine how they answer the question(s) at hand.

As reported in the July issue of the newsletter, the ConnectYOU Photovoice project is progressing extremely well, with eight schools and two youth services from across the Mornington Peninsula and Frankston areas participating in the initiative.

To date, two of the scheduled three workshops have been held. These workshops focus on building the capacity of school and youth services staff in analysing the data collected from students as they complete Photovoice activities. The workshops were held in March and July, with the first of the newsletters for the project being disseminated in June.

Over the next few months, school visits will continue and the third of the workshops will be held in October. The project will conclude in an exhibition at the Frankston Arts Centre from 29 November. All participating groups will be provided with a report detailing analysis of data collected. These reports will form the basis of future work with schools and youth services in relevant areas. For more information about the ConnectYOU Photovoice project, please contact Erica on 5971 9121 or efairweather@phcn.vic.gov.au.

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