

NEWS

One step closer to respite

South Australian charity founded by Greek Australian entrepreneurs raises hope for autism and cerebral palsy families

ANASTASIA TSIRTSAKIS

Adelaide not-for-profit foundation Living Without Limits (LWL) went all out last week in its efforts to raise funds for families of children affected by autism and cerebral palsy.

Established in 2012 by SA business identities Steve Maras, George Yatzis and current chairman Phillip de Pinto, the foundation's fundraising dinner last Saturday put the final pieces of the jigsaw together that will realise a House of Respite based in Adelaide's Victor Harbor.

Speaking to *Neos Kosmos*, Mr Maras is eager to set the wheels in motion. "We've found through our journey that what's lacking here is a place where families of children afflicted by these conditions can go, because after all the monies that go to therapies and everything else,

there's no money left for people. They can never get away, or have a holiday like everyone else," he said.

The facility will be managed by one of South Australia's leading disability providers, while all costs will be accounted for, granting families the opportunity to get away at no personal cost.

Held at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre, the fundraising event saw 600 guests attend. A highlight of the night was a raffle for a brand new Toyota Yaris Ascent. In an unexpected act of generosity, the winner donated the vehicle back to the foundation to be re-auctioned, fetching another \$15,000.

Over 100 items were auctioned along with a number of generous donations, raising close to \$190,000, a figure Mr Maras said "exceeded all expectation before the night where the target was \$150,000".

A number of donors took the opportunity to pledge their assistance in establishing the facility by providing construction services with an estimated value of \$100,000.

"This is going to be more about the families, the children and the siblings of the children, because what we found is the concentration is



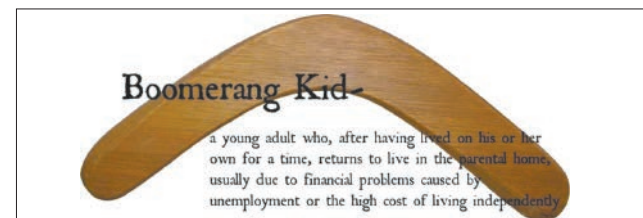
Steve Maras, co-founder of the Living Without Limits Foundation, at the fundraising dinner in Adelaide.

on the child that's impaired and the children that are able-bodied are probably not given the concentration and the focus," Mr Maras explained.

While the foundation is based in South Australia, this is an initiative the co-founder

says other states could benefit from. "This is a generic thing that can be rolled out anywhere," he said.

LWL expects to establish the property over the next twelve months, which will cater for about 50 families each year.



AGWS steps up for families facing crises

The Australian Greek Welfare Society (AGWS) will give a free workshop to assist adult children who have returned to the family home after a personal crisis.

The service, called 'Boomerang Children', is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services to deal with individuals dealing with marriage breakdown, loss of employment, mental or physical health issues, and their parents.

AGWS provides personal counselling as well as couples or family group combinations to help them manage their family relationships in an effort to empower these members of the Greek Australian community to reach their full potential and rehabilitate.

According to the 2011 Australian census, up to one-quarter of adult children aged 20-35 were still living at home with parents. The data indicated that the majority were male and were living with a single parent and had returned home as opposed to never having moved out - a situation familiar to the Greek community.

"Without a doubt, the main reason is because the cost of living is so high. This includes the cost of rent, utility bills, petrol and lifestyle expenses," says Kia Antoniadis, AGWS family counsellor.

"There are also high levels of unemployment, breakdown of relationships, divorce and addictive behaviours such as gambling, alcohol and drug abuse, making it even harder

for people to live independently, so the parental home is used as a back-up or safety net."

Some of the advantages can include sharing household and general living expenses, having company and the sense of security and protection. However, for the 'boomerang child', this return includes a loss of space, routine, lack of privacy, change of lifestyle and habits which could eventually lead to depression.

"It means having to be accountable and being treated as a 'child' again and challenges around becoming a carer of an elderly parent with complex health issues," adds Adonis Maglis, AGWS community services officer.

"If you find yourself in the situation you can always seek counselling or mediation support for issues of difference that cannot be resolved at AGWS."

The workshop will be conducted in Greek and is targeted to parents who are interested in learning more about the topic of 'Boomerang Children'. Bookings are essential. Call AGWS on 9388 9998.

* Speakers: Adonis Maglis, AGWS community services officer and Kia Antoniadis, AGWS family counsellor. Guest speaker Celia Walsh, client and stakeholder relations officer/mediator, Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria, Department of Justice & Regulation

When: Thursday 30 July 2015, 12.15 - 2.15pm.

Where: AGWS head offices, 7 Union St, Brunswick.

Preveli winemakers take top spot

Wild Thing makes judges' hearts sing

ANASTASIA TSIRTSAKIS

Family-run Preveli Wines in WA has been awarded the trophy for Best Sauvignon Blanc at this year's Boutique

Winemakers Awards of Australia.

The winning wine was their 2014 'Wild Thing' Sauvignon Blanc from Margaret River, which was voted best Sauvignon Blanc in Australia and New Zealand.

Owner Gregory Home said the award was particularly significant in that it gave

recognition to small producers, which he says "offer so much more personality and vibrancy than mass-produced styles for the supermarket chains".

"The ability to come into our cellar door in the seaside hamlet of Prevelly with sandy feet after a surf, chat to the owner, try the wine and

chew the fat about the region is something quite special in our busy lives today," Mr Home explains.

Established in 1995, the company was named after the Cretan village of Preveli, in honour of the monks who hid and assisted the escape of Allied troops after the Battle of Crete in 1941.

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Host: SBS Radio's Kyriakos Gold Judges: Dean Kalymniou, Helen Kapalos & George Donikian!

Guests: Anthea Sidiropoulos + Con Kalamaras & Ilias Chatziemmanouli

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