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December 2009

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# be.fore

## from the executive director

beyondempathy.org.au

“The secret of happiness is to find something more important than you are, then dedicate your life to it.”

- Philosopher Daniel Dennett

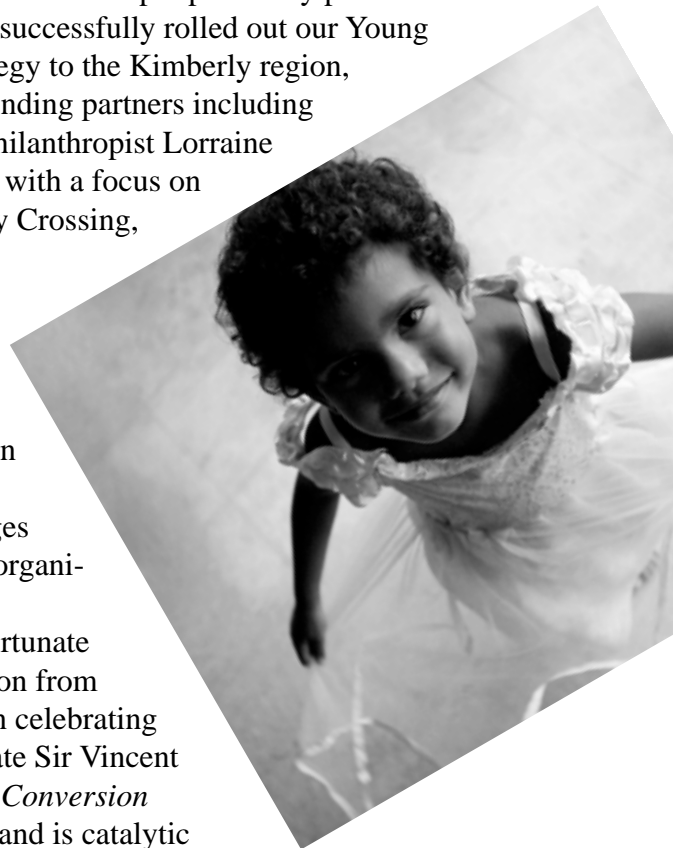
Since our last newsletter in May 2009, BE has kept up a steady pace and continued to mature and evolve. We have successfully rolled out our Young Mothers' and Parenting National Strategy to the Kimberly region, welcoming some new philanthropic funding partners including The Australian Children's Trust and Philanthropist Lorraine Warner. The Kimberly strategy begins with a focus on Derby and a roll out strategy to Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek and Kununurra.

We were fortunate to receive a significant two-year grant through the Jobs Fund (DEEWR) for our social enterprise strategy in Bowraville. This evolution of BE's arts intervention work and translation into the realm of social enterprise creates great challenges and growth opportunities for us as an organisation.

This year we have also been fortunate to receive a commemorative distribution from the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday of its founder, the late Sir Vincent Fairfax for *Conversion* in Bowraville. *Conversion* supports the social enterprise strategy and is catalytic in laying the foundations for our eight year commitment to working in Bowraville. Along with VFFF, the Caledonia Foundation has again committed to BE for the long haul in supporting our Bowraville strategy.

The Illawarra Feature Film project is creating a lot of excitement and some trailers were shown to participants at the 6<sup>th</sup> BE Leadership Camp in November, which were enthusiastically received. Phillip Crawford is directing the film project supported by Anna Cater as producer. We are indeed lucky to have renowned Australian filmmaker, Kriv Stenders, working with us as a creative mentor and guide on the film project.

We have held two BE Leadership Camps in August and in November, involv-



# be.fore

## from the executive director

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ing over 60 participants, artists and community support workers. Supported for the long haul by the Coca Cola Australia Foundation, BE's leadership program remains one of the most important, vital and quintessential elements of our program.

Another intensive series of workshop were held in Tennant Creek in September. Through these workshops we worked with over 250 participants with a whole of community approach through 50 individual workshops across 16 different art forms. We have produced 17 art products and three public outcomes in collaboration with six community partners.

The *Gula Gama-li* exhibition was a great success in Moree and a wonderful opportunity for both BE and the Moree community to reflect on and celebrate the last collaborative five years together. Our early childhood development book *Gaayli-Gal* (many children), which was inspired by the Moree community and created by artist, Wendy Kimpton, with local families, was launched in conjunction with the exhibition opening, along with our CD of children's songs *Gaayili Yugal* (child's song). Developed by musicians Simon Mel-



Kim McConville, Executive Director

lor and Rod Smith, the CD has been in high demand by early childhood centres across the state. The exhibition and launch of *Gaayli-Gal* and *Gaayili Yugal* marks the end of *Connections*, a three year FACHSIA funded project. Our work will be sustained in Moree in partnership with our friends and colleagues.

2009 will also see the completion of our big project *Out of the Blue* (OOTB), which has run on the NSW north coast, Armidale and the Illawarra. Overall, 420 young people were involved in 361 hours of workshops. 24 BE artists worked on the projects creating 20 quality art products launched in 12 public outcomes.

Our year has ended on a high note with the launch of the *BE wAy*. The toolkit details our model, way of working and strategies for individuals and communities to use so they might replicate the BE way of doing things in their own community, with their own emphasis and flavour.

There have been many amazing and inspiring highlights this year and none more important that the achievement of the young people we serve in our programs. These young people continue to humble us with their tenacity, resilience and beauty.

Warm Regards,  
Kim



# be.longing

## greetings and farewells

BE welcomed five new staff members to the Core Team and farewelled one since May 2009.

**Pia McBean** had been working part-time in administration since late 2008. This year her role has expanded to Personal Assistant to the Executive Director. Pia organises Kim, which gives Kim more time to spend fundraising and liaising with funders. In many ways, Pia is to Kim as the Pensieve is to Dumbledore – she remembers everything Kim needs to be reminded about. Pia organises the many facets of Kim's diary, prepares her meetings and travel, and reminds her what she needs to do when. On top of this, Pia also organises travel and accommodation – no small task in BE! – and sundry other office tasks. Pia also liaises with BE's supporters and founders to provide timely updates and other information.

In May 2009, **Joshua Thomason** took on the role of Executive Producer, which encompasses taking a creative overview of the artistic outputs of all the projects. Joshua's expertise is in various forms of digital media, including film. Since completing a degree in Visual Arts in 1997 and post graduate studies in multimedia and training, Joshua has worked all over Australia producing multimedia projects and strategies with over 20 organisations. Joshua has also developed the 1<sup>st</sup> interactive made-for-mobile TV show in the world, Street TV, broadcasting on Vodafone live!, which has won 2 major industry awards and an audience of 300 000 per year. Joshua also works as Project Manager for Tennant Creek and Creative Director for the Bowraville Better Factory Strategy.

Also in May 2009, **Rachel Burgess** joined BE as Project Manager and Lead Artist for *Manduwa*, the roll out of the National Young Mothers' and Parenting Strategy in WA. Rachel comes from a background encompassing the fine arts (she is a practising artist and has exhibited nationally and internationally) and academia (she has a PhD from the University of Newcastle in Fine Art). Rachel has worked extensively in Aboriginal communities as a Remote Area Programs Lecturer for Charles Darwin University and as an independent art consultant.

**Kerry Grace** was employed as the Enterprise Development Officer for the Bowraville Better Factory Enterprises in August 2009. Kerry is a resident of Bowraville with a background in business development and for the past several years has been the manager at MiiMi Aboriginal Corporation. Kerry and Joshua will be working in collaboration to manage the Bowraville Better Factory Strategy.

BE's most recent addition in December 2009 is **Susie Spencer** as Chief Operating Officer. Susie will be ensuring that all projects are running smoothly and meeting their targets. For the past six years, Susie has been Vocational Education Consultant for the New England Region. In this role, as part of a team of four, Susie provided leadership

# be.longing

## greetings and farewells

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for vocational education and training courses and vocational learning programs for students in the 28 secondary and central government schools in the New England Region. With extensive background in managing projects and people, Susie is a welcome addition to the BE team.

At the end of November 2009, we farewelled **Monique Kalmar**, who was the Project Manager for *Across My Bridge* for the past two years. Monique did an amazing job in liaising with the disparate community groups in the Auburn (Inner West Sydney) Local Government Area. The project's focus was on giving young Muslim people a voice and connection to the wider community via the arts, while honouring their backgrounds. During this time, Monique was also studying drama and completed a three year acting course in May 2009. As *Across My Bridge* has come to a conclusion, Monique's time with BE has also come to an end. Monique has been offered a scholarship with the New York Film Academy for a one year *Acting for Film* course in Los Angeles. We all wish Monique all the best with her acting career and hope she has a wonderful, exciting and challenging time in L.A. in 2010.





# be.ginnings

## launch of BE wAy Toolkit

Our year has ended on a high note with the launch of the *BE wAy*. The toolkit details our model, way of working and strategies for individuals and communities to use, so they can replicate the BE way of doing things in their own community, with their own emphasis and flavour.

The *BE wAy* was launched by the Chair of the Westpac Foundation, Helen Lynch. Helen's remarks were generous and highlighted the extensive support and understanding by the corporate sector about the value of using the arts to change disadvantaged young people's trajectory.

The launch, which was held at the Westpac Foundation in the Westpac Building in Kent Street, Sydney, was made special by the involvement of our partners, including testimonials by Di Penberthy, Health Promotion Coordinator, Regional Health Service Program, North Coast Area Health Service, Macksville & Port Macquarie Community Health Services, and Adam Williams and Amy Hahn from our Leadership Program. It was their testimonials that really made the event so special. Adam and Amy's raw honesty and courage brought tears to the eyes of many and made us all so proud and feel honoured to be connected to them and, through them, the work BE undertakes.

Kim McConville has worked intensively with consultant Regina Hill over the past three years to develop a toolkit that articulates how BE runs its programs on the ground and why we choose this method of working. The information contained in the practical how-to sections of the toolkit has been drawn from BE's dedicated team of artists and support workers in community. This information is supported by sections detailing research done in the area.



Chair of the BE Board, Anna Buduls, speaking at the launch



The BE wAy toolkit

# gula gama-li

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The Moree community celebrated five years of collaborative work with Beyond Empathy in 2009. An exhibition, *Gula Gama-li embrace*, at the Moree Plains Gallery was held from the 11<sup>th</sup> September until 15<sup>th</sup> November 2009, which included paintings, drawings, photographs, objects, film and mosaics from three projects: *Mubali*, *Connections* and *6x6*.



The exhibition was opened by the Honourable Virginia Judge MP, the Minister assisting the Premier on the Arts, on Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> September, at the Moree Plains Gallery. It was followed on Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> September, by a launch of a CD of children's songs and a photographic book about the stages of child development as demonstrated by the children of Moree.

*Gula Gama-li* represented a five-year journey of the Moree community, embracing its children and families through *Mubali*, *Connections* and *6x6*. Meg Binks, midwife and child & family health nurse (Moree), says: 'The strength of our community is in the strength of our families. Our children and those who nourish and guide them are precious, and they are what makes our community strong'. The CD of children's songs, *Gaayili Yagal* (child's song) and the book, *Gaayli-Gal* (many children) were both developed directly with the parents and children of Moree, as part of the *Connections* project.



Kim McConville, BE's Executive Director and a former Moree resident, says: 'BE has a very strong connection with the Moree community. Our first project, *Mubali*, which means 'pregnant' in the Gamilaroi language, was here in Moree and is still running. Cherilda Murray, who was the first young woman in Moree to have a belly cast made of her pregnant belly in 2004, is now expecting her second child and both her belly casts are part of the exhibition.

We use arts processes to enable change for disadvantaged young people and, through



# gula gama-li



the sharing process of making art together, connect young people to local services and into the community. The Moree community has always been a starting point for BE to trial new and innovative strategies. It is their ability to embrace new ideas which leads to regionally and culturally significant exhibitions such as this.'

*Mubali* evolved into *Connections*, which helped young parents develop parenting skills and to understand early childhood development. The "6x6" *Artists Community Project* was part of *Connections* and brought seven nationally renowned non-indigenous visual artists together to spend six hours a day for six days in Moree working alongside seven local indigenous visual artists, each being a mentor and guide to the other. The artists' brief was 'New

Horizons: Indigenous Families and Children within the Moree Landscape'.



The visiting artists were: David Larwill, Garry Shead, Luke Sciberras, Jonathon Throsby, Ian Marr, Gabrielle Courtenay, Adam Rish and artist/photographers Greg Weight and Williams Yang. The local Moree artists were: Ellen Draper, Margaret Adams, Paula Duncan, William 'Billo' Priestly, Brent Beale, and, visiting from Boggabilla, Joy Duncan and May Hinch. All contributed art works for the exhibition.

In October Sabrina Druecke, an artist from Barcelona, visited *Ngarrwa* in Bowraville. She made paste-ups from photos of some of our familiar faces combined with flowers and animals on the walls of the Resource Centre. These beautiful collages look really vibrant and everyone is pleased with the effect. Sabrina was with us for a fortnight working alongside Valerie Quinlin and her sister Latoya in Nambucca Heads and Bowraville. Margrit Rickenbach's felt making operation has been very popular with everyone and they are hoping to learn new skills and develop products for sale in the new shop in Bowraville, as well as make some things for themselves and family for Christmas. Local Indigenous artist Donna Brown joined us for felting as well.

Another new face at *Ngarrwa* is young Elliot Keen, who BE is employing as a mentor for the school-age kids who attend our group on some Fridays. Elliot is a young local Gumbayngirr man who was recommended by the High School principal, and completed his HSC last year. He also works with the Year 10 lads as a teacher's aide at the centre which is great work experience for him and a good influence on the kids. They have been working on animations, with transition back to school in mind. With these kids and Elliot, we have agreed to visit or be visited by the school once a month. We will also download the



free literacy and numeracy programs prepared for indigenous learners by the Education Department, which will be available for anyone to access. Mission mum Liz Jarrett continues to work with the young ones, with assistance from another local mum, Sarah. Together they have sorted out donations from Hector and are full of possibilities and enthusiasm for kids' craft activities. Liz accompanied us to the International Arts in Health Conference in Port Macquarie and talked about

her work with BE in Bowraville. She has been a tremendous help with installing the new exhibit in the Land Council windows and running face painting stalls at NAIDOC Week and the Footsteps to Discovery launch and celebrations.

*Ngarrwa* continues to attract interest from Health and Social service providers and our "couch corner" is well used for quiet conversations with mums with their sleepy babies. The lads' group is keeping the yard really clean so that the kids can now play all over the place. There is great interest in their garden plots. The exciting new developments ahead in the community will draw on the relationships we are all building here together, and it is reassuring to see the centre's timetable filling with groups and activities – the place is really starting to buzz!

Jo Davidson, Lead Artist and Project Coordinator



# across my bridge

The *Across My Bridge* (AMB) project was supported by the Australian Government's National Action Plan funding program, Westpac Foundation and Australia Council for the Arts, and completed at the end of November. After two years on the ground *Across My Bridge* has successfully engaged over 100 young people through a series of hip hop music, digital photography, film making, drama and visual art workshops. In 2009 the project focused on Auburn LGA and worked alongside Granville Multicultural Community Centre, Auburn Youth Centre and Auburn Council. Other related partners included Barnados Auburn and the Inner West Skills Centre.

At the recent 2009 *Across My Bridge* project launch, young people came together to celebrate their participation at workshops and resulting artworks. There were over 60 in attendance, including VIPs such as The Hon. Laurie Ferguson MP, Stephan Kerkeyasharian (Chair of Community Relations Commission), The Hon. Barbara Perry MP and Senator Marise Payne among others.

AMB utilised external artists including Soraya Touma, Jack Wachtel, Yanni Scott Davis, Gemma Parsons, Jeremy Piccin, Kwame Powell, Joshua Thomason & myself plus BE leaders, including Solo, Jess, Steve, and others. It has been an amazing journey of learning to manage this project and witness real change happening in the lives of



young people, who we got to know over a short period of time. Unlike other Beyond Empathy projects in regional areas, our workshops accessed young people over a period of twelve months via the education system and the youth centre drop in centre.

We've seen our young leader, Nick, (whom some of you met at the last camp) embark on a process of leadership at the Auburn Youth Centre, running his own hip hop sessions with young people and work-

ing for GMCC, attending TAFE and now finding employment! Another key at risk young person engaged in our recent film making process also recently found employment after completing Year 10. Young people were engaged through drama workshops (run by myself and other youth workers) and in film making, in partnership with AYC. These young people are at high risk, and to have them involved and acting alongside Auburn Police officers at Auburn Police station is amazing to witness – particularly the shift in how they perceive authority. The Auburn Girls' High School group have com-

pleted evaluations and identified that they are experiencing a new relationship to authority in classes developed from regular, weekly *Across My Bridge* workshops where they have been able to express themselves in hip hop, art, short film and photography, engage with BE workers (myself and Soraya) and experience a new level of respect from and for adults. Key outcomes include the production of the *Across My Bridge* CD with 8 hip



hop tracks developed with young people and produced by Jack & Yanni. The CD, given out at the launch in August, was a wonderful recognition of the young people's contribution over the first half of the year. Public performances by Low Budget Records gave evidence to the emergence of a local community hip hop band, coming together through *Across My Bridge* workshops – they continue to do local paid and unpaid gigs in Sydney. They performed at the Human Relations Commission

'Webplatform' launch at Customs House in the city, attended by key politicians, funders and supporters.

Most recently we've been developing a short film that has been developed from discussions between young Granville Boys' High School students and Kwame, and from drama workshops I've led with them. The result is a deep engagement with film making and regular attendance at workshops (that participating teachers and youth workers say is remarkable given these young people have struggled with mainstream education). We end this year finalising the short film to be shown during Youth Week by the Auburn Youth Centre and Auburn City Council in April 2010, and with a public library exhibition of the Auburn Girls' High School students' self-portraits at Auburn Library.



As sad as I am to depart from *Across My Bridge* to pursue acting in L.A and film making, I think The Hon. Laurie Ferguson MP captured the success of our work at the recent Auburn Youth Centre AGM. He noted: 'The success of the *Across My Bridge* project is evidenced in the transfer of skills to local community organisations and the ability now of the (Auburn) Youth Centre to now undertake arts-based youth engagement off its own bat'. I think this is a testimony to all of our work and the Beyond Empathy model.

Monique Kalmar, Project Manager



# be.camp

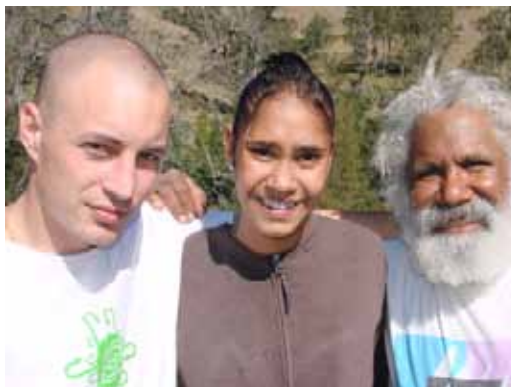
## leadership camp #5

The 5<sup>th</sup> Leadership camp was held at Jasper's Village Resort, near Wauchope, from 10<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> August 2009. It was attended by 20 young people, in-

cluding five established BE leaders and one new BE leader. The young people came from Moree, Taree, Kempsey, Bowraville, Nambucca Heads, Armidale and Ermington (Sydney).

The creative boot camp style offered a well structured program of the arts to build and refine the skills developed during workshops held in different communities as part of different projects. The intensive program included music production and performance, visual arts, movement and dance. The workshops enjoyed maximum levels of participation, sharing and engagement in a safe and nurturing environment. In addition to the creative workshops, Peter

Slattery, youth worker, who has attended all the Leadership camps, held daily workshops focusing on self development and team building.



Participants enjoyed new friendships and built closer bonds with the elders who accompanied the young people. The five established BE Leaders, who were familiar with the camp format, assisted in the smooth running of the camp and stepped up to their role as peer mentors.

All in all the camp was a great success and enjoyed by all who attended. Feedback from the Moree girls (Ashanti and Roslyn) reinforces the importance of Camp: "The camp was empowering and allowed us to let go of shame. We went feeling shameful and came out feeling proud. It was a safe environment to be able to talk and

we could express ourselves through art. We made new friends and saw old ones again."

# be.camp

## leadership camp # 6

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Camp 6 was held 23-27 November at Jasper's Village Resort. 25 young people from the Illawarra, Armidale, Bowraville, Nambucca Heads, Moree, Port Macquarie and Newcastle attended, along with 13 artists and support workers and two Aboriginal Elders.

The weather was beautiful and full use was made of the Hastings River with swimming taking place every day. Workshops in dance, music making, drama, painting, and aerosol art were held, along with Peter Slattery's sessions in self development and self awareness. For the first time we experimented with two activities being brought into camp – kayaking and rock wall climbing. Both were very popular and encouraged participants to overcome fears and embrace challenges.



As always Yanni's music workshops were highly popular and Yanni worked into the night facilitating the creation and recording of songs. A highlight that came from these workshops was a song by Zac (Bowraville) and Gordon (Illawarra) featuring Soraya (artist and singer). Jack's aerosol art workshops and Jo and Aunty Paula's art workshops were also popular and a variety of paintings and graffiti panels were produced. Everyone learnt the 'Hollywood Shuffle' and other dances covering a variety of styles, including indigenous dance, courtesy of Juvarn, Kwame, Steve and Uncle Martin. Over the course of the camp the disparate group of young people who arrived evolved



into a dynamic group working together. New connections were made and old friendships deepened. The conversations that occurred around the campfire, and in other moments during the camp, were where some of the most important 'work' happened.

There were many individual moments of achievement throughout camp, where someone overcame a personal challenge or did something they had never done before or

just joined in and participated rather than hanging back and watching. Roslyn was very hesitant and initially refused to participate in the rock wall climbing, but after receiving active encouragement she had a go and reached the top! She then had another go at a more difficult section. Each one of these moments, no matter how small they might appear to an outsider, was a step forward for the individual. Building on the potential of individuals and facilitating the ability to work in groups as part of a team, gives the participants valuable skills for life and is what the camps are all about.

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# conference

## National Juvenile Justice Summit

IIR Conferences' **National Juvenile Justice Summit** is taking place in Melbourne on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of February, 2010 at the Rendezvous Hotel. Beyond Empathy is one of the organisations proud to be endorsing this conference.

State Government representatives and youth justice organisations will be speaking about the significant issues moving forward for juvenile justice in Australia. The summit will feature presentations from:

- Peter Muir, Chief Executive, Juvenile Justice, Department of Human Services, NSW
- Heather Harker, Deputy Commissioner Juvenile Justice, Department of Corrective Services, WA
- David Waterford, Executive Director, Families SA, Department for Families & Communities
- Bernie Geary OAM, Child Safety Commissioner, Office of the Child Safety Commissioner, Victoria
- Nick Evans, Director, Policy & Programs, Disability, Child, Youth & Family Services, Department of Health & Human Services, Tasmania
- Liz Hughes, Acting Director, Youth Services & Youth Justice, Department of Human Services, Victoria
- Anne Hampshire, National Manager, Research & Social Policy, Mission Australia
- Father Chris Riley, Founder & CEO, Youth Off The Streets
- Michelle Kilgower, Operations Manager, Tirkandi Inaburra Cultural & Development Centre
- Colleen Murray, Former Center Manager & Indigenous Consultant + many more!



For further information contact IIR Conferences on +61 2 9080 4090 or visit the event website [www.iir.com.au/juvenile](http://www.iir.com.au/juvenile)

An exclusive 10% discount offer is available to Beyond Empathy supporters. To claim your 10% discount please remember to quote the discount code I1003BE when registering over the phone or via fax or email.



BE Leaders Adam, Rusty, Amy, Rosie (top), Sarah and James (bottom)

The BE Leadership program is a 1:1 Leadership Skills Development, Mentoring and Support Program enabling young people to develop confidence and leadership skills.

The BE Leadership program works directly with 25 marginalised and socio-economically disadvantaged young people aged 15-25, with a focus on those from indigenous, culturally disadvantaged and/or minority groups.

Some of the achievements of BE Leaders are:

**Jess** (Illawarra) has taken up a Dental Technician traineeship with Aboriginal Health and is now in fulltime employment. She continues to pursue her interests in music and singing in her spare time.

**Valerie** (Nambucca Heads) is the first graduate of the BE Leadership program to be employed by BE as an Assistant Community and Cultural Development worker and emerging artist.

She has continued to work closely with Kellie Martusciello and Jo Davidson at *Ngarrwa* every Friday and also accompanied Kellie and Joshua Thomason to Tennant Creek in May 09. Val worked closely in collaboration with the BluEarth Foundation during this visit. Val has also accompanied Kellie to Moree and worked on the *Connections* project. She was a participant in the *6x6* project in Moree in November 08 and worked closely with artist Garry Shead. Their collaborative works have been displayed as part of the *Gula Gama-li* exhibition. Val has also spent a week in Sydney in October 2009 working with, and being mentored by, visual artist Soraya Touma.

BE Leader **Rosie** (Nimbin) also participated in *6x6* and worked with photographers, Wendy Kimpton and Greg Weight. Her works have also been displayed as part of the *Gula Gama-li* exhibition. She has completed her first year of a Bachelor of Photography course at Griffith University. Currently Rosie is working with Wendy on developing a book of her photographs.

Moree BE Leaders, **Ashanti**, **Roslyn** and **Kathleen**, have also assisted with *Connections* and *6x6*.

**Adam** (Armidale) has also continued to work in local Armidale theatre acting in a local play, *The Naming of Armidale*. He has applied to study acting at NIDA (National Institute for Dramatic Art) and AADA (Australian Academy of Dramatic Art) in Sydney and will be auditioning for a place in December.

# out of the blue

## illawarra – project x & *pericles*

In May, a group of 5 BE leaders and emerging artists from the Illawarra attended Raw Dance Company's 'Project X' at the Illawarra Performing Arts Centre in Wollongong.

The show was a fusion of Funk Tap, Live Music, Percussion and Beat Boxing. For some it was the first time inside the Performing Arts Centre and the first experience of live theatre.

With the help of the staff at Merrigong Theatre Company, we were given discounted tickets and were invited to attend a free dance workshop with the cast the day before the show, which was both enjoyable and beneficial for myself and BE leader James Taurua who attended.

We would like to thank Raw Dance Company Brisbane and Merrigong Theatre Company for their support in giving the opportunity to those who might not otherwise get to experience the thrill of live theatre.

We would also like to say a HUGE thank you to Bell Shakespeare and their Hearts in a Row initiative for giving Beyond Empathy participants the opportunity to experience a fantastic live performance of *Pericles* featuring the Taikoz Drummers at the Opera House.

On our arrival at the theatre we met up with participants from other BE projects and were greeted by representatives from Bell Shakespeare, who presented us with complimentary tickets, programs, drink vouchers and an animated explanation of the production.

For many of those from the Illawarra, it was their first time at the Opera House (apart from Deb, who had "been inside once, but only to use their loo") and none of the participants had ever experienced live Shakespeare before. That being said, everyone thoroughly enjoyed the performance and had plenty of things to talk about on the train ride home, from how comfortable the theatre seats were to the awe-inspiring costumes and set. The Hearts in a Row initiative aims to give the unique experience of exceptional live theatre to those who may not otherwise get the opportunity. We are extremely grateful to be involved once again.



BE Leader James at the dance workshops.



Our trade mark poster shot featuring BE participant James Taurua doing *Pericles*.

# out of the blue

## illawarra – non-stop hip hop!

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Nine male participants from Berkeley attended hip hop workshops with Morganics and Wire MC at Wollongong Youth Centre during the October school holidays. They recorded two tracks in five days and made such an impression on the artists that they invited the Berkeley Boys to record with them in Redfern. Wire MC generously gave them beats he had created, which the Boys could take away and use as the basis of songs in the meantime.

As well as producing music tracks, the participants took part in beatboxing and breakdancing workshops and created a three panel mural. The mural was displayed when the artists returned to Wollongong to perform with participants at Viva La Gong, Wollongong's Community Arts and Culture Festival, on 7 November 2009.



Graffiti Panels for Viva La Gong Festival.

Morganics is also interested in being involved in the Short Film Project in the Illawarra. He is working on adapting his stage show 'Survival Tactics' into a film and wants to include BE leader Steve Rees as a character in the film.

The larger scope for the Illawarra project will involve the creation of two films. The first is a short film comprised mainly of film clips to music

tracks produced in Berkeley over the last 3 years. The film will have a story told through the music about the cycle of crime and the suffering of those left behind. The other is a feature film involving young people from several communities across the Illawarra and will be in production from now until late 2010.

So far, more than 50 young people have participated across both film projects, gaining experience in front of and behind the camera with 12 core participants, some of whom may go on to producing their short films as part of the long term strategy for the feature film project. We've shot 20 scenes between the two films so far and aim to have the short film out, and in local cinemas, by January 2010.

Gemma Parsons, Project Coordinator

Valerie became involved with Beyond Empathy in 2007 through a chance meeting with a BE worker. She had recently returned to live with her family in country NSW after living in Sydney. She had lived in foster and kinship care for a number of years before moving. She had been involved in violent relationships. When she met Beyond Empathy she was living with her family and was dealing with the recent death of her partner, who had been murdered.



Valerie attended a Leadership Camp in May 2007. After that camp she went to Tennant Creek to help facilitate workshops before returning to help run a series of programs in northern NSW. She has attended all six of the BE Leadership camps as a peer mentor. For professional development, Val has worked with artists Garry Shead (as part of the 6x6 project in Moree) and Soraya Touma. For the last two years she has been involved with Beyond Empathy as a community development worker and an emerging artist. Val is the first graduate of the BE Leadership Program to be employed by BE. In 2009 she enrolled in TAFE and is currently balancing study and ongoing work with Beyond Empathy.



# out of the blue

## mid-north coast nsw

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*Out of the Blue* (OOTB) has absolutely charged through the Mid-North Coast towns of Bowraville, Kempsey and Taree, offering more than 100 workshops. Some highlights from the program include the Australian Unicyclist champion giving workshops and demonstrations at Kempsey PCYC. Participants also marvelled at the performances and workshops facilitated by Cirque de Soleil trapeze artist Natalie Harris.

Claude Tessier and Margrit Richenbach have provided sophisticated and engaging mask and costume making workshops in Bowraville. There were ongoing workshops in drumming, twirling and circus. Zac Holland is a participant who has been involved since the beginning of the program and, through all sorts of dramatic personal circumstances, has pursued his music, showing passion and perseverance.

Two of the most colourful outcomes from the program include participants painting over 200 metres of mural at the Indigenous community at Purfleet in Taree. The mural was inspired by the dreaming stories of the local Biripi people and its imagery is both beautiful and dramatic. The Kempsey and Taree PCYCs also had their logos splashed across their walls by BE Artist, Jack Wachtel.

Another important outcome from the program was the production of *The Ripple Effect* CD. This is a collection of original songs written and recorded by OOTB participants. The process of writing and recording their own original songs allowed participants to share their life stories and master the process of sound production. The songs on the CD articulate the full spectrum of participants' emotions from depression to anger to joy.

After the production of the CD, the OOTB program moved onto the creation of music videos. A big congratulation goes out to the following participants who completed their video clips: Carah Keen, Zac Holland, Shane Morcombe, Ray and Attan Munro and Wayne Paulson. A special mention goes to Zac and Carah who produced an entire album each, became competent in recording programs, and performed at multiple events.



Taree dance group - Goiwii Middar's head dress on Stage with DJ Scoob at *Elements* hip hop happening 25/7/09 – Kempsey PCYC



PrayingMantis (Dungutti totem) and Shark (Biripi totem) dancing together at *Elements* – 25/7/09

# out of the blue

## mid-north coast nsw



Nathan painting his Spirit trees - one black, one white - at Purfleet - April 09

cided with NAIDOC Week celebrations. We were also lucky to have well known Indigenous act Last Kinection, with Brother Black, Soul Purpose and Uncle Ray Buchanan perform at the opening ceremony with his dance group, Goiwii Middar.

The 'Elements of Hip Hop Happening,' at Kempsey PCYC in late July 2009, saw BE Participants, Shane Morcombe, Zigo MC (Zac) and Carah perform their original songs. Coinciding with Drug Awareness Week, this event increased the community membership of the Kempsey PCYC by approximately 150.

Many of the participants who took part in the *Out of the Blue* program are continuing to perform their original material. The program re-energised community spaces and made them come alive to the youth community as spaces of interest and healing. It was an honor to act as program co-ordinator for Out of the Blue and to see that art inspires change.

Kai Tipping, Project Coordinator

We facilitated workshops at the 'Culture Camps' that provided Goiwii Middar (dance group) with professional costume development and recruited new dancers. BE video artists assisted Compass, a youth space supporting alternative education in multimedia, in engaging their Juvenile Justice clients via the production of TV ads. This collaboration also resulted in Compass adopting the BE model of working in community. Zac and Carah both performed at the BE 'Hothouse' event, which was held at the Taree PCYC in early July 2009. The 'Hothouse' event was a youth hip hop concert which coincided with NAIDOC Week celebrations.



Ben Green - Elated after winning gift voucher in dance comp at *Elements* - 25/7/09

This year one of BE's Leaders, Jess Rees, was the subject of an article in the *Illawarra Mercury*. In the article she spoke eloquently of her life in Berkeley and her work with Beyond Empathy. Here are some selected highlights from that article written by Louise Turk:

“I love living in Berkeley, some of the kids might do hard things or they might act tough, but at the end of the day, they will do anything for you. There is a real sense of community here.” [Jess], who gained her Higher School Certificate at the Illawara Sports High School became involved in community projects at the age of 17. A long time fan of hip hop music, [Jess] jumped at the opportunity to make her own songs when the national arts organization Beyond Empathy came to town [in 2006].’



‘[Jess], naturally shy, became more confident through learning new skills and forming friendships with peers. Her leadership qualities were identified and she was encouraged to become a workshop facilitator, running similar workshops for other young people. “I went from sitting there writing my own songs to actually helping other kids make their own songs”.’

“We made three albums together at Berkeley and Legolands [Warrawong in the Bundaleer housing estate], at the end of each album, we put on a performance for those communities. All of those performances turned out really well and last year we decided to fuse it all with a stage show at the Illawarra Performing Arts centre called *Postcodes from the Edge*.”

‘Last year [Jess] joined a six-member hip-hop crew called *Hyperflex*. The group has since disbanded but, during their six months together, they write five original songs and performed them. [Jess] was known in the group as MC Boo.’

“I want other kids to know that nothing should stop you. Its about having no shame and giving things a go.”

# out of the blue

## *piecemeal* - armidale

The project is about half way through and is expected to run until June 2010. The focus has been on engaging disadvantaged/marginalised young people and encouraging their regular attendance. Pari Jay, Social Worker (Armidale Community Health, Hunter New England Health Service), has also attended the workshops. The workshops have encompassed drawing and painting, drama games and exercises, digital stories, and more recently playwriting. The project began slowly and the initial focus was on building trust among participants and between participants and workers. BE uses the arts as a tool to create a safe environment. Focusing on an artistic activity, the participants can relax and conversations can occur about the issues they are facing. While *piecemeal* has had relatively low numbers, this has helped those participants attending to feel comfortable enough to share and discuss some very deep issues. Conversations initiated by young people have encompassed such issues as self harm (cutting), suicide attempts and associated encounters with medical personnel, housing issues, death and fear of death, grief and grieving, violence in various forms, depression, mental health, parenting and personal histories. Through these conversations participants were encouraged to find different ways of looking at challenges and their effects. It was determined what access the young people had to services, which could help them, and whether they were willing to access those services. As a result, one participant has recently expressed an interest in attending counselling with a psychologist to help address mental health issues.

A highlight from the past six months was when a participant came to a workshop and showed me a story she had written. With encouragement, she has continued to develop the story and the group has been developing it collaboratively as a play. It deals with issues faced by young people in regional Australia, such as sexual promiscuity, truancy, smoking, alcohol use and depression (and how they are all linked). This is a piece created by young people about their issues and will be performed by young people.

Another participant with a strong interest in drama has been helped to audition for NIDA (National Institute for Dramatic Art) and AADA (Australian Academy of Dramatic Art). A life goals plan has been developed with him to help him achieve his goals over the coming year. He and another participant recently auditioned for a local play and both received parts. He has been particularly helpful in assisting other young people to become engaged in the workshops. Two participants attended the 6th BE Leadership camp near Wauchope, NSW.



Nicola works with one of the participants of *piecemeal*

Aboriginal culture is strong in Tennant Creek. The traditional landowners of this area are the Warumungu people. According to Warumungu legend, the town of Tennant Creek grew up around the home of a spiky tailed goanna called Nyinkka - a powerful ancestral being. Tennant Creek has a population of 3,500 people, situated in the Barkly Tablelands and lies on the Stuart Highway, 510 kms north of Alice Springs. The Barkly, which it serves, is a huge, and sometimes forgotten, expanse of 240,000 square kms between the tropical 'Top End' and the arid 'Red Centre'. The size of Victoria, there are 9000 people that live in the community. 70 to 80% of the population is Aboriginal with 13 different traditional language groups that are still being spoken.

Beyond Empathy has been conducting arts intensive residencies in Tennant Creek since 2007, working closely with Julalikari Youth Development Unit, Barkly Arts and several other local organisations.

The project is designed to meet the following objectives:

- Successfully engage participants and support networks
- Conduct quality arts intensive arts program and activities
- Produce quality performance and arts based outcomes
- Build social cohesion
- Provide access to arts based train-



- ing and development
- Strengthen participant wellbeing
- Develop capability of local support workers and artists
- Strengthen social participation

Beyond Empathy has also conducted arts based workshops as part of the Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds (HBHM) program supported by the Coca Cola Australia Foundation.

HBHM week takes a holistic approach to health through a program of the arts, with activities that encourage the importance of health and mentor positive self-expression. Over the course of the program the team delivers workshops and programs including:

- Lullabies in Lingo with singer/ songwriter Jacqueline Freeman
- Lets Dance! for schools and community groups, run by *So You Think You Can Dance* stars Travers Ross and Lamb
- The Expression Sessions with DJ K-Note and Juvarn Thebus

We believe that the residencies are providing the framework to deliver long-term benefits to the community through the unique combination of healthy eating and reading and writing programs along with sport, dance, music and film making.

Joshua Thomason, Executive Producer and Project Manager Tennant Creek



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