



Annual Report 2010

Spina Bifida
FOUNDATION VICTORIA



Our mission

Helping people with spina bifida to lead better lives



Cover photo

On-the-snow Ski Camps aim to introduce members with spina bifida to the challenges of skiing. This in turn increases confidence in individual's physical capabilities, the opportunity to forge new friendships and creates a sense of independence.

For the first time this year the camp was extended to include children

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President's Report



The past year has seen the SBFV continue to develop and offer a valuable range of activities and services for members. We have made significant progress in promoting the folate message and continue to develop our supporter base. I would sincerely like to thank our Executive Director, Elizabeth Logan for her hard work and dedication over this year.

In September last year, the fortification of breadmaking flour with folic acid commenced. The SBFV has been a strong supporter of this initiative over many years and it is very pleasing to finally see this happen. With the help of Bayer HealthCare and funds raised through the support of the Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce, we have produced a Folic Acid information leaflet to help spread the word. This is an important public health message and we are fortunate to have the support of Bayer HealthCare to have this brochure distributed nationally to health practitioners.

The SBFV has supported Monash Medical Centre to conduct Spina Bifida Information seminars. Elizabeth was a keynote speaker at one of the seminars and our members, Katrina Hartley and Melinda Mavroudis have also presented. The Independent Living Skills program for our adult members has continued and the winter ski camps were again well received with a successful children's camp also conducted this year. The Family camp in January was also well attended.

The Night of Celebration was held in November last year at the Immigration Museum and was very well attended. Congratulations to Helen Houghton and Gary Robinson for receiving the Menelaus Awards.

The SBFV is in a good financial position but ongoing funding continues to be a challenge. The Board has established a Fundraising Committee to help improve our funding opportunities to seek diversity in our sources of income. If you are able to assist in this area we would be very happy to hear from you.

The Advisory Committee has undergone some changes and is now meeting on-line to make it easier for members to be involved. The Social Club continues to be well supported providing a range of events to benefit members. I would like to again thank the Committee for all their work this year.

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President's Report continued

There have been some changes in staffing. Many of you will know that Mini Dahiya has become the proud mother of Raayan and came back from maternity leave earlier this year which has meant that Toni-Marie Wuelfert's fixed term contract came to an end. Toni-Marie made a great contribution to the SBFV developing programs and re-building our membership base. Agnes Tsetinis continues to be a great member of the team looking after the admin area.

We have had many people contribute to the SBFV in a voluntary capacity over the year. This includes assisting with the organisation of functions and events, particularly the Family camp, helping with office mail outs and a host of other things. It would be difficult to name you all, but I would like to sincerely thank everyone who has given the SBFV their time, energy and commitment.

Again, a huge thank you to our patron, Geoffrey Rush, Jane Menelaus, Margaret Menelaus and the Menelaus family. Their ongoing support is a huge benefit to the SBFV. The combined connections of the Menelaus family open up valuable opportunities for the SBFV. Margaret continues to sponsor the annual Menelaus Awards.

I would particularly like to say thank you to my fellow Board members for all their work and support throughout the year. Your Board members this year have been Liz Parkinson (Vice President), Jane Halliday, Elizabeth Lewis, Andrew Churchyard, Mark Oswald, Stella Minahan, Robert Wald (Treasurer) and myself. Thanks for all your hard work this year. I would also like to acknowledge and thank Sue Buckley who continues to assist us with Board minutes.

In closing, I would like to say thank you to our members for your support throughout the year. I encourage you all to get involved in the programs and activities we offer and to help build our membership by spreading the word.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Simmons". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

John Simmons

Executive Director's report



The SBFV has been fortunate again this year to be supported by a number of organisations and individuals who have helped to raise funds for, and create awareness of, our cause as well as providing assistance with programs and activities. As a small not-for-profit we are most grateful for these extra 'helping hands'.

The assistance of our key financial supporters, who are listed later in this Annual Report, is sincerely appreciated along with various other groups and organisations that play a different (but just as important) role in ensuring we can offer good quality services. For example, there are those that provide their services for free or at greatly reduced prices and those that help by linking us to skilled volunteers. Whilst I've recognised all of them within the articles in this report, I'd like to take this opportunity to stress how much their support is valued.

Many thanks also to the Board of Directors for providing direction for the SBFV again this year and the Advisory Committee which has arranged many interesting social events. These groups have helped the SBFV to continue to streamline activities and to improve on our programs and services. As an example of this the SBFV has embraced technology and introduced better social networking through our Facebook page (which complements the online convenience of mc2) and Advisory Committee meetings are now held on Windows Live Messenger which means members don't have to travel to be involved.

Just as important are the office staff who work day in and day out to ensure that the SBFV runs smoothly. I'd like to acknowledge the work of Agnes, Toni-Marie and Mini as well as Anne who have shown enthusiasm, commitment and passion in their roles. With their support, the SBFV has been able to help more people than ever before and is well-placed for the coming year.

Whilst we have much work to do in the next financial year, I'm confident that we can again rise to the challenge.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "E. A. Logan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Elizabeth Logan

The SBFV's Patron



Geoffrey Rush (Patron) is an actor who has received many national and international awards for his work. His career began with the Queensland Theatre Company in Brisbane and his numerous achievements have included an Australian Film Institute Global Achievement Award, an Academy Award and two Golden Globe Awards, an Emmy Award and most recently a Tony Award.

Geoffrey is married to Jane Menelaus, the daughter of the late Malcolm Menelaus co-founder of the Spina Bifida Foundation of Victoria, and they have two children. Because of Geoffrey's admiration and respect for Malcolm, he is honoured to be the Patron of the SBFV.

Geoffrey kindly donates his time and talents to the SBFV.

Board members

John Simmons (President) works for the Department of Justice in emergency services telecommunications. His daughter Katherine was born with spina bifida in 1987.

Liz Parkinson (Vice-President) has a background in allied health education, and is currently a senior member of the academic staff in the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences at Monash University. Liz has a nephew Jeff who was born in 1987 with spina bifida, hydrocephalus and cerebral palsy.

Robert Wald (Treasurer) is a Fellow Chartered Accountant, currently a partner in the firm Bell Partners Pty Ltd. He has had over 30 year's experience in the not-for-profit sector both as an auditor and treasurer.

Dr. Andrew Churchyard is an adult neurologist with interests in movement disorders, adult developmental disability and neuro-genetics. He runs the Victorian Adult Spina Bifida Service at Monash Medical Centre and is also a consultant neurologist at Southern Health, Victoria.

Assoc. Prof. Jane Halliday is an expert in birth defects research, using the Victorian Birth Defects Register to examine trends in neural tube defects over time. She is head of the Public Health Genetics Unit at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute and was part of the research group assessing folate awareness in the community and establishing the SPINE (now FINE) register.

Staff

Dr. Elizabeth Lewis is a highly respected neurosurgeon, with special interests in paediatric neurosurgery, spinal neurosurgery and medico-legal work. She has received a number of awards, including the Member of the Order of Australia (1992), Woman Achiever of the Year (1997) and Honoured Guest Neurosurgical Society of Australasia (2000).

Dr. Stella Minahan is an adult with spina bifida. She is a senior lecturer in management at the Deakin Graduate Business School and has a PhD in organisational behaviour. She has published over 50 articles in peer reviewed journals and conferences plus three books on management and consumer behaviour.

Mark Oswald is an adult with spina bifida, who is also on the Advisory Committee and is a recipient of the Malcolm Menelaus Achievement award and a past participant of the Independence Program and Computer Skills and Training Program.

Elizabeth Logan
(BA, MA, FAIM)—Executive Director

Mini Dahiya
(BMed, GradDipPubHlth)—
Program Officer

Toni-Marie Wuelfert
(BBus, BMin, Cert IV Workplace Training
& Assessment)—Community Engagement
Coordinator (contracted to March 2010)

Agnes Tsetinis
(Cert III National Clerical—Administrative
Competency Standards, Cert IV
Information Technology)—
Office Administrator

Anne Glynn
(BSW, GradDipGenCouns)—(Part-time
Contract to September 2009) Project
Officer Folate Information NETwork (FINE)

Annual Night of Celebration 2009

Commencing with the formalities of the Annual General Meeting, President, John Simmons, provided a roundup of the year's achievements. He also introduced two new Board members including Robert Wald, Honorary Treasurer, and Dr Stella Minahan.

Stella is employed as a Senior Lecturer in Management in the Deakin Business School at Deakin University and she gave a presentation about her experiences of having spina bifida.

This presentation was followed by a lively power point featuring photographs of members undertaking various activities throughout the year. We then watched a DVD, produced by Sean de Morton about his brother, Justin, who has spina bifida. Sean had worked hard at raising funds at the school where he teaches for the SBFV.

The weather smiled on us on Friday 6th November and the Atrium at the Immigration Museum was the perfect setting for a fun-filled Night of Celebration.

Many of the guests had been eagerly awaiting the post-supper entertainment by the Gowri - Dances of India. This group of seven colourfully dressed women didn't disappoint and it was great to see everyone taking up the challenge to do some "Bollywood dancing" outside in the Museum's courtyard.

Three Certificates of Appreciation were presented, one each to Katherine Simmons, Jason Parry and Liz Parkinson. All of these members had given many hours of voluntary service to the SBFV during the past year.

The two recipients of the Malcolm Menelaus Achievement awards this year were Helen Houghton and Gary Robinson. Interestingly, both are the children of Life Members and have been involved with the SBFV for many years.

The final activities of the night were the presentation of prizes (donated by Mark Love) to the winners of the footy tipping competition and the raffle draw. The SBFV thanks both Costco Wholesale Australia and Elizabeth Lewis for the donation of raffle prizes.

Clockwise from top (opposite page) –

The Gowri – Dances of India performers added a splash of colour and taught guests some interesting moves.

Rosie was very excited at winning the Costco hamper in the raffle.

Everyone got into the dancing mood in the warm evening air.



Malcolm Menelaus Achievement awards

Gary Robinson— Award Recipient

Firstly, let me introduce myself to those who have not met me. My name is Gary Robinson and I am a 41 year old male who has spina bifida. I have been married for the past 16 years to my beautiful darling wife Lynne, who also has spina bifida. We have a 10 year old daughter, Kellie, who is “the apple of my eye”.

I have always had the love and support of my wife and daughter, mother Jean (a past President of the Spina Bifida Association and Life Member of the SBFV), father Graeme and two brothers, Peter 46 years old and David 43 years old. I have to mention that the most important aspect with dealing with spina bifida is to have the love, support and backing of family.

In my working career, I worked for Business Victoria (an arm of the Victorian Government) in the Manufacturing and Services Sector, starting off as an Administration Officer and working my way up to be Manufacturing Advisor to the Minister and heads of the Department. This was for 14 years before health matters took over, and I gave up work to play the role of house-husband to my daughter, which I am still doing today.

Last year, I was nominated for the Malcolm B Menelaus Achievement Award by my parents and to my surprise I was one of the recipients. This meant so much to me as Malcolm was my Orthopaedic Surgeon from a very early age up until I

was around about 14 years old. I always found him to be a true professional in his field, and the most important thing of all, a friend to every one who had dealings with him. He is sadly missed. With the prize money that I received I was able to upgrade from my very old PC to a new laptop computer which I am using on a daily basis, to keep up with the times.

I would like to thank on a very personal note Margaret Menelaus and her family for this award, and thank them for all the ongoing support that they give to the SBFV and its members.

To the President, John Simmons and fellow board members, thanks for the time and effort put into setting up the structure of the SBFV and lastly to the hard work and dedication of our Executive Director, Elizabeth Logan and her staff who are truly, the backbone of the SBFV and keep it running to perfection on a daily basis.

Helen Houghton— Award Recipient

I was genuinely surprised and touched to receive the Malcolm B Menelaus Award in November 2009. It is not often that you receive an award like this. It is an even rarer occasion when you receive an award in the name of a person that you actually knew very well.

I can always remember my appointments with Mr Menelaus, he would come in to the room with his booming voice and he

would put you immediately at ease. I had three osteotomy operations in a row to try to put my hip back into its socket and each time they did not work. In the end Mr Menelaus gave up and humorously called me, 'Naturally Crooked'. He had a good sense of humour!

I have continued to work on the History of the Spina Bifida Association/ Foundation. As everyone knows, I do enjoy doing courses! Last year, I completed my Certificate 4 in Disability Work and I have been able to have a regular speaking engagement talking to the current crop of Cert 4 students about the course. It is great to talk to new students and give them an insight into the course and what it is like to have a disability like spina bifida. I have also become involved in an online web site, DiVine, for people with disabilities who wish to write about their experiences and any other issues that they are passionate about.

The \$1,000 which has come with this award is very much appreciated. It has only been recently that I have decided what I wanted to do with this money. I did not want to use it for anything trivial. I have applied to do yet another course, this time, focussing on Leadership skills and disability within the Monash community. I have the interview in October. If I am successful, I will start the course next year in February at RMIT Melbourne.

This course will help me in my quest to spread the word about spina bifida when I go out on public speaking engagements to various groups. I do not find this kind of thing daunting, but you can always

learn something new about how to project yourself in a positive way to help enlighten the wider community about disability.

I would like to thank the Spina Bifida Foundation of Victoria for all their help and willingness to accept my articles over the years and I hope that these articles have given people some interesting information about spina bifida.

I would especially like to thank the Menelaus Family for their ongoing support for this award. The Menelaus Award has definitely inspired me to keep on learning and broaden my skills. Positive feedback and encouragement certainly makes all endeavours worth pursuing.



Accepting the award on Gary's behalf were daughter, Kellie, and mother, Jean.



Helen shares her delight at receiving her award with mother, Harriet, and father, Murray.

Past recipients – where are they now?

Jamie Tampion

After receiving the Malcolm B Menelaus Achievement Award in 2002, I continued pursuing my passion of doing shows with the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Victoria. As our name suggests we do almost exclusively Gilbert and Sullivan shows like the Pirates of Penzance, The Mikado and HMS Pinafore.

I feel very honoured to have received the Achievement award as it has enabled me to take singing lessons and to purchase a portable voice recorder – both of which have helped me with the shows.

Over the past eight years the Gilbert and Sullivan Society has gone from strength to strength and earlier this year I was able to participate in an Australian premiere production of Thespiis. This was Gilbert and Sullivan's first collaboration and legend has it that it was not considered up to the standard of the shows of the time so was basically 'abandoned'.

To this day, the 'book' – lyrics and dialogue – have survived but all except two of the songs have been 'lost'. Our production was reconstructed using most of the original book set to music from Sullivan and Offenbach. It was very well received by the small audiences and even received a letter of praise from one of the people who worked on the reconstruction.

Our company has been invited to perform in 2011 at an international arts festival in Buxton, England - near Manchester!

The photo (below) is from our production of Thespiis and that's me second from right wearing devil's horns.

I'd like to thank the Menelaus family for the assistance that the Achievement award has provided and the Spina Bifida Foundation for its support.



Fundraising Activities and Events

'With this night, I remember...' Fundraising Ball

A wedding-themed fundraising dinner held in the Grand Ballroom of the Sofitel Melbourne on Collins was a highly anticipated fundraising event for the SBFV. The evening was organised by National Event Organisers who donated their time and expertise to the event.

More than 120 people attended and were entertained with music, professional dancers and were able to bid for a number of silent auction items

AFL Grand Final Fundraising Lunch

The SBFV was chosen as the charity to receive the proceeds from the Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce 2009 Grand Final fundraising lunch. This event attracts more than 300 business people from the local Dandenong community.

Funds were raised from auction items, raffle tickets and the game of 'Dandy Chamber Lotto'. The money received from this event will be used to produce information leaflets about the importance of folic acid in the diet for women of childbearing age in a range of languages.

The SBFV thanks the Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce for donating the funds as well as everyone that supported us by buying items and tickets on the day.



Board member Jane Halliday with husband Michael Leighton Jones, Jane Menelaus, Executive Director Elizabeth Logan and Patron Geoffrey Rush enjoyed the event.



The Ballroom dancers, Shane and Ashlea, were a highlight of the Ball.

This event attracts more than 300 business people from the local Dandenong community.

Ritchies Community Benefits Program

The SBFV continues to receive support from Ritchies IGA Supermarkets and liquor stores through their Community Benefits Program.

For every dollar spent at Ritchies stores they donate one percent to the charities which are nominated by customers. By shopping at these stores and quoting our reference number (92246) everyone can raise funds for the SBFV.

Star Bingo

A percentage of the weekly bingo sessions conducted by Star Bingo continue to be donated to the SBFV. These sessions are held at the Dorset Gardens Hotel in Croydon. This financial support has been ongoing since 2005 and the SBFV is sincerely grateful for this assistance which goes directly to maintaining our services.

Sponsors for Contact newsletter

For the first time the SBFV has sought sponsors for its quarterly newsletter called Contact. Each sponsor pays a small fee to have their logo advertised on the back page for a year. Money received from the sponsors helps to pay for the costs associated with printing and postage of the newsletter.

The SBFV continues to receive support from Ritchies IGA Supermarkets and liquor stores through their Community Benefits Program.

Community Seminars

Myki seminar

With the introduction of the new Myki system, the SBFV held a seminar to inform members about the changes to public transport travel in Melbourne and on V/Line services.

Along with these changes has been the development of the Access Travel Pass. This Pass is for people with a significant permanent disability who travel independently on public transport and can demonstrate that due to their disability they cannot use ticketing systems. The Pass entitles the holder to free travel on specific Victorian country and metropolitan public rail and bus services.

Funding for this seminar was provided by Myki of which the SBFV is grateful.

Event Management Training session

Last year the SBFV Advisory Committee, the members of which organise all the Social Club functions, requested more information on, and help in, developing their skills in conducting and managing events. As a result an Event Management training session was held.

The aim of the session was to educate those attending in how to organise events and a training consultant guided us through a step by step checklist to ensure that future social events are well managed.

Funding for the training session was provided by the City of Melbourne which has supported the Social Club and its events this year.

Independent Living Skills program seminar: Looking after Yourself

In late June 2010 the SBFV held a seminar to coincide with the launch of the third module of the Independent Living Skills program.

This module is about educating members to care for themselves and covers information from getting out to getting around. The speakers at the seminar also told members about looking good while out and about. Speakers came from a number of organisations including Metro Trains, Travellers Aid, Yooralla's Abelinks program as well as Elly Lukas Beauty Therapy College.

The SBFV would like to thank The Hugh Williamson Foundation for financial support of this module.



Leonie from Elly Lukas Beauty Therapy College provides some useful makeup tips.

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RSL seminar

From time to time the SBFV is contacted by people in the general community requesting that we talk to their group.

This year the Executive Director, Elizabeth Logan and member, Julie Davis, presented to the RSL War Widows and Widowed Mothers Association Dandenong branch.

Elizabeth briefly talked about the SBFV and gave an explanation about spina bifida while Julie spoke about her life and her experiences as a paralympian.

After presenting at this seminar, the SBFV received a number of donations which were greatly appreciated.

Monash Medical Centre spina bifida family seminar

After a successful National Spina Bifida seminar held in November last year, parents requested another to be held at Monash Medical Centre which focused on topics of particular interest to them. In May a number of families attended a half-day information seminar which was highly informative.

Speakers included Joanne Michalitsis from the Podiatry department who discussed foot care and spina bifida and then Liz Mackenzie and Dr Vered Schildkraut talked about the Young Adults Transition Service available at the hospital. Dr Andrew Churchyard (SBFV Board member) gave a speech about sexuality and independence for adults with spina bifida and Professor Yves Heloury discussed urinary continence. The final speaker was Dr Andrew Danks informing us about shunts and hydrocephalus.

All of these talks were beneficial and the SBFV is a proud sponsor of these seminars hosted by Monash Medical Centre.



Prof Heloury speaks to an attentive audience of families.

SBFV Programs and Committees

Family camp 2010

It was sunshine and smiles all round at the Family camp at Phillip Island with plenty of happy faces over the weekend, particularly in and around the pool.

A wide variety of activities were again available to keep parents and children occupied. Outdoor activities included archery, canoeing and braving the high ropes as well as a session hosted by Wheelchair Sports Victoria which included wheelchair basketball and rugby. The highlight of the weekend however, was the trip to the Penguin Parade.

As usual the talk was free flowing and on Saturday afternoon, Jean Robinson, a Life Member of the SBFV joined us at the All Seasons Eco Resort and gave a brief talk. Jean discussed her experience of life as a mother with a son, Gary (featured on page 8), who has spina bifida.

The volunteers did a wonderful job over the weekend looking after the children. Financial support was provided by The M K A Bell Memorial Fund, managed by Trust Company Limited.



Above — Everyone relaxed with a dip in the pool to escape the heat.

Clockwise from left — Parents enjoyed an afternoon tea together and time to chat; children enjoyed activities including the high ropes; archery and; canoes.

“It was a wonderful time to connect as a community; to have fun, share stories and exchange ideas.”

Facebook and mc2 – My Connected Communities

This year the SBFV launched a Facebook page for members as a complementary communications medium to the use of mc2 (our on-line communities). The Facebook site has proved to be very popular with members as it's a great way of keeping in touch with one another and what's happening. The aim of our Facebook page is the same as mc2, which is to overcome social and geographical isolation throughout Victoria.

Members are welcomed on to both sites where they can chat in a secure environment. As well as chatting they are informed of upcoming events and social activities, and are able to upload photographs, vote in polls and access the Central Point Resource file.

Other social media advances made by the SBFV have been to post the Community Service Announcements and other SBFV messages on YouTube.

Advisory Committee

As the representative group for the wider SBFV community, the Advisory Committee discusses issues of relevance and then presents them to the Board of Directors and the SBFV office.

All members of this committee have spina bifida and meet regularly to talk about issues that directly affect them.

This year the committee, amongst other activities, has addressed changes to the national continence aids payment scheme; have made recommendations about the SBFV Independent Living Skills program; have assisted in seeking out organisations that can help members access services and transport; have conducted events and; have been trained in event management.

The Advisory Committee plays an important role in advising the SBFV Board by providing direct insight into the attitudes, needs and issues relating to spina bifida. To ensure that the Advisory Committee is truly representative of the membership, the SBFV conducted a review of its terms of reference. As a result the committee now meets using Windows Live Messenger so that members can attend without having to travel into the city for meetings and so that the input and ideas of members who live outside the metropolitan area can also be canvassed.

All members of the SBFV who are over 18 years of age are encouraged to consider nominating for a position on this committee.

On-the-snow Ski Camps

Since 2007 adult members of the SBFV have had the opportunity to learn how to ski at Falls Creek with the support of Disabled WinterSport Australia (Victoria). This year the program was extended to include children (between the ages of seven and 17).

The aim of the camps is to introduce members with spina bifida to the challenges of skiing. This in turn increases confidence in individual's physical capabilities, the opportunity to forge new friendships and creates a sense of independence.

Many of those who went on the camps this year had never been to the snow before and had memorable experiences. Feedback from all participants and parents was positive and they highly recommended the experience to other members.

The SBFV is grateful for receiving funding for the snow camps from The Hugh Williamson Foundation and the Bendigo Bank as well as a donation from Dame Elisabeth Murdoch.

The Disabled WinterSport team and participants at Falls Creek.



Educational Scholarship

Since the introduction of the Educational Scholarship fund in 2008 many SBFV members have been helped in paying for their higher education studies. This fund aims to assist members to further their learning by offering financial support to help with the cost of fees, the purchase of text books, stationery and other items.

The SBFV continues to encourage members to access the educational scholarship as the benefits of study are numerous including increased chances of gaining employment, improved confidence and additional qualifications.

This fund was established through financial support from Medtronic.



Helen Houghton, a recipient of the scholarship, (featured on pages 8–9) continues to study.

Social Club

Aimed at alleviating social isolation, the Social Club plays an important role in providing opportunities for adults with spina bifida to get to know one another. The Social Club is managed by the Advisory Committee which takes an active part in selecting venues and activities as well as making arrangements for these events.

This year the Social Club outings have been subsidised by funding through the City of Melbourne.

Members have watched Shakespeare in the Botanic Gardens, visited the Melbourne Aquarium, sang along at a Melbourne Zoo Twilights concert, gone bowling and lunched at various cafes in a number of suburbs.



Social Club activities are always lots of fun.

Volunteer program

Last year the SBFV introduced a Community Visitors Volunteer program which aims to provide companionship to people with spina bifida, living in their own homes or care facilities, who feel socially isolated.

The objectives of the program are to:

- promote links between people with spina bifida who are socially isolated and the wider community
- encourage and help people with spina bifida who have minimal social contact to get involved in more activities
- provide companionship to those who prefer social interaction in their own environment.

Assistance has also been kindly provided to the SBFV by both skilled and unskilled volunteers in activities such as taking minutes at meetings, conducting research, distributing the quarterly newsletter 'Contact' and at events including the Family camp. The Board of Directors consists of volunteers as does the Advisory Committee.

All of these people play a vital role in helping the SBFV conduct its activities and their efforts are greatly appreciated.

Central Point Resource File project

Created to meet the needs of members (as recommended in the Community Needs Analysis report) as well as the wider spina bifida community, the Central Point Resource File continues to provide current information on relevant service providers.

This file is a central point in which members can access details on information relating to housing, employment, continence, respite, sport and recreation, transport as well as parental support services, to name just some areas. In fact, the file contains information on 19 specific service areas. This information continues to be updated regularly and is available on mc2.

The Central Point Resource File continues to provide current information on relevant service providers.

Independent Living Skills program

All adult members of the SBFV received an Independent Living Skills program manual last year. The manuals contain information which links into seminars on various topics relating to living independently.

The aim of the manuals is to assist adults with spina bifida to develop the skills to lead more independent lives. The production of the manuals has meant that people with spina bifida now have a resource with which to help them achieve this goal.

The first module of the manual is entitled, 'How to Manage Your Money Better' and contains practical money-managing tips from budgeting to where to go for financial help. The second module is entitled, 'Good Food for Life' and contains easy recipes, important details about food safety and advice about health eating.

The third module is entitled, 'Personal Care and Safety' and will contain information on travel, transport, personal safety, as well as self esteem and relationships.

One of the key benefits of the manual is that members can proceed in learning at their own pace and review past learning simply and easily. The most recent, third, module of the program has been funded by The Hugh Williamson Foundation.

An enthusiastic group attended the ILS program seminar.



FINE (Folate Information Network)

The FINE program began with the development of a database of people in Victoria with spina bifida, or a family history of spina bifida or neural tube defect (NTD). At that time there were no folate awareness campaigns in place for the general public, or ways for those in the spina bifida community to access current health information.

Most recently the SBFV has also regularly distributed newsletters and has produced a new folic acid leaflet, as well as maintaining up to date health information on sites such as the Better Health Channel.

In September last year the new food Standard for Australia came into effect which requires wheat flour for bread-making to contain added folic acid.

The SBFV has worked hard to see this Standard introduced. On learning that the New Zealand government was considering overturning the decision on mandatory fortification, the SBFV wrote a letter to the Editor of the New Zealand Herald (which was published) and submitted an official comment through a Public Discussion paper. The decision has subsequently been delayed for two years.

Air time has also been sought, on Melbourne metropolitan and regional television stations, for the Community Service Announcement featuring SBFV Folate Ambassador, Jane Hall.

A number of financial supporters have provided funding for the FINE project over the years. The folic acid leaflet has been produced and distributed with the assistance of the Hugh Williamson Foundation, the Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce and Bayer HealthCare.

Financial Report

Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2010

	2010	2009
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank	109,595	188,345
Other	4,076	5,188
Fixed Assets		
Computers & Office Equipment	11,462	11,102
Total Assets	125,133	204,635
Current Liabilities		
Trade Creditors	1,975	2,475
Other Creditors	4,346	5,376
Provision for Employee Entitlements	9,969	9,731
Total Liabilities	16,290	17,582
Net Assets	108,843	187,053

Profit & Loss Statement for the Year Ended 30 June 2010

	2010	2009
Income		
General	85,795	81,964
Grants	99,498	153,953
Total Income	185,293	235,917
Expenses		
General	204,703	201,216
Grants & Projects	58,799	59,107
Total Expenses	263,502	260,323
Net Income/(Loss)	(78,209)	(24,406)

The above is a summary extracted from the audited accounts.

Key Financial Supporters

Bendigo Bank

City of Melbourne

Family of the late Sir Fletcher
and Rena Jones

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Thank you also to all the people who have made significant contributions to the SBFV through donations of time, products and money.

This Annual Report was designed pro bono by Unifers Graphic Design.

Donations are welcome!

The SBFV relies on the generosity of individuals, organisations and philanthropic trusts to continue its work.

If you would like to help us by making a donation we encourage you to contact the SBFV office on telephone (03) 9663 0075 as we would be delighted to talk to you.

All donations of \$2 and above are tax deductible and go directly to supporting the programs conducted by the SBFV.



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