



Educators and community development workers would agree that

- How and what you learn as a child affects how and what you learn as an adult.
- How and what you learn as an adult shapes your family’s learning environment.
- Where you live affects the learning opportunities available to you.
- Your economic situation affects your ability to take advantage of learning opportunities.

- Where you work affects your ability to improve your skills through training.

In Canada they have developed 4 key pillars of learning communities and our learning programs at MOSHCC are also developed around these same 4 key elements.

Learning to Know involves the development of skills and knowledge needed to function in the world. These skills include literacy, numeracy, critical thinking and general knowledge.

Learning to Do refers to the acquisition of applied skills that are often linked to occupational success, such as computer training, managerial training and apprenticeships.

Learning to Live Together involves developing values of respect and concern for others, fostering social and inter-personal skills, and an appreciation of the diversity of Canadians.

Learning to Be to activities that contribute to the personal development of one's body, mind and spirit— activities that foster creativity, personal discovery and an appreciation of the inherent value provided by these pursuits.



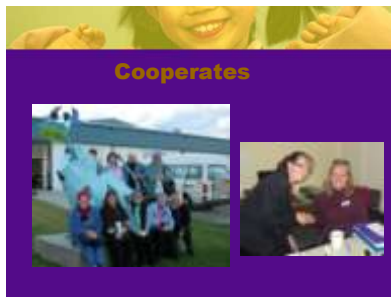
Our learning community is predominately people who live in the Milang and Clayton Bay District but in the past couple of years has further extended to include people right around the lakes and across the whole of Alexandrina Council.



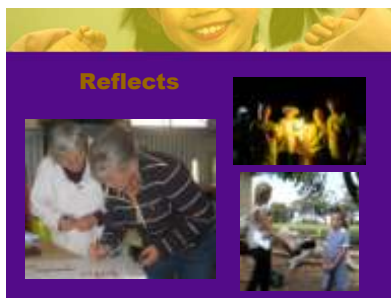
At MOSHCC we encourage people to come together in many and various ways sharing common purposes, values, goals, interests, practices, beliefs and geography. In that coming together there is a shared interest in a particular outcome. That could be as simple as a particular group wanting to learn some new skills to enhance employment opportunities or it could be a regional response to an environmental issue such as we have seen over the past 2 years. This focus encourages identity building which in turn enables connections with community.



Collaboration, cooperation and partnerships are imperative to the success of a learning community. Collaboration engenders shared creation and shared discovery, so important in these rapidly changing times. At MOSHCC collaboration takes a myriad of forms, there is the collaborations that we have with other providers in the region such as TAFE but also the collaborations that learners have in groups about how they will collectively achieve the outcomes they are seeking.



The cooperative way that learning is encouraged at the Centre means that people are both teachers and learners. An example of this is the WOW women's group which meets fortnightly. They plan their program together from shared knowledge and interest and they learn from the experiences of each other. Enjoying a yum cha brunch was a new experience for most of the group and researching the various foods eaten on the internet helped expand knowledge of another culture.



Collectively and individually the community reflects on what their learning needs are. The environmental circumstances have led the community to come together and reflect on what the future might hold, how it can respond to current situations and where opportunities might lie. This has led to an awareness of mental health problems that might arise and the community rising to the challenge of undertaking mental health first aid training, but also the community advocating for increased training in land and

conservation management in a partnership with Tafe SA.



If the community had stayed focused on its original region of Milang then the opportunities such as the Life with Gusto project would never have happened. This project focuses on the physical activity and nutrition in the old Strath DC region using a community development framework. Also the Shoreline project which although not as financially fruitful as we had hoped will still provide opportunities for the whole of the Lakes communities. If we had continued to look just in our back yard we would not have been able to respond proactively to the bigger picture issues.



Mapping the communities social capital and then utilizing the incredible wealth of knowledge, skills and experiences brings people together in ways which are empowering, building peoples sense of well being and also optimism for the future.



The community has developed and nurtured relationships and partnerships across the whole region, but also nationally. A learning community looks for common ground which may not be immediately apparent. One of our strongest relationships has been with Council regarding delivery of the HACC service to the Milang & District community in ways which are meaningful and people centred.

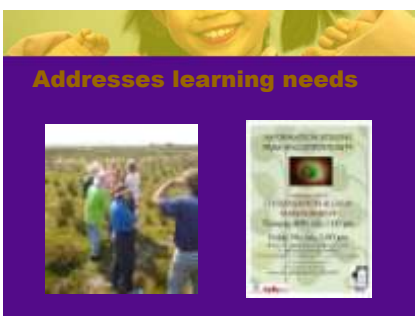


This has been one of our biggest challenges over the past 12 months with so much uncertainty regarding water. However the community has risen to the challenge, attending meetings, learning how to respond to referrals and EIS's, written letters to the editor, responding to surveys. We have also encouraged and provided opportunities for people to come together and talk about the issues. The turtle project has of course been an amazing way of sharing with and educating the broader public about the environmental crisis

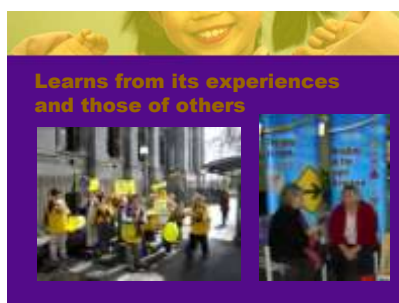
in the region.



Many learning resources are created and are as varied as online resources and the induction process for volunteers at MOSHCC which enables them to receive a unit of competency in the TAFE certificate Active Volunteering



The environmental circumstances has seen us work together with LAP and NRM board to deliver some workshops around acid sulfate soils and plant identification. This has helped people to gain a better understanding of env problems. The Eco Action project is now feeding information into CSIRO for 100 sites around the lakes and in the tributaries which is contributing extensively to the sites which the CSIRO alone would be able to monitor.



Coming together as a community to share successes such as the award builds confidence and encourages others to try something new. I never ceased to be amazed at the generosity of volunteers who share their knowledge and experience with others



And this sharing also help individuals, groups and the community to understand itself, the issues, the changes and encourages proactive responses and creative solutions.

This development has helped the community to survive the stresses that low water levels and uncertain future has causes. Being a learning community has improved resilience.



In the past 12 months we have had 90 volunteers active across all the Centre programs. In our ACE programs we had 394 enrolments in 42 workshops/classes receiving 5600 student contact hours

In our TAFE Transitions program 40 students receiving qualifications in aged care, home and community care, active volunteering and training and assessment.



Our focus on equity and inclusivity has meant that people are able to cope with different perspectives and values and this has increased peoples civic participation and active involvement in our democratic society. Acceptance of diversity has also increased peoples willingness to entertain new ideas and to accept change.



Our aim has been to encourage all in our communities to be lifelong learners, to provide as many learning opportunities as we can and to promote and nurture pro-active partnerships.



So what do we want? To enhance the potential of all citizens. We are well on the way to having an alive, empowered, optimistic community with the skills to be successful but just as we encourage lifelong learners, we know that as a learning community, linked with other learning communities, ours will be a long term on-going project which continues to support and nurture our communities on their individual and collective journeys.



On the journey we will create new knowledge which will be shared

A team from the faculty of education at the Uni of Tasmania has come up with a definition of learning communities for the 21st Century

“Learning communities are made up of people who share a common purpose. They collaborate to draw on individual strengths, respect a variety of perspectives, and actively promote learning opportunities. The outcomes are the creation

of a vibrant, synergistic environment, enhanced potential for all members, and the possibility that new knowledge will be created.”

Sadly we currently grapple with the disconnection of communities in Alexandria.

I ask you, could we share this vision of a learning community for the 21st century, and make the vision a reality for the whole of Alexandria.