

EIGHTH SERIES OF AWIN UDNUM ACTIVITIES

Working Together for Healthy People, Culture and Country

“Between the 18th and 20th March another successful and stimulating series of Awin Udnum workshops were held in Kowanyama at the Atharpuch Mums and Bubs Family Health Centre. Workshops explored the interconnecting themes of healthy lifestyle, healthy people and healthy culture by working together, sharing resources and knowledge. Our ninth series of workshops will be held at the Crossing in May,” said Coordinator, Bernadette Boscacci.

Project partners and community participants joined together to deliver a range of healthy cooking, arts, culture, health education, environmental and community development activities. We learned and shared simple and effective things we can do to improve our health in everyday life.

The unpredictable late wet season weather meant workshops could not be held out bush. They were held in the back two rooms and hallway of the Centre, where Apunipima Health Clinics are now run. It was a place where participants spoke about times when the workshop room was the hospital - having given birth there or were there as babies.

Workshops were for all ages. Participants included Elders, adults, men’s and women’s group representatives, children, secondary students and their teachers.

Senior Kunjen Elder, Alma Wason joined the workshop for two of the days and participated in the arts activities, as well as sharing her weaving, language and writing skills, unique historical perspectives, and other traditional knowledge. Alma suggested the name *Awin Udnum* for the program referring to the “right, true or good path”.



A display of beautiful old (and more recent) weavings and shields that are part of the community cultural collection was set up in the workshop room. Some items on display were recently repatriated from Townsville and donated to the *Kowanyama Museum Collection*.

Special thanks to Bruce & Elaine Sommer, Jeanie and John Adams, and the *Yalga Binbi Institute* for the return of these valuable items to Kowanyama.

Alma Wason and Fay David both got to see and hold beautiful old *abmbin* baskets made by both their mothers over forty to fifty years ago.

School cultural activities

On the first day, a group of secondary school students and their teachers came along to be part of the workshop. In the morning, Rowena Aidan, Monica Josiah, Chrissy Aidan & Judith Brumby helped Viv Sinnamon lead the Cultural Mapping activity. Students' clan totems and country were put onto maps of the area. Students and their teachers learned more about the young people's cultural connections to country and each other.



Later, we all went on a Community Nursery and *Demonstration Garden* Tour led by Viv, the *Apunipima* and *Awin Udnum* project workers. Students learned about trees and plants of cultural and historical significance, e.g. the prison tree outside the Cultural Centre, traditional bush foods and medicines. Everyone gathered to meet Glenn Duncan and Daniel Bracegirdle from the *Jimmy Little Foundation*, who had come along to introduce themselves and tell us about

their project, which was happening at the school that same week.

Good food for good health

While at the garden we collected some vegetables and herbs before all returning to the workshop venue to cook up a healthy lunch for everybody to share. *Apunipima* staff Kirby and Derlene led this healthy cooking activity, supported by the *Awin Udnum* and Jimmy Little crews and School staff. We ate really well all week actually, thanks to Fiona Millard's cooking and coordination, which produced many yummy and healthy meals and snacks for us to share.

We enjoyed healthy morning, afternoon teas and lunches each day, which included a beef and vegie stew, chicken and vegie curry, steamed rice, ham and salad wraps, freshly made scones, fruit, yoghurt and muesli treats, cheese and tomato crackers, fresh fruit, nuts and raisin toast.

Sharon set up her immunisation trolley in the workshop on one of the days and participants were able to get flu shots if they wanted. Cath also ran some of her clinic activities out of the workshop. In between the health promotion and education sessions, experienced and emerging local artists worked on artworks that explored the themes we'd been discussing. It was a great atmosphere of skills sharing, support, experimentation and multimedia arts practice.

Key participants included Rowena Aidan, Rochelle Kitchener, Gavin Beasley, Priscilla Josiah, Lillian Josiah, Alma Wason, Monica Josiah, Lettia Brumby and Leonard Gregory. Bernadette Boscacci worked with the project artists, facilitating various art activities such as acrylic and ink paintings, drawings on canvas and paper, weaving and beading. Some

beautiful works were developed and will be on display in the community at an exhibition in May.

Use of photographic media

Throughout the workshop, Fiona Millard led *Photovoice* activities with everyone at the workshop. *Photovoice* helps people to record, reflect and evaluate personal and community health issues activities in a creative way. A number of cameras were handed out and people were shown how to use them. Everyone was given an opportunity to take photos or be photographed as part of the health activity. Some photos were later printed out and put up on walls for visitors and participants to look at, think and talk about with others.

People would like very much to be involved in talking about ways to get more and better involvement in women's, men's and other groups. They were very interested in making their own community promotional resources including health posters, recipe books and calendars.

Fiona has plans to support this community idea through the *Photovoice* project.

On the second day, the school students and staff put their handprints on the project family tree, which was started in the last workshop. They painted their palms and printed them onto the group canvas, adding leaves to the tree trunk that Billy Doolan had painted for us.

Ways to Relax

The last day of the workshop was *International Happiness Day*. The day started with Larry Tierney who led a morning session "*Relaxing with worries*" which looked at and shared ways to deal with anxiety.

People who took part contributed valuable personal experiences and said that the relaxation activity really helped them to relax and clear their minds.

After morning tea, the school students again joined a session with Dr Bogdan who taught us *Laughing Yoga*. Everyone

learnt that there some different kinds of *laughing yoga*, and ways to relax and breathe.

The success of the workshops was only possible with all the different organisations working together to make Awin udnum interesting and fun for all those people who took part. We must thank everyone".

Through the week a number of visiting Health Promotion, Clinical and Allied Health Professionals led participatory Health Education Sessions as part of the workshop program.

These included:

Diabetes Journey to Good Health with Cath Dowey of *Apunipima*

Sexual Health – Women's group with Sharon Hawkins of *Queensland Health*

Sexual Health - Men's Group with Alphos Chuma of *Queensland Health*

Sexual Health Protective Behaviour with Marita Box of *Queensland Health*

Nutrition, food labelling, healthy cooking and Dental Care activities with Fiona Millard from *Apunipima*, Kirby Murtha and Derlene Grey

Tackling Smoking with Josh Mene of *Apunipima*

Mental and Emotional Health with Larry Tierney of the *Royal Flying Doctor Service*

Art Therapy with Bernadette Boscacci

Laughing yoga session with Dr Bogdan added to the enjoyment of the moment.

Thank you team !!

Most of us found it to be a really silly, fun and really funny activity. We learned that there are many health benefits from laughing yoga. It is a way to help relieve anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart and other sickness.

Later that day, Bernadette led the group in a creative meditation & reflection activity where participants created their own personal mandala, using pastels, crayons and ink.



Participant comments

" We'd like to do some more of these exercises and hold more discussions like that (Sexual Health & protective Behaviours) as part of Women's Group"

" The breathing and relaxation exercises were really good, it stopped my headache"

" The relaxation exercises helped me to get focussed and release stress"

" I felt relaxed all day after those relaxation and laughing sessions"

" I shared some of the relaxation techniques I learnt with my son last night, and made me feel good to be able to do this and help him a bit"

" I learned a lot about healthy diet and how dangerous smoking is for you"

" The mandalas were a good exercise. They helped me to spend some time reflecting on myself and gave me some new ideas for designs"

"Let's make sure this sort of program continues into the future, working together as a community"



SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL CULTURAL STUDIES

Teacher's involvement applauded



Last term teachers Nate Brown and Aaron Davey have taken their students for classes investigating the building of traditional shelters of the lower Mitchell River. Students worked with Land Office staff and teachers to develop models of wet and dry season shelters following classroom presentations on seasonal designs and bush



materials that were used in delta palm country and stringy bark (messmate) top end country.

Students completed the traditional shelter program with a Gooseberry Creek bush trip to talk about bush materials used to build a simple bough shade. Students constructed the shelter in the school yard as their final project. Activities of the program related to development of student abilities to research, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate a discrete project as part of their studies.



During the last *Awin Udnum* healthy lifestyle and culture workshop at the old Mothers and Babies Centre students worked with Land Office staff and community in identifying the individual student's clan membership and association with country.

Students were involved in other bush activities that included cutting and boxing two native bee nests, bush food and medicines, making bark dishes and handles for stone axes.



This year teachers will continue integrating cultural activities into class works and be a part of preparations for participation in the Laura Dance Festival in June.