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MEDIA RELEASE

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Italians embrace wellbeing during Mental Health Week

On 14 October Co.As.It. held an information session for Italian-Australians that encouraged them to become more involved in activities and in the community. The event was part of **Mental Health Week**, and had the theme: 'Sign up, Link in, Get involved'.

Co.As.It. psychologist Anna Piccolo presented a talk on **Volunteering and its beneficial role on mental health and general well being**. Special guests spoke of their experiences as volunteers and the impact volunteering has had on their lives. Felice Montrone described his many roles in the Italian community as a volunteer, ranging from organising the Abruzzo Earthquake Appeal and raising vast funds, as well as volunteering to help find accommodation for the Italian Youth during World Youth Day 2008.

Two volunteers from the CVS program (Community Visitors Scheme) gave their experience of visiting the elderly in nursing homes. Sergio Arciuli, a relatively new volunteer, and Maria Lizzo, a seasoned volunteer highlighted the amazing positive effects their visits had on the elderly people. Moreover, they also described how much they also gained as volunteers by spending a few hours a week with them.

Co.As.It. Youth Worker Nino Lo Giudice demonstrated some interesting ways in which technology may be used to connect with other people. Attendees were encouraged to learn how to use computers, starting with the Co.As.It. beginner computer courses for Italian speakers. Two current students from the computer course spoke of the knowledge they have gained from attending the course and strongly recommended it to everyone.

Drug and Alcohol Worker Francesco Mendolicchio together with herbalist Daniela Demarchi presented information on alternative medicines and the use of herbs. The information given was received with great interest and attention as it provided detailed accounts of different herbs and plants which may be used for specific health problems.

The day was an overall success and Co.As.It. would like to thank everyone who participated and contributed to make it so.

For more information on how to become involved as a volunteer in the Community Visitors Scheme or in the companionship program or about computer courses for beginners, call Co.As.It. on 9564 0744.

Media contact:-

Felicity Fedele
Marketing Coordinator
Ph: 02 9564 0744
Email: felicity.fedele@coasit.org.au

HEAD OFFICE
Casa d'Italia 67 Norton Street
Leichhardt NSW 2040
Tel (02) 9564 0744 Fax (02) 9569 6648

ITALIAN BILINGUAL SCHOOL
Tel (02) 9572 9077
MULTIMEDIA RESOURCE CENTRE
Tel (02) 9564 0755

WESTERN SYDNEY
108 Wigram Street
Harris Park NSW 2150
Tel (02) 9893 9222 Fax (02) 9893 9277