

Healthy living



Have trolley will travel: Amelia Jones helps her disabled brother Braeden on board the Blue Mountains trolley tours during a recent visit by the family. The Jones family are working hard to help other families with a disabled adult or child find great travel options.

Mum's focus on wheel issues

By B.C Lewis

A Sydney mum has started her own website focusing on travelling with a disabled child or adult. The website www.havewheelchairwilltravel.net was created last December after her family visited America and Julie Jones, whose son Braeden, 17, has cerebral palsy, struggled to find meaningful information.

"I found little information on travelling with someone in a wheelchair. As an ex-travel consultant I knew there would be plenty of information on websites about access to attractions but I wanted a more personal account of general issues of travelling with a wheelchair," Mrs Jones said.

"I was looking for reassurances, that managed well and with planning, families like mine could have a fantastic holiday. When asking questions I kept hitting brick walls and it took digging to find the information I was after and I found myself thinking "we can't be the first family to travel with a wheelchair!", but at times it felt that way."

She says the site "seems to be fulfilling a real need".

"Disability is a niche market but an important one," Mrs Jones said. "If accommodation or an activity isn't right it can ruin a holiday when you are travelling with a wheelchair." The aim of the website is to inform and encourage parents of children with a disability or adults with a disability about travel opportunities and attractions that are wheelchair friendly or accessible. Our aim is to try and get the information out to as many families as we can in the hope that our research may benefit others."

Recently Mrs Jones visited the Blue Mountains region for the bicentenary celebrations with husband Mark and children Braeden and Amelia and are set to return this month. Blue Mountains Lithgow Oberon Tourism are hosting us as a family so we can see more of the accessible Blue Mountains.

"We are passionate about the area and love nothing more than telling families there are things to do with a wheelchair. I guess the nature of the Mountains means people think bushwalking tracks just do not fit with a wheelchair holiday or day trip."

During their last visit the family took in the following disabled-friendly activities, the accessible Trolley Tour, Echo Point, they did the walk at Govetts Leap, had lunch at the Carrington Hotel, which is always a favourite, and stopped at Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens on the way home. (The Gazette understands that because of ageing hydraulics in the wheelchair accessible shuttle trolley is not always available but over 55 per cent of Blue Mountains bus company buses are low floor wheelchair accessible vehicles). Mrs Jones said the website and facebook "covers cafes, playgrounds and travel tips so it fits into that category and definitely is an area a little neglected in mainstream media".

They write more about their favourite Blue Mountains activities on their website and at www.facebook.com/havewheelchairwilltravel.

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Helping men lose their large bellies

Former Olympian Stuart McIntosh knows the importance of fitness. He competed in two Olympic Games in the slalom canoe event and consistently ranked in the top 10 in the world during his career.

Now the Mount Riverview father of three, personal trainer and Australian Institute of Sport coach is bringing over 20 years of expertise in fitness and health to the Blue Mountains.

"I am an open book to be used for anyone who wants the information I hold," said Mr McIntosh.

"I can help young athletes

with their first gym programs, help men over 30 get back into shape or club athletes make the jump they want. I am all about core stability strength and targeting individual needs."

Mr McIntosh decided to start My Fitness Mentor because of the number of people who asked him for advice.

"I helped my bank manager lose 20 kilograms. He just needed to focus on a few key points that would make a difference and once it started to happen he asked for more tips."

Mr McIntosh believes the social and economic effects on

the long-term health of men are neglected. For many men their commitment to work and family often leaves them overweight and unfit.

"I see so many men between the age of 20 to 60 with large bellies. I mean seriously why not use an Olympian to help get back into shape?"

"Fortunately I find people that do contact me just need the holes in their knowledge base filled and a push in the right direction."

For more information on the services he provides go to www.myfitnessmentor.com.au.

Milena Muscatello

BA(W)(Psych), Post Grad (Couple Therapy)



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