



Health

South Eastern Sydney
Local Health Network

Media Release

22 October, 2014

“Fear and Shame”: using theatre to ease the stigma of mental illness

The St George and Maroubra Mental Health Services are partnering with the Multicultural Health Service, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, Marrickville Council, Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW Inc, Greek Orthodox Community of NSW Ltd and the Hellenic Art Theatre to address issues of stigma and mental illness in the Greek-speaking community.

As part of Mental Health Month, the Hellenic Art Theatre will be performing the play “Fear and Shame”, a family drama that follows the experiences of a Greek migrant family when their youngest son develops a mental illness.

“People within culturally and linguistically diverse communities can experience high levels of stigma associated with mental illness,” explained Klara Takas, Greek Bilingual Counsellor, at the St George Mental Health Services.

The Greek community has strong theatrical traditions and an established history of using theatre for educational purposes. Previously the Hellenic Art Theatre worked with South Eastern Sydney Local Health District on the highly successful “Alive and Out There” theatre project which focused on issues around cancer and stigma.

“We are excited to partner with the Hellenic Art Theatre as part of Mental Health Month, and hope that by using the medium of theatre we can engage the Greek community to talk about mental illness and stigma,” Ms Takas said.

The Greek speaking community is one of the largest ethnic groups living in the St George area, with more than 5,440 people born in Greece, and 17,280 people who speak Greek residing in the local area.

Marrickville and Canterbury also have large populations of people with Greek heritage. In Marrickville, 6.4 per cent of the population speak Greek at home, while in the Canterbury area this figure rises to 9.8 per cent of the population.

“Fear and Shame” was written by Dushan Ristevski. It is directed by Stavros Economidis, and produced by Evelyn Tsavalas. The play will be performed in Greek with English surtitles at the Greek Theatre – Mantouridion, Building 36, 142 Addison Road, Marrickville.

The full schedule is as follows:

31 October – 16 November 2014
8pm Friday and Saturdays, 5pm Sundays.

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District media contact: 0409 973 612

Funding for the project was provided by the Multicultural Health Service, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, and a number of sponsors from the Greek community. Marrickville Council has also provided funding to produce a DVD of the play.

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For further information on “Fear and Shame” please contact Evelyn on 0413 989 007.