

Australian Chiropractic Unit Promotes Awareness

Dynamic Chiropractic Staff

The Australian Spinal Research Foundation (ASRF) used a unique and successful trial method in 1990 to spread knowledge and appreciation of chiropractic in Australia. The Mobile Spinal Health Awareness Unit was designed to teach individuals about spine-related problems, suggest applicable preventative measures, and recommend appropriate health care. The ASRF developed a "traveling" program that would take the Mobile Unit to schools, small companies, and public venues so people could learn through charts, models, spinal screenings, and chiropractic staffers the effectiveness of chiropractic health care.

The Mobile Unit consists of chiropractic illustrations and materials fitted into two separate sets of folding panels. It also uses models of a full-size human skeleton, full-size flexible spine, degenerative vertebrae, a knee joint, and it carries a spinal analysis machine. Chiropractors conducted a total of 6,740 spinal screenings. Participants received a copy of the results, and chiropractors kept a separate record for research analysis at the Macquarie University Centre for Chiropractic and Osteopathy.

The ASRF asked Dr. David Lovett, newly retired from 30 years of practice, to serve as public education officer. Dr. Lovett's role was to present talks about the spine, and the nervous and muscular systems. Depending upon the group, Dr. Lovett follows the introductory talk with a more detailed question and answer session and hands-on activities.

The Mobile Unit depends upon local chiropractors to distribute brochures five or six weeks prior to its visit, and to lend their professional services. Several community chiropractors bought advertisements in their local newspapers at their own expense, and personally contacted the media to promote the Mobile Unit's visit.

In 1990, the Mobile Unit covered 27,000 kilometers around Australia; it was on display in all capital cities in Australia except Brisbane, and in 41 other community locations. A total of 171 talks on spinal health were presented to 6,515 students and 287 teachers in 73 schools. Another 91 talks were given to 1,868 employees and management at small companies and government offices. The ASRF has pronounced the program a great success.

The Mobile Unit has potential in disaster relief situations, as demonstrated by its work at the the Charleville Flood in Queensland, Australia. The ACA Queensland branch and the ASRF carried out a one-week program of free chiropractic care for victims and workers in the Charleville Flood. The team, which included Dr. Lovett and Dr. Bob Barham, worked out of two vacant upstairs rooms in the Charleville Town Hall without electricity, so all treatment continued until it became too dark. The Mobile Unit team saw a total of 518 patients in five days.

For those considering development of a similar unit for school education, disaster relief, or public awareness, the ASRF has available a detailed, 81-page report on the development and operation of the Mobil Spinal Health Awareness Unit. Write to: Australian Spinal Research Foundation Ltd, P.O. Box 1047 Springwood Queensland 4127.

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