

eyeson autism

Brisbane right behind global 'Light it up Blue' campaign



Brisbane's most iconic buildings Light it up Blue for Autism Awareness Month

Photo: Hendrix Photography

In a coup for AEIOU, many of Brisbane's most iconic landmarks turned blue in April, as part of the Global 'Light it up Blue' campaign, which originated in the United States. We also worked with the artist Tim Sharp and the Brisbane City Council to illuminate Tim's artwork onto Brisbane's William Jolly Bridge.

In an incredibly exciting campaign for the Foundation, local, state and federal governments joined us to raise awareness and support for people with autism, along

with local businesses, the media and our ambassadors, including Tim Sharp and Broncos great Corey Parker.

Families and staff from our centres supported the campaign, with centres hosting 'blue days' and encouraging local schools and businesses to join in. AEIOU Foundation Camira parent Justine Davidson encouraged 10 McDonald's restaurants in Ipswich to 'Go Blue for AEIOU' capturing plenty of attention thanks to River 94.9FM and the Queensland Times.

Why best practice early intervention is vital for the whole community

To coincide with Autism Awareness Month, AEIOU released a study commissioned from Synergies Economic Consulting which shows it's possible to save more than \$2 million over the lifetime of a person with autism who has had access to best practice early intervention. The Synergies Economic Consulting study reflects international findings, with a 2007 report in the United States showing the lifetime societal costs of autism exceed \$35 billion, and a 2009 United Kingdom study predicts autism costs the UK community \$28 billion every year.

In line with the Study, AEIOU Chairman, James Morton called for an incremental direct investment from the Federal Government of \$40 million per year, to make early intervention accessible to all children with autistic disorder. He said every teacher in Australia should receive training at university to help them identify the needs of children with autism, and better support them to achieve their potential. AEIOU also promoted the need for the National Disability Action Plan to be delivered with priority, with a coordinated approach to accommodation, community participation, post school life skill programs, and employment.

Lynn's Lunch is fashion forward with Alex Perry

Fashion royalty will descend on Brisbane in July, when Alex Perry joins AEIOU for a very special Lynn's Lunch at Victoria Park.

This is an event not to be missed, with Alex joined by Charlotte Dawson to host a panel of guests who will share rare personal insights about their greatest triumphs and adversities, which have shaped their philosophy on life. There will also be a sprinkling of style, with our guest panel divulging their style secrets and favourite trends for winter. AEIOU parent Paul Betros will share his own story of hope and courage, and you will learn more about the families AEIOU strives to support, and how the Lynn Wright Memorial Fund can support

families who need financial assistance. Great raffle prizes will be available at the luncheon and your support by participating in these activities will be greatly appreciated. Our ticket prices cover the cost of the event and the real fundraising comes from donations and raffles on the day with proceeds directed to the Lynn Wright Memorial Fund's scholarship program. Philanthropically minded donors can make a massive difference in the life of a child with autism by giving a full bursary to support a child at AEIOU. To book go to aeiou.org.au/ **Lynns-Lunch**. If you're unable to make it, but would like to make a donation instead, contact Jemma Riding on 07 3320 7914.

Special guest Alex Perry will join Lynn's Lunch in July



what's on

Lynn's Lunch 12 July

Lynn's Lunch is returning with special guest Alex Perry. This glamorous and inspiring event is a highlight of the AEIOU year, and is your chance to directly help a family that otherwise may not be able to access AEIOU's early intervention program. Tickets are \$125 each and you can book online at aeiou.org.au/Lynns-Lunch. Your support of the raffles and your tax deductible donations will help raise funds to provide access to the program for a child with autism. Through your generosity, you really will help make a difference.

AEIOU Research Conference 14 September

AEIOU is hosting this inaugural conference to raise awareness of current autism research and developments, such as the DSM V (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Five).

The conference will feature keynote speaker Professor Rita Jordon, who will host a half-day workshop the day before (September 13) focused on practical strategies for managing challenging behaviours. Tickets will be available from July at aeiou.org.au/research-conference.

Take a Hike Townsville 16 September

Take a Hike is going troppo! After its success in 2011, Take a Hike is back in Townsville with a new route and is now taking place in September. Participation is a feat complete with physical and mental challenges and connecting like-minded people over the 40 kilometre hike. For enquiries, call Michael Brazier, Major Gifts and Sponsorship Manager on 07 3320 7916. To sign on or sponsor a hiker, go to aeiou.org.au/Take-a-Hike.

Take a Hike Brisbane 14 October

Plans for the River City's Take a Hike are underway, and we are already receiving registrations! For enquiries, ring Michael Brazier, Major Gifts and Sponsorships Manager on 07 3320 7916. Our Take a Hike challenges include eight weeks of training to get you into shape prior to the event. Registrations will open in July, at aeiou.org.au/Take-a-Hike.

A word from our CEO

Alan Smith – CEO

Welcome to Eyes on Autism. It's been an exciting year, with a number of projects delivering great results for AEIOU. As we go to print, our Take a Hike 2012 program is in action, with our Toowoomba team just over the finish line, setting the pace for the Gold Coast, Brisbane and Townsville hikers. The support received from our hikers and all these communities is tremendous, and I sincerely thank our hikers and supporters.

We're also looking forward to Lynn's Lunch and welcoming our long-term ambassador Alex Perry back to Brisbane, where he will visit one of our centres and meet children and families enrolled in the program. Lynn's Lunch is a special event, where you have the chance to donate funds to support children who need financial assistance in order to attend AEIOU.

In this edition, we reflect on Autism Awareness Month and share real family stories, along with how you can help to make a difference to other families just like these. You could consider hosting an event with AEIOU as a beneficiary, sponsor an event, leave a gift to AEIOU in your Will, introduce workplace giving to your company with AEIOU as beneficiary, make a tax deductible donation before the end of the financial year, or make a recurring gift.

With this newsletter you will find a survey and a fact sheet about autism. By completing this survey, you will help us to know more about your needs and wishes as a supporter. We are grateful to receive all feedback, which helps us to better understand what you would like to achieve from your experience with AEIOU, and how we can tailor the news and information so as to better communicate and engage with you. Thank you for your ongoing support. I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

Kind regards,
Alan Smith
CEO



Quick Bites

AEIOU recently received approval to extend our licence to enrol three new children in our Townsville Centre this year. We are also expanding our reach in the Gold Coast, with Goodstart now leasing AEIOU a second classroom to cater for six new child placements, resulting in a total of 18 enrolments in the centre. The Foundation still aims to construct a purpose built centre at the Gold Coast, and is delighted with the opportunity to support more local families in the meantime.



A great day at Paddle for Kids

Making a splash on the Brisbane River

The rain held off for AEIOU's annual Paddle for Kids event in April for a fun-filled day on the water and on dry land to raise funds for the AEIOU early intervention program.

Braving the weather, hundreds of Brisbane locals, including corporate supporters, turned up, along with families, friends and staff from AEIOU.

The event featured a series of kayak relay races, face painting, jumping castles, bumper bubbles and an array of delicious food and drink.

There was friendly yet fierce competition on the water with 27 teams vying for the prestigious Golden Paddle Award, with the Chairman's IV eventually taking out the title. Team Pacific won the highest fundraiser award after generating \$2,753, the Dippy Sippy team won the best dressed award (after coordinating a marvellous Tele Tubbies theme) and the Wally Pops won the Bradman Award.

A special mention also goes to Shari's Angels. Shari, who attends our Nathan centre, inspired her family to enter three teams, which together raised \$3250.

The generous-spirited St Lauries cooking squad led by Mike Hudson managed the BBQ and formed two teams to join the kayak races. South Bank Corporation and the University of Queensland devoted volunteer teams to help our fundraising team deliver an enjoyable event. A total of \$16,654 was raised from the event. Thank you to all of our supporters. We look forward to an even bigger Paddle for Kids in 2013.

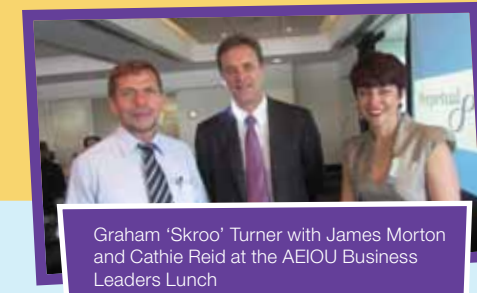
AEIOU welcomes Brisbane's leaders in business

AEIOU hosted more than 100 Brisbane corporate leaders at a lunch at the Strand at Rugby Quay in May. AEIOU shared information about how the program works, who it helps, how it has benefited our wider community and future growth plans.

Flight Centre Founder and Managing Director Graham 'Skroo' Turner gave an entertaining speech about how he founded his business, his philosophy, and tactics for success.

The event was MC'd by Channel Nine's Andrew Lofthouse, and AEIOU Business Ambassador, Cathie Reid, Managing Partner of the APHS Pharmacy Group and winner of the National Commonwealth Bank Business Owner Award category, 2011 Telstra Business Women's Awards, gave an inspirational presentation.

Guests also heard about the development and future of Flight Centre, a successful multi-national corporation established in the early 1980s, and how it was led to operate more than 2000 agencies globally employing over 30,000 people across 30 brands.



Graham 'Skroo' Turner with James Morton and Cathie Reid at the AEIOU Business Leaders Lunch

Camira centre replaces Park Ridge

Our Camira centre opened its doors in January, starting the new school year in a bigger, brighter centre which underwent extensive refurbishments over the holidays. The larger centre brings many positives for the Foundation, including the opportunity to increase enrolment capacity.

With AEIOU supporters, Hutchinson Builders, and dedicated staff, a fresh coat of paint was applied and a backyard blitz took place. The new centre opened its doors on schedule, welcoming existing and new families to the program. Congratulations to Centre Manager, Amy Harding and her team for their hard work, creating an inviting centre.



The Dippy Sippy team, led by Sippy Downs Centre Manager and her staff won the Best Costume Award



AEIOU Chairman James Morton was joined by AEIOU Director and Three Plus Chief of Staff Peter Kelly, Three Plus Consultant Megan Houston and Monty Summers to take out the Golden Paddle Award.



The St Lauries BBQ was sought after on the day

AEIOU hosts bi-annual Parent Conference

To coincide with Autism Awareness Month, AEIOU hosted a free parent conference to support families in our program with access to autism experts from a range of fields, including psychiatry, paediatrics, occupational therapy and education. The conference, which took place on Saturday 20 April, was opened by The Honourable Tracy Davis, Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

Families were able to learn new strategies to employ at home to reduce challenging behaviours, teach children how to develop functional life skills, how to build an effective support community around your child, and how to navigate the maze of autism interventions.

We thank our keynote speakers for joining us, who among them included Dr Michael McDowell, Dr John Varghese, Dr Jacqui Roberts, and Lyndall Franklin.

Turning blue at AEIOU

Every AEIOU centre celebrated Autism Awareness Month by hosting blue day parties. In Toowoomba, children dressed in blue and played with blue goop and playdough, and the teaching and therapy team donned outrageous blue outfits. At Bray Park, every room in the centre celebrated Autism Awareness in their own unique way by exploring art, craft and sensory activities focused on including the colour blue in activities that would further our young people's learning goals and interests. At Nathan, the entire centre went blue, with balloons and streamers decorating the front foyer and beyond, and Channel Nine's Today Show joined the children for a 'Happy Blue Day' party complete with an enormous blue cake. Some parents took the party to their friends, families and colleagues, including Camira mum Danielle Butcher who created a masterpiece to share with her work colleagues in the form of a decadent cake.



Taylor Kennedy enjoys a dance at our Bray Park centre's blue day



McDonald's restaurants got behind AEIOU on 21 April 2012

Golden arches turned blue for AEIOU

McDonald's restaurants across Ipswich turned blue for AEIOU on Saturday 21 April 2012, raising awareness and funds to assist children with autism in our Camira centre. Over \$1600 was raised to help AEIOU Camira renew its playground.

McDonald's joined AEIOU's 'Light it up Blue' awareness campaign to support the Camira centre after being approached by AEIOU Parent Fundraising Coordinator, Justine Davison, who hoped one restaurant would agree to participate in International Autism Awareness Month initiatives.

"To have not one, but 10, McDonald's restaurants agree to come on board surpassed my expectations!" Ms Davison said. "From a personal perspective, as a mother of a child with autism, the support of McDonald's tells me that businesses and individuals are keen to work together to help find solutions for children with autism, and we know investing in early intervention supports these children to achieve their maximum potential."

Participating restaurants were located at Bellbird Park, Booval, Brassall, Goodna, Ipswich CBD, Orion Shopping Centre, Oxley, Redbank Plaza, Riverlink Shopping Centre, and Springfield Lakes.

Staff wore blue AEIOU t-shirts and decorated their dining areas, while also raising funds. For McDonald's Queensland Community Marketing Representative, Annette Taylor, it was an easy decision to support AEIOU Foundation and International Autism Awareness Month.

"We saw this as an opportunity for McDonald's to be involved in a local-level initiative to engage the community and support AEIOU Foundation, which offers amazing assistance to children with autism and their families in our community."



AEIOU joins Global Light it up Blue Campaign

When the sun went down on Monday April 2, cities all over the globe united in the international 'Light it up Blue' campaign for World Autism Awareness Day. In Brisbane, AEIOU lit up City Hall, King George Square, the Treasury Casino, the Wheel of Brisbane, QPAC, Kurilpa Bridge and William Jolly Bridge which shone blue like the Empire State Building, the Rockefeller Centre, the Sydney Opera House, and other iconic buildings.

To launch the campaign, AEIOU hosted a breakfast event at the Gallery of Modern Art on Sunday April 1, releasing new statistics on the cost of autism from a report commissioned from Synergies Economic Consulting.

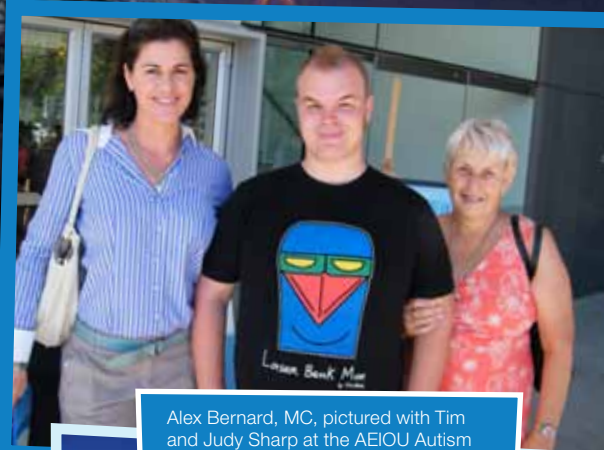
We were joined by South Australian Senator Nick Xenophon, The Hon. Andrew Lamming MP for Bowman, The Hon. Tracy Davis, Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services along with Brisbane's Lord Mayor Graham Quirk, Autism Awareness Managing Director, Nicole Rogerson, and Dignity for Disability President, Rick Neagle. AEIOU was also delighted to welcome our ambassadors, including the artist, Tim Sharp and Broncos great, Corey Parker.

The event was MC'd by Alex Bernard and several families joined us, with children blowing bubbles, painting and playing in our new AEIOU bumper bubbles, which were sponsored in part by Aqua Bubble, and proved to be a great hit with children of all ages.

Tim Sharp played an integral role in the campaign, working with AEIOU in an exciting project to illuminate four pieces of his artwork onto the William Jolly Bridge throughout April. His work included a special 'Light it up Blue' piece created specifically for the campaign, along with favourites such as 'A Double Shot of Happiness' and 'Raining Cats and Dogs'.

Several AEIOU families bravely shared their stories in the media to help raise awareness. We thank Chris Gates, Sam and Matt Kahler, Phaedra and Glen Jones, Gail Boike, Danielle Butcher, and Justine Davison, who are some of the parents who talked about their own experiences.

We also thank our ambassadors and supporters. Plans are already underway to deliver a complete campaign in 2013, to engage schools and workplaces all over Queensland.



Alex Bernard, MC, pictured with Tim and Judy Sharp at the AEIOU Autism Awareness Month Launch



The Wheel of Brisbane turned blue, and donated a portion of ticket sales to AEIOU during the first week of April



AEIOU speech pathologist, Becky Mead, with student, Ben Butcher



AEIOU Ambassador, Corey Parker, got into the spirit at our launch event

Nathan's sensory garden is supporting children to engage in new sensory experiences

Nathan Sensory Garden - now open

Our Nathan centre has a new sensory garden, and we think it's amazing! The Garden features spinning wheels, a lady bug shaped xylophone, and edible plants. The garden was created to support the centre's education program and therapy support to help children engage with new smells, textures, sounds, tastes and sights. Children can explore and engage in a number of new sensory experiences that can be very important to their development. It also helps with relaxation and provides a unique play environment for children to learn and express themselves. We thank the Bryan Foundation for donating funds to create the garden, Hutchies for their support in constructing it, and the Boike Family, for donating and laying the turf and plants. Gail and Nicholas have a son, Kayden who attends our Nathan centre.



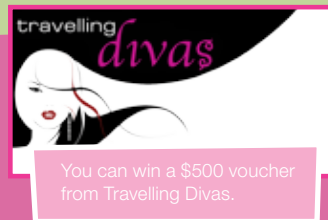
Psychology and research update

In May, AEIOU's Research Fellow and Psychology Manager, Dr Jessica Paynter, attended the International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR) in Toronto to present preliminary outcomes for a cohort of children who have attended AEIOU's Nathan centre. IMFAR is an annual scientific meeting which aims to promote the sharing of information about autism including its causes, nature, and treatments and includes researchers from around the world from across a range of disciplines including psychology, medicine, genetics, and biology. The Study of the Effects of an Australian Centre-Based Early Intervention Program for Children with Autism was delivered by Dr Paynter with James Scott, Wendi Beamish, Michael Duhig and Helen Heussler and was recently published in The Open Paediatric Medicine Journal last month. The study measures the impact AEIOU Foundation's program has on children's cognitive, interpersonal and fine and gross motor skill development.

You can read the article on our website, under 'News and Events'.

A new research and psychology team has been created, and is led by Dr Paynter to manage all research, assessment and psychology activities across AEIOU.

Travelling-Diva style!



You can win a \$500 voucher from Travelling Divas.

Have you ever dreamed of a unique holiday experience that truly rejuvenates your mind, body and spirit? Andrea Powis did, and so created Travelling Divas, an extraordinary online travel company that delivers the ultimate holiday experiences for women who want to explore their dream destinations with a touch of luxury, plenty of pampering, extraordinary food, and experiences you can't get anywhere else.

Travelling Divas is a supporter of AEIOU Foundation and will host a number of bespoke events on the Foundation's behalf over the year. Better yet, as part of this partnership Andrea is giving two women the chance to win a \$500 voucher to go towards a trip of their choice. Whether you're keen to explore Spain, Italy, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom or New York, Travelling Divas has it covered.

To learn more about Travelling Divas and their exquisite experience, go to www.travellingdivas.com.au.

To enter the competition, go to aeiou.org.au/divasregister.



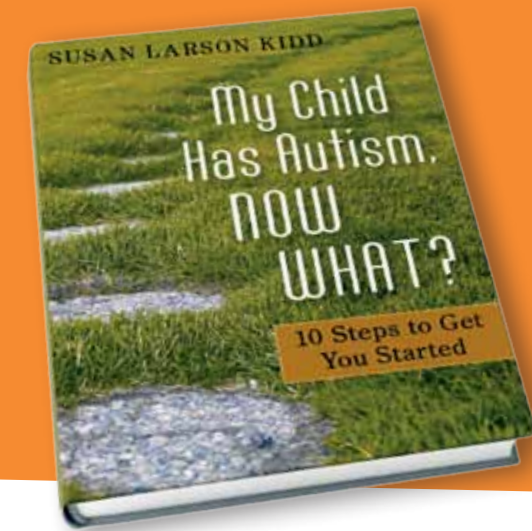
At AEIOU we have teamed with Footprint Books to review publications that may assist families in our program or community.

TITLE:
My Child Has Autism, now What? 10 Steps to Get You Started.

AUTHOR:
Susan Larson Kidd

PUBLISHED: 2011, Jessica Kingsley
PUBLISHERS: London, Philadelphia

THE REVIEWERS:
Dr Jessica Paynter, AEIOU Research Fellow and Psychology Manager
Cate Hamilton, AEIOU Education Support Manager



THE BOOK:

Jessica Paynter:

The book's author is described as an educational and behavioural consultant. The book is based on her practical experience. It is brief and written in clear language without too much jargon and technical terms are clearly explained. This book covers 10 "steps" which are essentially a summary of 10 areas for actions and a range of practical strategies for each area. For example, chapter one covers sleeping, eating, and toileting and includes strategies such as using visual schedules, routines, and stories to show the process of toileting. Each chapter gives a brief rationale for strategies and overview with a range of practical ideas presented.

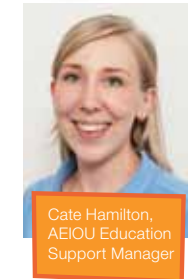
It's an easy read but there is a lack of balanced information based on evidence and research on topics such as sensory integration, diet modifications and vaccinating – an omission which could present risks in some cases. Overall, some chapters provide useful ideas for parents at the beginning of their journey; however I recommend parents read with this book with some caution.

Cate Hamilton:

This book provides parents of children aged 3 - 8 with a starting point following the diagnosis of an ASD. It is free of jargon and engaging and helpful for parents who may have trawled through texts that are difficult to read or link to their own child's needs. As a result, you're likely to find Susan's book a useful first port of call as it introduces parents to many of the core strategies around establishing routines, using visuals, and creating a comfortable home environment.

However, some of the recommended practices should only be implemented under the guidance of your medical specialist or an occupational therapist. For example, weighted blankets may be effective for many children but do not have a strong evidence base and when used inappropriately have been linked to the death of young children.

This is not going to be the "ah-hah!" book for parents but it is a helpful introduction to practical strategies. Read this book along with "The Australian Autism Handbook" (O'Reilly and Smith), information from your Autism Advisor about services in the local area and the Raising Children's network resource on children with ASD.



Cate Hamilton, AEIOU Education Support Manager



Jessica Paynter, AEIOU Research and Psychology Manager

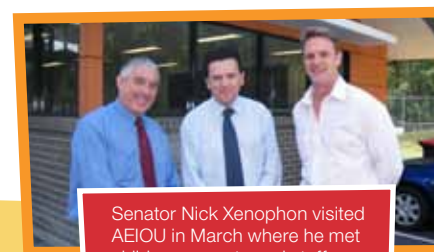


Leigh Boag and Jodie Holman from Paramount Pictures Australia, Brisbane office, volunteered their time to AEIOU.

In focus - volunteer profile

AEIOU welcomed some special visitors in April, when Jodie Holman, Leigh Boag, and Janine Reilly from Paramount Pictures Australia visited our Nathan centre and Central Office, donating their time in the classrooms with children and assisting our administration team. Every year, Paramount Picture's team members from across the globe roll up their sleeves to volunteer for local charities on the same day.

Our team was delighted to welcome Jodie, Leigh and Janine who thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Jodie said she was amazed by the team. "While we knew about AEIOU Foundation and had an idea about how autism affects families, it's fair to say that we had no idea about all of the challenges children with autism strive to overcome every day. We were blown away by the kids, who are beautiful and by the team who are not only professional, they are simply beautiful – so kind and dedicated," Jodie said. "We hope to return to AEIOU again in 2013."



Senator Nick Xenophon visited AEIOU in March where he met children, parents and staff.



Nick Xenophon addresses guests at the AEIOU Autism Awareness Month Launch

AEIOU Visitor Profile

In March, Senator Nick Xenophon visited AEIOU's Nathan centre, where he met children and families, and learned about the program AEIOU delivers. Nick, who joined AEIOU to launch Autism Awareness Month on Sunday April 1, said that what he learned from his visit is that best-practice early intervention can change children's life trajectory and that in a country as lucky as the one we live in, all children deserve a chance to shine. As a result, he is calling for a Senate Inquiry into early-intervention for children with autism spectrum disorders, which would compare the effectiveness and timeliness of various diagnostic and early-intervention programs. It would also be asked to report on the cost and effectiveness of rolling out a program – such as the AEIOU Program – nationally.

In April, AEIOU was also delighted to welcome Andrew Lamming MP to visit the centre. He spent time visiting each of the classrooms and meeting children and staff in the centre. In May, Rugby great, Ricky Stewart, flew to Brisbane to attend an event hosted by Damon Jackson, whose daughter previously attended AEIOU Bray Park. While here, he visited AEIOU to see the program first-hand and meet children and staff. Ricky and AEIOU hope to work together on a number of initiatives in the future.

All action at AEIOU - an update on our centres

Our Gold Coast centre recently enjoyed a visit to Harmony & Hooves where they were able to interact with and pet the chickens and guinea pigs and brush a horse's mane. The children were also able to ride a horse and join in some art and craft activities. The group included our team, children from their centre and their families, providing an opportunity to engage in a social activity with the support from AEIOU.

In March, children from our Bundaberg centre had an excursion to Crazy Maze, an indoor playground, where they put their lessons about identity into practice, engaging in social interaction in a supportive environment. The class took turns on the equipment with other children and practiced requesting.

It's been an exciting year at Nathan, with several excursions taking place, including a visit to see The Lorax. This was the first time many of the children at AEIOU had been to see a feature movie, and was a special treat for mums and dads. The cinema opened early to ensure children weren't overwhelmed by lots of people, and adjusted the sound inside the cinema so that it wasn't too loud. By helping to ensure their first experience at a movie cinema was positive, children were encouraged to associate the movie theatre as a safe and fun activity to visit in the future.

The Bray Park MyTime group recently participated in a special autism specific Stepping Stones Triple P Course. The course, which is presented by AEIOU Education Support Manager and Bray Park team has been developed specifically for parents of children with behavioural issues which can make family life stressful. The course has been designed to focus on autism to teach parents to apply Triple P strategies in their home and family environments.

Our Toowoomba Centre has welcomed visits by Kathy Possum and her Exploring Australia Programme, Ocean Life, along with Dental Nurses and a dentist, fireman and hairdresser. Each of these events had a positive impact on the children, reducing the anxiety of some in visiting the dentist and hairdresser. Our hairdresser visit and follow up hairdressing centres led to one little boy going to the hairdresser and progressing from being followed around the shop with a snip here and a snip there to sitting in the chair for a full hair cut.

It's been a busy time at Sippy Downs, with lots of activities in each classroom for children to practice their fine motor skills. In the Dolphin Room, children have practiced working with the letter 'S', using as many words starting with the letter as they could imagine. They also used their scissors to cut circles on paper to make spirals and created 'S' shaped rainbows.

In the Shark Room, children used stretchy dough to help learn to gain control over hand movements, and improve coordination. This activity also helps develop self esteem, with children receiving praise for their creations, as well as imagination, social and communication skills by learning the importance of turn taking and sharing with their peers.



Children from our Gold Coast centre encountered horses, chickens and guinea pigs at Harmony & Hooves.

AEIOU Nathan hosted children and their families at a special screening of 'The Lorax'.

Sponsor profile: The Brisbane Broncos

The NRMA Insurance Brisbane Broncos continue to demonstrate their ongoing commitment to supporting Queensland's wider community via the Brisbane Broncos Charities Fund and Charity Partner Program. The Broncos established the Charity Partner Program six years ago, in an effort to assist Queensland charities whose values are aligned with those of the Club.

AEIOU Foundation is one of 11 charities during the 2012 Season supported in the Charity Partner Program through financial donations, player appearances and the invaluable opportunity for game day promotions. Over the past three years, the Brisbane Broncos have been part of AEIOU's 10:40:600 program, donating \$10,000 to AEIOU every year to help maintain the program. Broncos Great Corey Parker is an official AEIOU Ambassador and supports the Foundation in a number of media and promotional activities.

In 2011, the partnership went a step further, with Broncos great, Corey Parker, raising over \$7000 for AEIOU, and the Broncos donating \$100 for every goal kicked by the back rower during the season. Broncos CEO, Paul White, says that in 2012, the Club will put their money on Corey again, to kick as many goals as possible throughout the season. The initiative is transferrable, so any goal kicked by another member of the Brisbane Broncos will raise an additional \$100 for AEIOU Foundation.

In 2010, the Broncos released 1,000 balloons with staff, parents and children affiliated with AEIOU to represent the 1,000 hours of early intervention per year that children with autism need to meet the best practice guidelines to reach their full potential. This year, Corey Parker joined AEIOU to launch our state-wide Autism Awareness Month campaign at the Gallery of Modern Art, and again to launch Paddle for Kids, AEIOU's most popular community event to raise funds for children in the program.



Corey Parker

AEIOU Foundation closing the funding gap

It seems obvious why fundraising is important: to raise funds for needed items, services and programs to ensure AEIOU Foundation enhances the lives of children with autism and their families and benefits the community through early intervention learning along with practical and caring support. Government grants, subsidies and program fees don't pay full program costs for each child, so your support in helping our fundraising is vital.

However, raising funds for AEIOU has many more benefits than meeting an urgent monetary need. General fundraising is essential to maintain program excellence for children with autism.

Unexpected benefits of fundraising

Fundraising empowers the giver to help others and provides income to pay for unbudgeted extras that enrich children's lives. It brings people together to work towards a common goal and allows the event participants to meet great contacts and have fun.

We don't expect people to give who don't have the capacity to donate, but if you do have the ability and the passion to give, we assure you the funds will make a real impact in the lives of children with autism and our fundraising team would love to talk to you. Here are the ways you can make a difference:

- Donate online at <https://aeiou.org.au/aeiou-donation>
- Give to the AEIOU Foundation pre-tax appeal being mailed to supporters before June 30
- Become a recurring giver and receive one tax receipt for your tax requirements
- Take part in an event like Take A Hike or Paddle for Kids by entering or sponsoring a team online (aeiou.org.au). Dates: TAH Gold Coast June 17, TAH Townsville September 16, 2012
- Attend Lynn's Lunch with Alex Perry at Victoria Park Conference Centre, Brisbane, July 12 (aeiou.org.au/lynns-lunch)
- Consider leaving a bequest in your Will after you have looked after family members
- Introduce regular workplace giving in your place of work
- Organise an event, making AEIOU Foundation a beneficiary
- Become a volunteer, helping with events, fundraising administration, mail-outs, or nominating for a fundraising committee
- Provide high quality raffle prizes or auction items
- Refer people to the fundraising team who would be willing to support the Foundation

For further information, email giving@aeiou.org.au or call Director of Fundraising, Kathy Davis on 07 3320 7905



AEIOU Business Ambassador, Cathie Reid.

AEIOU launches Business Ambassador Program.

AEIOU Foundation recently launched a Business Ambassador Program, appointing APHS Packaging CEO and co-owner of APHS Pharmacy Group Cathie Reid as AEIOU's new Business Ambassador. The Business Ambassador program is a first for AEIOU Foundation and is designed to encourage Australian business to play a part in the economic development of the Foundation.

As a Business Ambassador, Cathie will be at the forefront of the Foundation's efforts to encourage the private sector to play an active role in supporting AEIOU's early intervention program for children with autism. AEIOU is delighted to welcome Cathie to the organisation.



Beneficiary Event - in focus

In March 2012 staff, parents and even one or two children from AEIOU participated in the annual Peak to Park fun run/walk hosted by Health Active Lifestyles Toowoomba. AEIOU was one of the beneficiaries of this event and received a generous donation from the proceeds.

The Toowoomba Community has been amazing in its support of its centre again this year. In May 2012, the Toowoomba Art Gallery held an exhibition of art pieces created by a number of current and past students and their families at a workshop held at the centre with artist, Damien Kamholz, and funded by the Toowoomba Regional Council.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

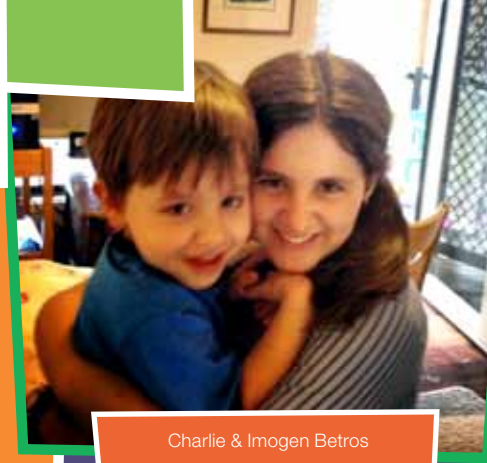


A family story

The Betros family have inspired the team at AEIOU since they joined our Nathan centre with their son Charlie in early 2011. The family's home was affected by Queensland's flood disaster shortly after Charlie began at AEIOU, and it was several months before they were able to return home. Shortly after, Charlie's father Paul became ill, catching a virus which attacked his previously healthy heart. As a result, Paul was admitted to hospital, where he has remained for over eight months awaiting a life-saving heart transplant. While writing this newsletter, we received extraordinary news: Paul has received his life-saving heart transplant and is recovering in hospital after surgery. He and his family ask us to keep his donor, and their family in our thoughts. While he was waiting for his transplant, Paul began writing a blog, which you can read here: <http://paul-betros.blogspot.com.au>. When he recovers, he hopes to publish it, and donate some of the proceedings to AEIOU and to the Prince Charles Hospital, where he has been an inpatient.

"Australian transplant hospitals boast some of the most successful clinical outcome statistics in the world. But Australia has one of the lower rates of organ donation in the developed world. If you wish to ensure that your organs can be put to good use should those unfortunate circumstances arise, you ought to join the Organ Donation Register. It can be done on-line at Donatelife.org.au. It takes a few minutes. It will ensure that your wishes are respected and preclude the need for your family to make the call under the most distressing of circumstances. You should also ensure that your family knows your wishes. I see no compelling reason for a person or family to decline an opportunity to donate their organs but my view is tainted by blatant self-interest!"

– Paul Betros



Charlie & Imogen Betros



Charlie's story - An excerpt:

by Paul Betros

"Charlie did not speak for the first three years of his life. He did not even babble. He did not play with other children. He took comfort in repetitive behaviours like opening and closing doors and flushing toilets. The experts call this stimming. He stimed for hours. Literally.

Charlie was terrified of having his hair washed or cut and would appear to be possessed by a demon whenever he thought someone was going to subject him to such torture. He would not watch children's programs on television, but delighted in viewing the Foxtel Help Channel. He taught himself how to use the remote control and watched his favourite bits over and over again for hours. Literally.

Charlie often experienced dramatic meltdowns, both at home and in public. He would scream and bite, out of fear that some harm was coming to him. He had no way to communicate to his parents his many fears about the terrifying world around him. Camilla became covered in bite marks and scratches. Elderly strangers would frown and tsk tsk at her, suggesting that she impose a little discipline in her parenting, like they did in my day!

Charlie would look for doors and other escape routes and run like Forrest Gump whenever he got a chance. He would just run. Hard and fast to nowhere in particular. Straight towards busy roads.

Charlie would only eat certain foods and only wear blue shirts.

Just after his second birthday, Charlie was formally diagnosed with ASD. It is a neurological disorder. His brain is wired differently to the neurotypical child. There is no cure and much debate as to the cause. Medical science knows comparatively little about it or how to treat it.

Camilla and I were devastated but determined. We read as much as we could and sought out people who had been down this rocky road before us. He was our precious baby boy and we would do whatever it takes.

We discovered that the medical world was trumpeting a therapy called Early Intervention. When the autistic child is aged from around two to six, the brain is still malleable and developing. An intense program of speech therapy, occupational therapy and several other therapies can assist the brain to develop in a more neurotypical fashion. The changes can be permanent and result in a lifetime of difference.

This gave us hope and we searched for an Early Intervention Centre in Brisbane. We had vaguely heard of a place called AEIOU through its advertising and discovered it in our web searching. It seemed good. Damned good. It had a very long waiting list but we quickly joined the end of the queue.

At the beginning of last year, Charlie started at AEIOU. It is good. Damned good. Charlie is doing remarkably well. We have a different

son. He now speaks in rudimentary sentences. A year of AEIOU has produced a transformed boy, but he is still autistic. Charlie still escapes and runs, still has meltdowns and still fears many aspects of the world around him. But he can now tell us about his fears. He can tell us that he is afraid to enter a room because the toilet seat or piano lid may be down. Camilla will then take any necessary action to correct the offending object and assure him that has been done. Together they will enter the feared area of the house and Charlie will relax knowing that all is good in his world for the moment.

Charlie now plays around other children and talks about them. We are confident that he will start playing with them soon.

It's extremely hard being away from home, leaving Camilla to fight the battle against autism without me. Camilla is a remarkable woman and is doing a sterling job. I proposed to her after two weeks with little hesitance and the confidence of youth. I have never regretted the decision and am privileged to be her husband.

Charlie will attend AEIOU for the rest of this year and then, hopefully, transition to mainstream school. I am determined to be there on his first day. Holding his little brown hand. Hopefully, I can let his hand go for a second or two and he will remain standing by me and not run. If not, I'll run after him and catch him."

To read the full story visit <http://paul-betros.blogspot.com.au/2012/04/charlie.html>.

A family story

Josh's story

by Alys and Michael Cottrill

Our son, Josh, began his time at AEIOU in January 2008 with very little speech and a number of sensory and behavioural issues. Gaining a full time place at AEIOU Moorooka gave us a sense of hope that the little boy we knew was lost inside him would be able to come out. Within a couple of months we noticed his speech had improved and that some of his sensory issues were less severe than when he started. He continued to make such great strides and in February 2009, Josh began as a prep student two days per week with the other three days at AEIOU. With early transition support from AEIOU, Josh soon increased his time to three days per week as a Prep student. By Term 3, he was up to four days and it seemed inevitable that we were going to have to say goodbye to AEIOU as he wanted to be with his new friends for the five days. On October 30 2009, Josh had his last day at AEIOU Moorooka. It was a bittersweet day for both the staff and us as we farewelled the people who had done so much and cared so much for our family. We needed not have worried, though, as an AEIOU staff member came to various meetings at the school throughout his first year to provide strategies as part of his IEP.

What we found at AEIOU was not only support and guidance for Joshua but for us all as a family. All the staff were very supportive and quick with reassuring words if needed. They all realised that, challenging as their jobs were, it was nothing compared to the parents' and so were always there supporting us and offering us a shoulder to cry on or sometimes just a hug. The lengths the staff went to in order to bring the best out of Joshua was amazing. Josh completed his first year at St Brendan's

without a single meltdown during the day. He worked well with his aides in the classroom and played happily at lunchtimes in the playground. This gave us an immense sense of pride at what he had accomplished during the year.

Josh has continued to blossom into a funny, caring, intelligent and happy little boy who enjoys going to school and playing with his friends. With a love of running and playing, it's no surprise that PE is his favourite subject. He's grown to be a keen reader, often astounding us with his reading ability as he reads us his nightly school reader book. With each year he has grown increasingly independent both in and out of the school environment. Joshua now prefers to see himself inside the school grounds, taking care of his own bag rather than walking in with me and having his bag unpacked for him. His developing speech has increased his confidence in speaking during class and enabled him to give a two minute oral presentation to his class about his favourite movie – Toy Story. He is acutely aware of the right and wrong kind of behaviour which he showed by going to the aid of one of his classmates who was being picked on by some older children. This action alone gave Michael and me such a sense of pride it was amazing to see how far he had come.

The processes followed at AEIOU Moorooka during the period Joshua was there proves that the time spent working on his transition to mainstream schooling was as important as the centre curriculum itself and there is no way that we will ever be able to truly thank the staff for their efforts in giving Joshua the best chance at school.



Josh Cottrill



Take a Hike

Take a Hike invites corporate, social and local identities to raise awareness and close the funding gap we experience across all AEIOU Foundation centres by taking part in a trek that spans 40 kilometres over nine hours.

This year, Take a Hike is expanding across Queensland to be bigger and better than ever! For the first time, we will host the event at the Gold Coast along with our annual hikes in Toowoomba, Townsville and Brisbane. Right now, we're busy recruiting hikers! Just contact Michael Brazier on 07 3320 7916.

Take a Hike is not a race - participants start and finish as a group. All hikers will receive an 8 week training program, delivered by Executive Excellence, so you're in safe hands.

Hiking not your forte? You can still make a difference! Simply support a hiker – go to aeiou.org.au/take-a-hike to sponsor a participant.



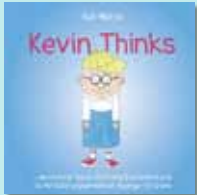


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