

eyes on autism



Temple Grandin takes time out for AEIOU Foundation

A warm welcome for Temple Grandin in Toowoomba

Coinciding with her visit to Toowoomba as the keynote speaker for the 2013 BeefWorks conference, Temple Grandin shared two days with AEIOU Foundation. It was a great coup for AEIOU, and her visit was highly anticipated by staff, families, and the community at large.

On Thursday 24 October, Temple and AEIOU Foundation welcomed 330 guests to a very special seminar at the University of Southern Queensland, where Temple shared valuable insights into her own life, her experience with autism, and her extraordinary journey. Her presentation linked to her latest book, the Autistic Brain. The University donated the facility to AEIOU for the night, and tickets were highly sought after, selling out within 48 hours. The following day, Temple visited AEIOU's Nathan centre in Brisbane to meet the children and the team in the centre, and learn about the Foundation's program and how it benefits young children in Queensland. Following her tour of the centre, Temple met

with AEIOU's Chairman, Dr James Morton, before joining more than 60 guests for a special event that afternoon.

Here, we were joined by respected Queensland journalist, Kylie Lang, who facilitated an exclusive interview with Temple, which was followed by an audience led question and answer session.

AEIOU's Alumni parents were invited to enjoy a private afternoon tea with Temple before the event commenced, where they were able to personally meet her and talk about her visit to Australia, her experiences, her thoughts on early intervention, her career in the cattle industry, and more.

Temple is an inspiration to many: she is a professor at Colorado State University, and an expert in animal science who has made an extraordinary difference to the livestock industry and the handling of cattle all over the world. She is a bestselling author, autism activist and was listed in the Time Magazine's list of the 100 most influential people in the world, in the 'Heroes Category'.

AEIOU was thrilled with Temple's generosity and the time she gave to the Foundation and looks forward to welcoming her to Australia again in the future.

To view her presentation, visit aeiou.org.au/aeiou-TV

Gold Coast centre now underway

Construction has now commenced on a new early intervention centre for AEIOU on the Gold Coast.

His Worship, the Mayor, Councillor Tom Tate turned the first sod at the site of AEIOU Foundation's new, purpose-built early intervention centre for children with autism on Tuesday 10 September 2013.

The Mayor was joined by Councillor Margaret Grummitt, AEIOU CEO Alan Smith, AEIOU Ambassador and Olympian, Thomas Fraser Holmes, and Chain Reaction Chair Michael Byrom, along with the Chain Reaction Queensland Committee.

The project has been made possible due to Councillor Tate's commitment to the centre,

and the capital investment from Chain Reaction. The Gold Coast community has been eagerly awaiting the development of this centre, which has been designed by the Buchan Group. AEIOU is delighted with its progress, and the support from the Gold Coast City Council, and the Chain Reaction initiative.

Currently, AEIOU Foundation provides 18 full-time early intervention placements from a temporary location, in two classrooms leased from a local Goodstart centre in Ashmore.

In 2013, and again in 2014, AEIOU was named a major beneficiary of the corporate cycling challenge Chain Reaction, with the funds raised providing the capital required

Councillor Tate enjoyed meeting families and children who benefit from AEIOU's service.



AEIOU CEO Alan Smith and Mayor Tom Tate turn the soil

to build the centre in Arundel. It will provide a total of 40 full-time placements, and the ability to better support local families.

AEIOU's Gold Coast service experiences the longest waiting list across all of our centres in Queensland. There are 21 families waiting for education and therapy support in region, and they're missing out on this life-changing program.

The additional 22 placements require recurrent funding from the Queensland Government, which has led the way in Australia with its commitment to early intervention. The centre, located in Byth Street in Arundel, will feature four classrooms, a motor skills room and a parent room.



The Chain Reaction Committee have pledged the capital funding for the building

what's on

Lynn's Lunch March 2014

Save the date for a gorgeous afternoon hosted by the Lynn Wright Memorial Fund, to help raise funds to provide financial support to families who may otherwise be unable to access early intervention at AEIOU. Details for this luncheon will be revealed in the coming months and we hope to see you there! Follow us on Facebook or our website at aeiou.org.au for information.

Take a Hike Toowoomba March 2014

The Take a Hike series is back in 2014, and promises to be bigger than ever! The best thing about Take a Hike is that anyone can do it ... you don't need special equipment, you just need to make time for training and a desire to tackle a challenge with like-minded people, while raising funds for children with autism. Visit aeiou.org.au/take-a-hike to register! To support the event in another way, contact Michael Brazier, Major Gifts and Sponsorship Manager on 07 3217 1076.

Autism Awareness Month 2 April 2014

Autism Awareness Month is your chance to shine! International Autism Awareness Day is on Wednesday 2nd April and to celebrate, AEIOU will host a number of events and initiatives throughout the month. There will be plenty of opportunities for you to support the campaign, so follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for all the details, or visit our website at aeiou.org.au.

AEIOU says Thank You!

On Thursday November 7, AEIOU hosted its annual 'Thank You' event for our sponsors and supporters. We were delighted to welcome donors and corporate supporters who have made this year's developments and milestones possible. Many of you have developed long-term relationships with the Foundation, and AEIOU is proud to connect with like-minded, community focused individuals and organisations, whose own brands and values align with AEIOU Foundation's. We also welcome new supporters, and look forward to long-lasting relationships.

It's important to remember that the funds AEIOU raises go directly toward maintaining the service, and keeping parent fees down in our centres, so every individual donor, corporate supporter, volunteer and community group who joins AEIOU Foundation is making a direct contribution that will have a lifelong impact on a child's life.

We're looking forward to another big year in 2014, and thank each of you for your friendship and support this year.

A word from our CEO

Alan Smith – CEO

It's been an exciting year at AEIOU, and we're grateful that we've been able to share it with you: the families we care for in our program, our donors, volunteers, our staff, and the people who support AEIOU to ensure success across our service.

Special highlights include opening the new AEIOU centre in Bundaberg, turning the first sod ahead of the construction of the new, purpose-built centre on the Gold Coast, and establishing a partnership with Minda in South Australia, bringing us one step closer to providing an early intervention service to families in Adelaide.

Take a Hike swept across Queensland this year, with more than 500 business and social leaders joining staff and parents from AEIOU to tackle the 40 kilometre challenge, raising funds to maintain our service, and creating conversation and awareness about a condition that affects thousands of Australian families. I was proud to hike in the Toowoomba and Brisbane event, and to walk beside so many committed, community minded people. I sincerely thank every person who took the time to hike, who sponsored a hiker, or who supported the initiative in another way.

Of course, welcoming Dr Temple Grandin to host two events for our community was a momentous occasion for us, and inviting her to visit one of our centres, where she met the children and staff and saw the program first-hand was exceptional. Temple is one of the most highly regarded autism advocates and there are some synergies between her journey, and our own. Temple grew up at a time when people didn't know a great deal about autism. She grew up at a time when people even thought it was some kind of brain damage. The world knows better now, mostly because of people like Temple who broke the mould and defied expectations.

Australia is still catching up to some of its international counterparts when it comes to the provision of early intervention, education and vocational support for people with autism. But that's something we're trying to change, at AEIOU Foundation. AEIOU

was developed because there was nothing else of its kind available for families who had children with a new diagnosis. Like Temple, we advocate for awareness and better understanding. We also lobby government for a greater investment into the futures of young children with autism.

Individuals with autism, and their parents, are some of the most extraordinary advocates for understanding and change you could ever hope to meet. Like Temple, and her mother before her, our founders James and Louise Morton, knew there was a better way. With tenacity, and also courage, we can all achieve the things we dream of.

It's a message that is fitting for the holiday season. It reminds us that we should all 'live to connect'. So this year, at AEIOU we're focussing on collecting moments, not things. No matter how you celebrate the festive season, it's worth taking the time to think about how other people are experiencing the world and to remember, that it's the little things in life that are the best.

For the mums and dads that we know at AEIOU, those special moments that are the gifts which keep giving might include receiving eye contact, a cuddle, hearing their child's voice, or watching their child playing with siblings or a new friend. By donating to AEIOU's Christmas Appeal, you can help us create and collect more of these moments. To learn more about what we do, how our program works or how you can help, please visit our website, www.aeiou.org.au. You can also connect with us via Facebook and Twitter, along with Instagram and Pinterest.

At AEIOU, we live to give, and I hope that this Christmas, you'll help pave the pathway for brighter futures for the children we care for in our centres.

It's been a tremendous year at AEIOU and I thank you for sharing the journey with us. Next year promises to shine even brighter. Enjoy a safe, happy and healthy holiday season.

Alan Smith
CEO





AEIOU hopes to establish an early intervention centre in Adelaide by 2016

Minda partners with AEIOU to support children with autism in Adelaide

AEIOU is excited to announce that Adelaide families could benefit from better access to early intervention for children with autism, with a new partnership between AEIOU and Minda to construct a purpose-built centre in the region.

AEIOU Foundation CEO Alan Smith said: "AEIOU is delighted to partner with Minda, and to be a step closer to creating life-changing opportunities for young children with autism in Adelaide."

However, plans are in the early stages, with AEIOU working with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to better understand how the new funding scheme will affect AEIOU's early intervention model.

Minda pledged its support by donating 2,000 square metres of land on its grounds in Brighton via a long-term lease, and AEIOU plans to use the land to build a centre that will provide 40 full-time placements for children aged from 2 ½ to 6 years.

There are many families in South Australia who are missing out on vital education and therapy support, and much-needed respite. AEIOU estimates around 1,185 children are diagnosed with autism in Australia each year, but just 10% of those children have access to early intervention programs that meet the 2012 Good Practice Guidelines.

The land parcel from Minda is crucial to bringing this important service to the Adelaide community. Minda is one of Australia's most respected providers of care for people with an intellectual disability and their families, sharing a number of similar values with AEIOU. Both organisations look forward to great opportunities for collaboration across areas including research, and training and development.

Minda CEO Cathy Miller said the largest non-government disability support organisation in South Australia was proud to be able to play a part in making the proposed AEIOU centre one step closer to reality.

"There is currently nothing like this type of support offered anywhere in the State, and it would be welcome news to the many South Australian families who have to support a young person with autism," Ms Miller said.

"AEIOU's early intervention program has produced excellent results for younger children in Queensland, and our local children and their families can benefit from the teaching strategies offered in a supportive learning environment," she said.

"As a community, it is important that we all help young people who have autism and provide opportunities for social interaction, development of communication and language skills and programs to improve cognitive development – and the proposed centre would play a key role in making that happen."

Theory of Mind: a special seminar for AEIOU Alumni

In August, a number of past parents from AEIOU joined us for a free seminar to discuss theory of mind and social competence. Hosted by AEIOU Research and Psychology Manager Dr Jessica Paynter, the roundtable discussion was designed to help parents better understand how their child comprehends other people's behaviours, desires and feelings, and then provided families with the tools to better support them in their schooling and beyond.

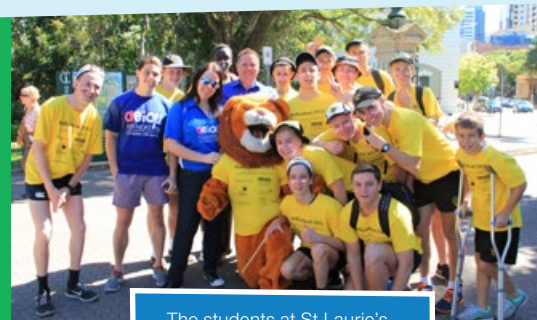
Theory of mind refers to the ability to understand and reason about minds, such as other people's beliefs and knowledge, and to use this understanding to predict and explain behaviour. Dr Paynter explains how within this theory, impairments in social skills for children with ASD are conceptualised as stemming from a difficulty in understanding other people's minds and how their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs influence behaviour. During this seminar Dr Paynter shared how difficulties with theory of mind can affect children's everyday social skills and what strategies can support development of this understanding.

Taking place at Blue Sky Coffee, our guests enjoyed complementary coffee and delicious pastries, tarts and sandwiches.

To sign up to AEIOU's Alumni, visit www.aeiou.org.au/alumni. Any parent, carer or relative of a child who attended AEIOU Foundation centres is welcome to register. If you are a past parent and there is a topic you would like to know more about, or an area AEIOU could support parents like you with, please email communications@aeiou.org.au with your feedback and we will investigate hosting a seminar, or issuing our parents with helpful advice and strategies.



Alumni workshop



The students at St Laurie's lace up for autism

Thanks, St Laurie's!

The students at St Laurie's get behind AEIOU every year to walk over 15km and raise \$10,000 for children with autism in our centres. We love seeing their bright yellow shirts dotting the Brisbane River, as they stride out to show their support of the families and children in our community who are affected by autism. AEIOU is thrilled with the School's support and admires the commitment the students and staff at the School demonstrate to their community.

The Hon. Tracy Davis opens AEIOU Bundaberg Centre

The Hon. Tracy Davis MP, Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disabilities officially opened AEIOU's new early intervention centre for children with autism in Bundaberg on Tuesday 30 July. Located on the campus of CQUniversity Bundaberg, the purpose-built facility is a real win for parents who lobbied with AEIOU to improve access to early intervention in Bundaberg.

The Queensland Government committed \$700,000 in capital funding for the centre, and \$500,000 in recurrent funding for the region, with plans for the centre to later provide outreach services to families across the Wide Bay-Burnett region.

The relationship between AEIOU Foundation and CQUniversity presents a number of mutual benefits to the local community, with the prospect of research collaboration, and work experience opportunities for students enrolled in a wide range of degrees in Bundaberg and across the wider University.

The centre opened its doors to families on Monday 24 June 2013. AEIOU Foundation has been supporting families in Bundaberg since May 2011, in a local Goodstart Childcare centre.

The day of the centre's official opening was considered a tremendous success and we warmly thank our Bundaberg team and the parents from the centre, particularly Anna Cunningham, Cynthia Farrelly and Judy Fenn, who assisted in the coordination of the event.



Mary's lemonade stand raised over \$120 for AEIOU

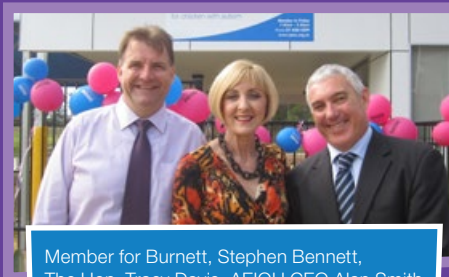
Generosity has no age limit

Mary captured the hearts of the team at AEIOU when her mum Mary-Jeanne Hutchinson of Craggy Range Wines sent us a photo of her raising money for AEIOU at her lemonade stall. Mary raised \$121.70 for AEIOU, with home-grown lemons from her grandmother's garden, and lemonade she made herself. Mary-Jeanne said: "Mary set the price of the lemonade for 50 cents a glass but patting the chicken was free."

The generosity and care Mary showed tells us that whoever you are, you can make a difference to the lives of others.



AEIOU thanks its parent community in Bundaberg for their enormous support



Member for Burnett, Stephen Bennett, The Hon. Tracy Davis, AEIOU CEO Alan Smith

Parents get a closer look at Open Days

On September 17, all nine AEIOU centres across Queensland opened their doors for the annual Open Day. It was a great opportunity for parents and carers whose child has received a recent ASD diagnosis to see the program first-hand, meet AEIOU's specialist team of educators, facilitators and therapists, and better understand how AEIOU can support, and enhance their child's life.

More than 45 parents, carers and allied health practitioners attended on the day, with enquiries pouring in state-wide. Director of Education Diane Heaney said that she is looking forward to helping support more families in 2014, especially in regional areas.

"When a family first receives a diagnosis it can be a very stressful and uncertain time. The Open Day was a great chance for parents to see the work we do every day at the centres, ask lots of questions, and meet other parents who are experiencing the same thing."

AEIOU experiences a long waiting list, which can be difficult for families. This year, Diane Heaney began hosting quarterly information sessions for families with a new diagnosis, to provide tools and strategies to implement with young children at home. AEIOU is also investigating how it can better support families living in regional and remote areas, and hopes to launch a new regional support service in 2014.



Parents and carers learning more about AEIOU's program



Bridge to Brisbane Blue Crew shines

On Sunday 1 September, AEIOU, was joined by 150 Blue Crew members who raised more than \$19,000 for children who attend our program. One father, Blair Hinchy, was inspired to join the Blue Crew this year, running for his son Nick who started attending AEIOU's Bray Park centre in April 2012.

Blair says receiving Nick's diagnosis was confronting, and left him wondering what the future held for Nick: would he be able to communicate? Would he live independently, and live a happy and fulfilling life?

"Nick's behaviour was challenging and outings become near impossible without additional support. Nick became more reluctant to leave the house and then impossible to get back into the car to return home. A trip to the park with two children became so stressful that we found ourselves trying to avoid them. Other behaviours started to become more obvious, he was chewing inedible items and he became obsessed by particular toys and movies. We noticed he couldn't speak in sentences but could repeat dialogue in movies, word perfect. He could sing nursery rhymes but couldn't repeat basic phrases. Nick was taking hours to go to sleep at night and then waking up throughout the night ready to play."

Blair says that while it was devastating to receive the diagnosis, receiving it was a critical turning point for his son, and their family. "It gave us some direction and we knew it was our chance to get some help that would make a difference to his life. We'd heard that early intervention was critical to unlocking the potential in children with autism and we wanted the best for Nick. We applied to AEIOU immediately," he said.

"We arrived at AEIOU in April 2012 exhausted and with nothing left but hope... Although Nick struggled initially with separation anxiety, we noticed positive behavioural changes almost immediately. The word 'miracle' was used in our household on many an occasion to describe those early days.

We also realised very quickly that we were surrounded at AEIOU by families who knew of the struggle, frustration, exhaustion and heartache that goes along with having a child with autism. We felt accepted and understood there and we immediately knew it was the right place for all of us. Although it was tough, we had a sense that everything was going to be okay.

Sixteen months on, Nick is preparing for transition to mainstream school next year and his future looks very bright. He is happy, smart, loving, very funny and he is everything I wanted in a son. As he has developed, he has exposed more of his charming and endearing personality. Without the early intervention that AEIOU has provided, we are certain this would not be the case.

This is why I ran the Bridge to Brisbane for AEIOU Foundation. Without their support our story would be very different. And for that, we will be forever grateful."

AEIOU thanks Blair, and every member of the Blue Crew, those who donated, and also those who volunteered their time to support the event on the day. AEIOU's Blue Crew has welcomed nearly 1,000 people to its team since 2009 and in that time, those Blue Crew team members have made a great contribution to our organisation by raising well over \$120,000 for the children in AEIOU's centres.



Bridge to Brisbane coincided with Father's Day, and Nick's dad, Blair ran for him and to raise funds for AEIOU



Olympic Ambassador takes time out for kids on the Gold Coast

Earlier in the year AEIOU was delighted when Olympic swimming champion Thomas Fraser Holmes approached the Foundation to become an official Ambassador. Thomas has a personal connection to autism, and has been actively involved in a number of our official events, including the Autism Awareness Month Launch and Gold Coast Centre sod turning. He particularly enjoys the opportunity to visit the centres and spend time in the program, supporting the staff and the children. In October, Tom joined the program for a morning, taking part in circle time, imaginative play and morning tea. He says that he is looking forward to spending more time with the children from AEIOU in

2014, and wishes everyone the best in the holiday season. Thomas said: "I think the thing that sets AEIOU apart is that it really is like a great big family. I'm looking forward to another great year working with the team and kids at AEIOU and am looking forward to meeting many other supporters who get behind this great organisation, too!"

AEIOU extends our thanks to Thomas, who has been extremely active, involved and engaged in 2013, and is excited to see more of him in 2014. Thomas has shown us that he really is a true champion in and out of the pool.



Thomas spends time with the children at the Gold Coast centre





Take a Hike Series... it's a wrap.

Read about some of our hiking heroes here!

The sun was shining and there wasn't a cloud in sight when 180 hikers crossed the finish line in Brisbane's Take a Hike event on Sunday 13 October. Marking the completion of the 2013 series, the hikers raised more than \$230,000 in an extraordinary effort to help close the funding gap we experience in our Bray Park, Camira and Nathan centres. The group consisted of a number of business leaders and media identities, along with community minded organisations and individuals, and parents of children who have attended, or currently attend an AEIOU centre. At the time of going to print, the top fundraisers were: The Super Group at \$40,000, Team Harris Black at \$24,431, Bart Sinclair at \$18,796, AEIOU Chairman James Morton at \$18,435, and Team Verde at \$16,825.

Bart Sinclair said he was excited to take part in the event for the first time, explaining his wife Judy's professional career was as a resource teacher with Brisbane Catholic Education where she supported children with learning disabilities, several of whom had autism. "Judy was always convinced early intervention was the pathway to creating the positive development of these children. She noted AEIOU's establishment with interest, and when we met James Morton last year, we realised that we could assist AEIOU centres by getting involved in Take a Hike."

Nigel Moser, who hiked as part of 'Charlette's Team' dedicated his efforts to his daughter, Charlette, who attends AEIOU's Bray Park centre. Together, the team raised more than \$1,000. "Five years ago, I became a father for the first time to three beautiful babies. By the age of two and a half, Charlette was diagnosed with autism. At three, she could say less than five words, she had no eye contact, and she would engage in solitary play constantly. After almost two years at AEIOU, she is chatting away, and is able to ask for the things she wants, her gross and fine motor skills have improved, and she loves to play with her siblings. Early intervention has given us hope for a better future, and as the gap closes, Charlette will start mainstream school next year," Mr Moser said.

Team Jacob, led by Steve Williams, walked for Steve and Karen's son Jacob. "The program at AEIOU and the staff there have had a profoundly positive impact on Jacob's life and in the process, our entire family." The team raised \$6,516.

The Townsville Take a Hike Crew had supported their local AEIOU Centre on August 25, raising \$54,036 to support the service. Top fundraisers included: Team Ross at \$7,672, Team Wait For Me!!!, at \$6,048, Team Haematology at \$5,355, Team unlockthelachs.com at \$5,094, and Team Aidan, who raised \$4,350.

Team Aidan was led by Belinda Boyce, whose grandson Aidan attends the Townsville centre. "In 2011, my family was rocked by the autism diagnosis. My daughter set about empowering herself with as much knowledge as she could, and she found AEIOU. When he started at the centre, he was completely nonverbal and had no ability to interact with others. He couldn't be soothed when he was in pain, and he couldn't communicate his needs. But AEIOU broke the bubble of autism for Aidan. We hiked as a tribute to Rebecca, Matt, Kody and Aidan and to help ensure the opportunity to attend this wonderful centre is available to any family who needs it."

On 2 June, the Gold Coast was home to its second annual Take a Hike event, with more than 100 locals stepping out to raise \$64,863 for the local AEIOU centre. Top fundraisers included: Bryan Mann at \$10,150, Team Chase at \$7,218.20, Team Happy Hikers at \$4,440, Team Super Phonics at \$4,255, and Team Refuelling Solutions who raised \$4,250.

Team Chase was led by Tamara and Jonathan Stephens who were hiking for their son Chase. "Our beautiful son was diagnosed with autism in June 2012, and he started at AEIOU at the start of this year. Because of AEIOU, Chase is learning how to express himself, communicate, and play with his peers and also his little brother, Hudson. Hearing "I love you mum" for the first time just before the hike was amazing," Tamara said. This newsletter features a story about Chase, and you can read it on page 10.



AEIOU's Take a Hike series inspired hundreds of Queensland locals

And so we're back to where the year began: Take a Hike Toowoomba took place on Sunday 10 March, with the group raising \$65,094 for the AEIOU Toowoomba centre. Top Hikers included Russell Strack at \$11,670, Simon Harris Black at \$9,415, Team McNab at \$9,310, The A Team (Shepherdson/Martlew) at \$6,101 and Sally Rigney-Vaughan who raised \$5,955.

Russel Strack's daughter, Amy, was diagnosed with autism when she was two. She attended AEIOU Toowoomba for two years, up until she turned six in 2012. "Amy was our first child and we had no clue that she was different to other young kids until she stopped communicating. It was then that we went to a specialist and learned about autism. When the paediatrician described the behaviours such as head banging, flapping and not looking us in the eyes, we knew she exhibited every one of the characteristics. Amy is Amy to us, and her whole family. She is a beautiful child that loves taking walks in her stroller. She loves The Wiggles and music and playing in water. I pushed Amy in a stroller for the last 10Km

last year and wanted to go one better in 2013. This year I asked my family (including Amy) to join me for some legs on the day and most of all, I wanted to raise some money for Sally and Sandy and the other AEIOU staff who cared for my beautiful little girl so well."

AEIOU thanks each and every person who took on the challenge of Take a Hike this year. For the uninitiated, it is an enormous commitment: it means a great deal of training, and this nine hour challenge is a physical and mental test, as well. Thank you to those who donated to a hiker, and to each of the volunteers who helped ensure the events ran smoothly on the day. Our sponsors across the series included Executive Excellence, Hyundai, Subway, The Toowoomba Chronicle, The Townsville Bulletin, the Gold Coast Bulletin, Jane Mearns (who donated Gluten Free catering in Brisbane), Active Rehabilitation, The Brew Booth and Blue Sky Coffee.

Planting a garden is investing in tomorrow...

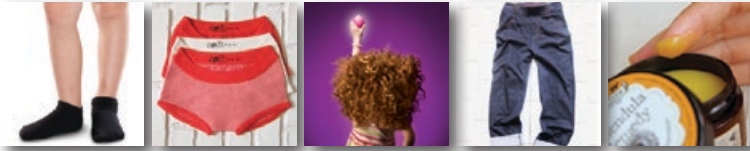
Make your Will a lasting legacy for future generations to come.

Consider leaving a gift in your Will to AEIOU Foundation. Contact giving@aeiou.org.au for more information.



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Want to boost your staff morale?

AEIOU's Workplace Giving Program gives employees the opportunity to make a significant and lasting impact on the lives of children with autism.

For details about AEIOU's Workplace Giving Program, contact 07 3217 1076 or email giving@aeiou.org.au.



Our curriculum

At the start of the year, AEIOU began a process to manualise its curriculum. The manual covers all aspects of the program, with main features including an overview of ASD, a summary of evidence-based treatments, an overview of AEIOU Foundation, a curriculum guide, therapy guidelines, assessment processes, behaviour support policy, and transition to new learning environments. Fidelity measures have been put in place to ensure that the program is being delivered effectively at all times, with a focus on evidence-based activities.

The process is being delivered by a steering committee, comprised of key education, therapy and psychology staff. The manual will also provide opportunity for greater consistency across all centres, and aid the development of new centres as AEIOU grows. It will support research goals, particularly with plans to bid for an ARC Linkage Grant, to study the implementation of research-based practices in early intervention programs for children with autism.

The manualisation was trialled across six centres this year, and will be implemented across all centres in 2014.



AEIOU is manualising its curriculum

Allens Linklaters

Allens is a leading international law firm with partners, lawyers and corporate services staff across Asia and Australia.

Through its alliance with global firm Linklaters, the firm works with many of the world's leading organisations – including 55 of the world's top 100 companies and more than 75 of Australia's top 100 companies. Allens' clients recognise the firm for its commerciality, professionalism, integrity and technical expertise.

Allens recognises that it has broad responsibilities to its people, their families and the communities in which they live, as well as its clients. In addition to maintaining the highest ethical standards, the firm engages with the wider community through its pro bono, reconciliation, charity and environment programs, and nurtures close relationships with a wide range of community groups in each of those areas.

Allens is proud to support AEIOU Foundation in its provision of a professional, full-time early intervention program for children with autism. The organisations have a history of working together in Queensland, through the support of AEIOU's corporate giving program, 10:40:600.

Allens < Linklaters

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



Big Ideas...AEIOU's second annual Autism Conference

In November AEIOU hosted its second annual Autism Conference, welcoming special guest and keynote speaker Dr Gary LaVigna of the Institute for Applied Behaviour Analysis®, along with a number of local and national autism experts.

Following on from the success of the 2012 event, the 2013 conference featured cutting edge research, new developments and thought provoking topics in the field of autism. Dr LaVigna hosted two sessions on the topics of Progress without Punishment, and Promoting Behaviour Change in the 21st Century, which challenged, and provided those in attendance with practical tools and knowledge to apply when working with children with autism.

Throughout the two-day event Dr LaVigna was also joined by a panel of national experts who discussed a range of topics including the new Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), sensory processing and engagement of children with ASD in learning activities.

Professor Deb Keen the Associate Dean of research at Australian Catholic University, Manager, Research and Development at Autism Queensland Dr Jill Ashburner, and Associate Professor Robyn Young of the School of psychology at Flinders University also joined Dr LaVigna for a panel discussion on the second day of the conference.

At the conference, Dr Jill Ashburner discussed sensory processing issues people with autism experience, and how they are often poorly understood. She spoke about a project in which an array of pictures were used to depict everyday sensory experiences to help young people with ASD talk about these issues, and what the outcome was. She also shared evidence-based approaches to supporting people with ASD who experience challenges related to sensory issues.

AEIOU has a commitment to enhancing the program through ongoing research and creating a strong dialogue with thought leaders at the forefront of new developments in the field of autism. Dr LaVigna said that through inclusive initiatives such as early intervention, the future is looking brighter every day for people with autism.

"From my perspective, what is exciting is the ever increasing inclusion of people on the spectrum into all segments of society that I see everywhere," Dr Gary LaVigna said.

AEIOU Research and Psychology Manager Dr Jessica Paynter said the conference aimed to disseminate research, which is vital to assist the community to better understand and support people with autism. She was pleased with the success of the two-day event, which welcomed professionals with an interest in autism, students, people with autism, and parents.

"The team at AEIOU had the opportunity to see Dr LaVigna present at the Australian Association for Special Education and were inspired by his positive approach to challenging behaviour. This inspired us to engage him to speak to our staff and families and share his vision."

"This conference gave attendees the opportunity to learn about the science of behaviour change and how it can contribute to quality of life for individuals with autism. One of the most valuable things that our guests took away from the event was increased knowledge about the latest science in ASD and how to apply it practically to better understand, work with, and aid individuals with ASD and their families," Dr Paynter said.



AEIOU's autism conference captured the attention of many allied health professionals, educators, parents, and people with an interest in autism.

Our staff shine at AEIOU

Hailing from the USA, Danielle is a teacher in our Townsville centre. Danielle says she has always gravitated towards working with children in need of extra support. Shortly after arriving in Townsville, Danielle secured a position on the AEIOU team and hasn't looked back, explaining she feels her experience with AEIOU has been a great learning experience, both personally and professionally.

"I've experienced so many wonderful, and surprising moments while working with the children, and our team in the centre," Danielle says.

"One special moment for me was when a child first echoed me after two terms of trying to teach him to repeat letters and words. Then, out of the blue he began to copy every word I said. I encouraged him to say 'hi' to each staff member, and each child, and we practiced naming objects. The best part was being there when his father heard him say 'Hi Dad' for the first time, when he came to pick him up."

Danielle says children with autism need someone to believe in them, to see their strengths, and to focus on their abilities. "We should use this as a teaching tool to give them the opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential."

Danielle Gravel is a teacher at AEIOU's Townsville centre

A family story

Chase Stephens



Chase is now able to communicate, and is developing relationships with his peers

In June 2012 Chase was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). After the initial shock and denial, my husband and I were actually relieved that we had an answer and something to move forward with. I went into 'teacher mode' and began to research, make lists, and sought therapy, intervention and assistance. The good news came in December of 2012 and Chase started at AEIOU full-time in January.

On his first day, on 14 January 2013, we dressed our little three year old, red headed boy who didn't look at you or make eye contact, who couldn't play with others, couldn't communicate and was struggling with toilet training. He began the PECS program and speech followed soon after. One of the happiest days of our lives was hearing our little boy say "mum" and "dad". After just three months Chase was able to say "I love you mum". Our hearts grew with pride that our little man was moving in the right direction and the work the dedicated and supportive staff were doing was working.

Our journey at AEIOU continues and after six months in the program our little red headed boy is a changed child who plays with his peers, speaks freely (although his speech is still developing), engages with others, sings, dances and looks at you when you speak. He is teaching his little brother how to sing the alphabet. The spinning is gone and his toileting is a work in progress. We had a friend over recently who had not seen Chase in about 5 months and when Chase put together a sentence using his PECS folder, engaged her in his conversation and gave her a hug and kiss goodbye she cried, because she felt so much joy in the progress he's made.

I am truly grateful and love seeing Chase so happy and smiling... Chase will continue to attend AEIOU this year and next and then it is our hope that he will attend mainstream school.

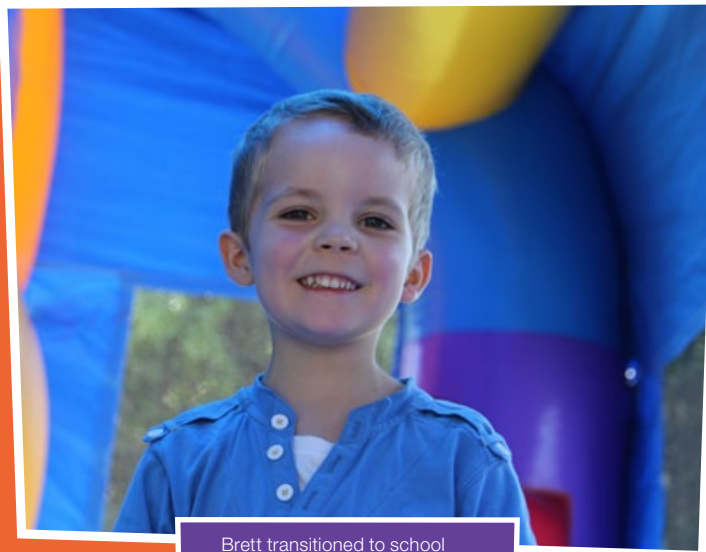
– Tamara Stephens

A family story

Brett Cuddeford

Before joining AEIOU, Brett attended the Early Childhood Development Program. In the middle of 2012, I was told Brett may have an intellectual impairment and that Prep should be delayed until 2014. We enrolled Brett at AEIOU in a part-time placement in September 2012 and then accepted a full-time placement in January this year. Since then, Brett's speech has progressed beyond my wildest dreams. His social skills have improved dramatically and he has made many friends at AEIOU, who are waiting to play with him when he arrives in the morning. His writing, spelling and drawing skills have also come along fantastically. When I was recently informed by AEIOU staff that Brett is ready to start mainstream Prep six months earlier than I thought he would be ready, I cried happy tears and I am so proud of Brett! I can't thank the staff at AEIOU enough for all the work they have put in with him. Without their efforts, Brett would not have advanced so much and he would not be starting mainstream Prep this year. I will always be grateful to staff at AEIOU for making such a positive difference in Brett's life, which has also helped family life significantly.

– Tara Cuddeford



Brett transitioned to school in the last term of 2013.

A family story



Aidan is getting ready to transition to Prep, and his mum says he is cheeky and confident

As a baby, Aidan was quiet, wasn't fussy and didn't cry too often. His older brother Kody, who was 2 at the time, was so excited to have a little brother to look after and teach. He would sit as close as possible while Aidan was feeding, and as soon as Aidan was on solid food, Kody had to be the one to feed him. The bond they had developed was so sweet.

When Aidan was around seven months, autism hit our family. My child, who would eat anything, began to live on a diet of banana and yoghurt until the age three-and-a-half. He couldn't stand to be touched, couldn't be soothed when in pain and although his brother was the only person he liked to be around, he would bite him, drawing blood at the drop of a hat for no reason at all. We now know this was his way of communicating with his brother. He would scream if anyone looked at him, stopped sleeping through the night and downright refused the dummy after loving it for so long and we had no way to sooth him anymore during the night.

I had worked in child care before having children, and although I didn't see myself as an expert, I knew Aidan was not hitting any of the milestones that he should have by 18 months old, and the milestones he did hit, were in all the wrong order.

It was in November 2010 that we were able to get into a paediatrician who knew within minutes that Aidan had autism. It would take an additional 6 months of testing until we had a diagnosis and could start getting Aidan help. It was clear to us that he needed help and that is when I found AEIOU. Aidan wasn't quite old enough to start yet, so I did everything I could over the next 3 months to prepare him.

On of August 4 2011 (Daddy's birthday) our life changed forever. Aidan was two-and-a-half and ready to start at AEIOU Townsville, full-time. Dropping him off at AEIOU on his first day was the hardest moment of my entire life. I look back now and it seems like such a long time ago. I didn't understand how Aidan would cope with no words, so much frustration and with no concept of toileting, self-care or what the world was like outside our home.

It had been a long time since we had taken him anywhere, apart from doctor's appointments as we couldn't even get him into the car without being bitten, kicked, hit or having our hair pulled during the process, so avoided it all together. Without a doubt, I would get hurt every single time; I knew he didn't mean it. I couldn't wear jewellery or earring's in case it was something he could get a hold off and I always wore my hair up.

It didn't take very long to see progress in Aidan. He bonded well with the wonderful facilitators and teachers and we did all that we could at home to help him as well. Within six months (when he was three years old) Aidan was toilet trained, eating anything and everything he could get his hands on (still is to this day) and had basic speech. His frustration levels were still high but knowing he was making progress motivated us to keep on going. It was heart breaking to push him to the limit every minute of every day. The stress on our family was immense as we had to be on the ball 24/7 making sure we were consistent in every situation. And it has paid off.

Aidan's big brother Kody was his greatest teacher of all. He would ask often why Aidan couldn't speak or play with him and he would sit for hours singing, reading, playing and getting right in Aidan's face to make him socialise and interact. Kody had memorised (at only 3 & 4) every single thing the teachers at AEIOU would

say to Aidan and we would hear Kody constantly redirecting Aidan throughout the day. He sat with Aidan's PECS book (Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), a method of communicating through pictures), helping Aidan construct his sentences to ask for help. They share a room now, and are inseparable. They love all of the same things.

Aidan is now four, and is a cheeky, happy, imaginative, little guy. He is such a delight to be around. He loves shopping, sleep overs, the movies and the beach. And most of all loves food!

Without the invaluable program that AEIOU Townsville has provided to Aidan, and the knowledge that they have provided to our entire family we would not have had the patience or the hope that we have today. We have made lifelong friends with the teachers at AEIOU. The centre in Townsville is so welcoming, you don't feel at all judged and the love and support we feel as a whole family is just amazing. As soon as Aidan starts prep next year I am starting work at AEIOU Townsville to help give back to families what AEIOU has given to us.

We had many dreams for our children while they were young and as much as I wish I could take their struggles away, our family has slowed the pace down. We take the time to listen about each other's day, the little things are so much bigger and we are just in awe of how far both our boys have come, together. We are also looking forward to going on our first family holiday this year, something Aidan wouldn't have handled in the past, but is more than ready for now. Aidan is so very lucky to have the brother he has, every struggle Aidan has had, Kody has felt too and has done everything he could to help his baby brother through it.

– By Rebecca Shine

This year, you can give a gift with true meaning

We celebrate moments at AEIOU, not things! This Christmas, we're inviting you to do the same.



This year, AEIOU is stocking special Christmas cards, which are on sale to give to loved ones in lieu of a gift.

If you have family and friends who are separated by distance, or who simply have everything, you can still connect with them in a meaningful way, by making a donation on their behalf for Christmas.

Imagine if you could give moments, rather than things. What would you exchange? A hug? A kiss? What about eye contact? Imagine if instead of witnessing your child experiencing the spirit of Christmas, you saw them feeling uncertain or frightened? There are thousands of children with autism all over Australia and by supporting them to develop the life skills that many of us take for granted, your gift will be one that lasts a lifetime.

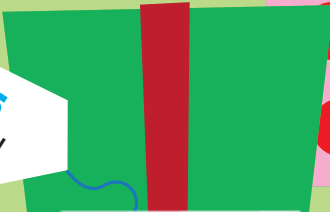
By donating to AEIOU you will help fund vital early intervention, helping families like yours create, and collect, more special moments together.

There are three adorable donation cards, at \$25, \$50 and \$100. You can make a purchase by simply selecting the card(s) and quantity in the form below, or buy online at aeiou.org.au. All donations are tax deductible and you will receive a receipt along with the gift card of your choice to give a loved one this year in lieu of a gift.

\$100
gift card



\$25
gift card



\$50
gift card



DONATE NOW

to make a difference for children with autism



\$25 gift card Qty: _____ \$50 gift card Qty: _____ \$100 gift card Qty: _____

OR I would like to make a donation of

\$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$ _____

OR I would like to make a regular monthly gift of

\$20 \$50 \$100 \$ _____

Whatever gift you chose will be greatly appreciated.

Title	First Name	Surname	Position
Organisation		Address	
Suburb		State	Postcode
Phone		Email	

Visa MasterCard Cheque enclosed (made payable to AEIOU Foundation)

Card No. _____ Expiry _____

Name on Card _____ Cardholders signature _____

Please send me information on:

- Leaving a gift in my will
- Holding a fundraising event for AEIOU Foundation
- I would like to visit a centre
- Workplace Giving Program
- Take a Hike series

OR

- I have already left a bequest to AEIOU Foundation in my will
- I do not wish to receive any further correspondence from AEIOU Foundation
- Please update my details