

eyeson autism

AEIOU Adelaide turns one!

October marked the first anniversary of AEIOU Foundation's first centre in Adelaide and to coincide with this milestone, AEIOU expanded the service, opening a new classroom to offer additional places for families in need.

The second classroom caters for 10 full-time placements, and current waiting lists continue to illustrate the need for access to affordable, high quality early intervention. To coincide with the centre's first anniversary, a series of workshops hosted by Adelaide Centre Manager Nicole Schaumlöffel were presented, sharing information about AEIOU's curriculum and outcomes, along with free behaviour therapy workshops.

In other news for the centre, the local Coles supermarket pledged its support to the young children in the program. We look forward to working with the Huntfield Heights community to continue raising support, and funds for the children in our program.



The most wonderful time of the year: Celebrating the class of 2015!

At AEIOU, December is a festive time for more reasons than one. Our end of year celebrations mark 12 months of dedication, of team work (with each other, alongside AEIOU families), and new beginnings.

Across our centres, children are getting ready to transition to school. Each centre hosts graduation parties to mark this milestone and these feted celebrations reach every corner of AEIOU. The only thing that beats meeting these young children as they begin with us is watching them flourish throughout their time in the program as they prepare for their next learning environment. As the end of the year approaches, we'll spot many of the children donning their mortar boards and graduation gowns, while their parents and carers join their classroom team to mark the occasion.

(Story continues on page 2)

Every child works hard, with the support of our team and their families to develop important life skills. Here, AEIOU teachers Teresa Gardner and Carla Crimmins share a little about some of the children in their classes, what they have achieved at AEIOU, and what makes them unique.

“A number of children are transitioning from our classroom this year, which is always bittersweet for us,” Teresa says.

“We first met Elliot in 2013, and this year he has been working hard on his play and social skills as he gets ready for school. He now enjoys asking an adult or a peer to play with him, and especially loves playing chase. He has a great passion for dinosaurs, and is really knowledgeable on the topic.”

Max Sullivan also joined AEIOU in 2013. His family moved from Dubai to attend AEIOU, and according to Teresa, something special about him is how loving he is, and how much he enjoys giving cuddles. “He has a great time playing in the sandpit and playing social games with an adult. He has improved his receptive language skills this year, and is now able to identify body parts, familiar people, and verbs,” she explains.

“Luka Carrick began attending AEIOU in 2012, and has grown so much in her time with us. She loves doing puzzles, and playing with bubbles – they make her laugh! She’s been working on her vocal imitation skills now, and is able to imitate ‘Mama’ and ‘Dada’ which is really special,” Teresa says.

Emma Zanesco began at AEIOU around the same time, and loves to play with cars on the ‘car run’, and pushing herself on the swing. She’s been working on her waiting and turn-taking skills most recently, and is now able to wait a short time for her turn, and request a turn from a peer.

Justin Hsu’s teacher Carla Crimmins says he began with AEIOU in January 2013. Since that time he has worked on developing his communication skills. “He has an easy going, gentle nature with the ability to melt your heart. Justin has also made great progress in his interactions with staff and peers and has a great understanding of the alphabetic principle,” Carla explains.

Be sure to follow us on Facebook, and check out the snaps of the children from across the program ... and stay in touch as we share the pictures from their first day at their new schools in 2016.



A word from our CEO

Alan Smith

This year, we’ve celebrated a ‘Decade of Difference’ at AEIOU and with that we’ve had the opportunity to reconnect with old friends and supporters, including the families who were the first to enrol their children in our program. It’s been a year of reflection and celebration for all of us here at AEIOU Foundation, giving us an added boost of energy to achieve many important long-term and short-term goals.

Highlights for this year include the expansion of our Gold Coast centre, the opening of an additional classroom in our Adelaide centre, the cracking efforts of our participants across the Take a Hike series, the progress we’ve made in research and, of course, our 10 year anniversary celebrations.

Next year, our Townsville centre will be at the forefront of change when the

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) launches in the region. We’ve been fortunate to work within the NDIS trial in Adelaide and continue to represent AEIOU Foundation, and, as such, the families in our program on the Queensland Transition Advisory Group, which plays a fundamental role in the full delivery of the scheme in Queensland in the coming years.

In 2016, we’ll commence construction on our purpose-built centre in Adelaide, in partnership with Minda. We’ll continue to deliver our service from our centre in Huntfield Heights until the new centre is completed in 2017.

We have also recently been named the major beneficiary for a number of significant events, which will provide enormous support to the young children in our program. These include the Rotary Art Spectacular, and the 2016

Chain Reaction – the Ultimate Corporate Bike Challenge event. We look forward to bringing you more news about this, and other great initiatives early in the New Year.

It’s been a bumper year, and I’d like to thank each of you for making what we do at AEIOU possible! The families enrolled in our service, our staff, our donors, partners and volunteers are essential to our success, and are our inspiration.

Wishing all of you a safe and happy Christmas. I look forward to seeing you again in 2016.

Alan Smith
CEO



Join AEIOU on social media



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Dr James Morton (AM) recognised in The University of Queensland 2015 Vice Chancellor's Alumni Excellence Awards

AEIOU Foundation Chairman and Founder, Dr James Morton (AM) has been recognised for his outstanding professional and community achievements in the University of Queensland's (UQ) 2015 Vice-Chancellor's Alumni Excellence Awards. He was presented with the award at the annual 'Courting the Greats' ceremony on Wednesday 21 October. Dr Morton was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2015 Australia Day Honours in recognition of his outstanding achievements.

Honoured and proud to be recognised alongside fellow alumni who have excelled across their fields, Dr Morton says the journey with AEIOU Foundation continues to be challenging, inspirational and rewarding. "Awards such as this also recognise the dedication and commitment of the team of people who work to support the Foundation," he said.

Dr Morton was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2015 Australia Day Honours in recognition of his outstanding achievements.



National Disability Insurance Scheme to launch in Townsville in 2016

The Queensland and Commonwealth Governments announced North Queensland will have an early launch of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) early next year.

The launch will take place approximately six months ahead of the full roll-out of the Scheme, and the first to access it will be children and young people aged under 18 years. Participant planning will commence with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) in January 2016 and from April, participants will begin to receive supports.

The launch will also be rolled out in Charters Towers and Palm Island.

Families who attend our Townsville centre will be directly affected. We encourage all families engaged in our service to read about the NDIS implementation. Information can be found online at our website, www.ndis.gov.au, and the team at AEIOU will work closely with families accessing the scheme.

Painting partners

As we go to print, 50 volunteers from accounting firm Ernst & Young Assurance are getting ready to roll up their sleeves and brighten our centres.

With the support from Dulux Australia, the volunteers will give a fresh lick of paint to three of our centres, ensuring our Bray Park, Nathan and Camira centres will look like new in 2016. Thank you to our volunteers at Ernst and Young Assurance for choosing AEIOU for their annual Corporate Social Responsibility Day and Dulux Australia for donating the paint!



EY

Dulux

Chain Reaction set to cycle for AEIOU in 2016!

We're absolutely thrilled to announce AEIOU Foundation will be a beneficiary of the 2016 Chain Reaction initiative. Chain Reaction – the ultimate corporate bike challenge, will commence on Saturday April 16, and while raising funds for Queensland children in need, cyclists will set the pace in Adelaide, with the seven day challenge set amongst beautiful scenes in the Adelaide Hills, Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale, while also visiting stunning locations including Victor Harbor and Kangaroo Island. Chain Reaction was responsible for raising the capital funding required to construct AEIOU's Gold Coast centre, and the funds raised in 2016 will have an equal impact, helping to expand our reach and support more children. We look forward to making a formal announcement, and sharing more details with you soon!



An exquisite luncheon to make a difference!

Lynn's Lunch is making a spectacular return on 22 April 2016, marking 10 years since the Lynn Wright Memorial Fund was established in honour and memory of AEIOU founder Louise Morton's mother. Lynn was a passionate advocate for AEIOU Foundation and also for young children who could benefit from early intervention. This year, 31 families at AEIOU received financial assistance from the Fund, ensuring their child could remain in the program and learn important life skills. The 2016 lunch will take place at the Victoria Park Golf Club. Be sure to keep an eye out for all of the details as they come!



Rotary Art Spectacular

AEIOU Foundation has been named a major beneficiary of the 37th Rotary Art Spectacular, taking place in 2016. This is the third year AEIOU Foundation's children will have benefited from this event, which is recognised as Queensland's most prestigious art exhibition. AEIOU is delighted to participate, and be a recipient in this extraordinary event. Thank you to our Rotary friends.



Emmi-Belle's inspiring 'autism dress' raises \$25,000 for children at AEIOU

On October 7, a beautiful children's boutique launched a unique dress for girls aged 1-8 with the goal of raising funds for AEIOU Foundation, generating a total of \$25,000. More than 120 attended the event, and the dress can be purchased online.

Capturing the attention of people from across the globe, Lacey Lane is the brainchild of Nikki Bowling and Bec Lucas. The duo designed the 'Emmi-Belle' dress, and Lacey Lane donated \$20 from the sale of each dress (RRP \$59.95) to AEIOU Foundation, raising \$25,000.

Nikki's daughter Emmi-Belle is the inspiration behind the dress. Emmi-Belle, who has autism, is enrolled at AEIOU Foundation's Bray Park Centre, where she has learned a number of new skills this year, including the ability to communicate with PECs (Picture Exchange Communication System), and she has developed her verbal communication skills, too. Nikki says the world has opened up for Emmi-Belle and her family. "When she began at AEIOU, I would have described her as being on the same level as a 14-month-old. She was unable to communicate and was having meltdowns on a daily basis. She would struggle with any type of interaction, including with me and her dad," Nikki explains. "She hated to be touched and would not give kisses or cuddles. She would hide in cupboards simply to be alone."

"In the beginning, I was a little anxious, because I didn't know how she would handle the new environment (at AEIOU) and the structured program, but before we knew it, she was loving it. She thrives on the structure and predictability, and she now plays alongside other children and engages in sharing and colouring with her sister. We play chase around the house with the whole family, and she looks me in the eyes to say 'hello' and 'goodbye'."

Today, Nikki says Emmi-Belle can ask for a drink of water if she is thirsty, and she is fully toilet trained. "She gives cuddles when you ask for one and even jumps into bed for voluntary cuddles at night. Emmi-Belle is a totally different kid, and so happy... our little girl has really come out of her shell, and we owe a massive thanks to the teachers and specialists at AEIOU," Nikki says.

Like all of the children in our program, the team at AEIOU is thrilled to see Emmi-Belle blossoming. The success of this one-of-a-kind fundraiser is tremendous. AEIOU is simply delighted to be part of the initiative and to be able to use the funds to make a life-changing difference to children in our program.

To find out more about Lacey Lane and to purchase an autism dress (hurry, before stocks run out!) visit www.laceylane.com.au. You can also find Lacey Lane on Facebook and Instagram.





Say WATT?

The perfect location for a Melbourne Cup luncheon!

WATT Bar and Restaurant hosted an extraordinary luncheon to celebrate Melbourne Cup this year, hosting a bespoke three-course affair from the venue's new food concept, New Farmer's Kitchen, to coincide with the race that stops the nation. AEIOU was delighted to be the beneficiary of the event, which raised funds to support our therapy program. Along with live coverage of the races, a three-piece band and DJ was on hand to keep the party atmosphere alive, with fun to be had with lucky door prizes, silent auctions and more. We extend our thanks to WATT Bar and Restaurant for their support.



Moonlighting musos help raise \$30,000 for AEIOU kids at the Triffid

On Sunday 13 September, a group of Brisbane's leading businessmen traded their suits for civvies in the name of an AEIOU charity gig at Fortitude Valley hotspot, the Triffid.

Long-time AEIOU supporter Scott Hutchinson owns the Triffid and John Collins (former bassist from Powderfinger) manages the venue. The pair teamed up with John Wilson (APH Properties) and Mark Waller (Clayton Utz) for a spectacular event!

The original aim was to bring some local musos together for a jam session, but plans quickly grew and five bands entertained more than 500 delighted guests.

The moonlighting musos are also some of Brisbane's most recognised barristers, lawyers, accountants, bankers, and retailers, and have been playing in bands for over 30 years. All reports indicate they thoroughly enjoyed the chance to get together under the one roof to create a day to remember! The bands included The Budgee Smugglers, The Manilows, The Hanovers, The Vinyl Frontier, and Roger the Cabin Boy.

The event raised \$15,000 for AEIOU, and Scott and Mary-Jeanne Hutchinson were quick to match the figure on the day, donating a whopping \$30,000 to help the children we support at AEIOU.

Plans are underway for a 2016 event, such was its success. An enormous thank-you to the team at the Triffid, Scott and Mary-Jeanne Hutchinson, John Collins, John Wilson, Mark Waller and each of the bands, along with everybody who supported the event on the day and gave so generously.

A day on the green at Paradise Point

On 9 August, AEIOU's Gold Coast parent committee kicked off their shoes with local supporters to raise funds for the children in the centre at the Paradise Point Bowls Club. Karen Fleischer and her family were at the helm of the event, which raised a total of \$7,000 in a great outcome! This is a popular event on the Gold Coast calendar and it has grown each year. We send a huge thank you to Karen for hosting it for two years running.

A family story

Jamahl and Beau Mooney

My son, Jamahl, was born in 2011 and until he was about 18 months old he developed normally. However, after that time he began to regress. At the time of his formal diagnosis in 2013, we were devastated. We had no idea how we would cope and how he could learn. We had the support of a very helpful autism advisor and with her, we were able to thoroughly look into a number of options that were available for our family. As part of this, we heard about AEIOU Foundation. We began to research the organisation online – I wanted to know what people were saying about it. The feedback was amazing and, to us, quite unbelievable. How could these people take my son, who wouldn't even look at us and give eye contact, or respond to his name, and who was completely non-verbal, and teach him to be like these children we were reading about? We had our doubts.

But, after reading all of this, we felt we wanted to enrol Jamahl at AEIOU. My mother and I attended an appointment with Jamahl at AEIOU's Townsville centre and were asked questions regarding his condition and his interaction with others. We were given an example of how the children are taught to communicate, beginning with the use of the Picture Exchange Communication system (PECs). We were amazed. Jamahl went on the waiting list and began at the centre in January 2014.

He settled in well. He learned to use PECs to ask for what he wanted at school and we incorporated this procedure at home, to reinforce what he learned. He was fully toilet trained in the day-time within the first year of his enrolment, and he also began to talk ... yes, he was saying words again! While they were singular words, it was so rewarding to hear. It wasn't long before he began to string more words together, creating two and three-word sentences.

It was around this time that my second son, Beau, who was born in 2012, began to show similar signs of a developmental delay, so we organised testing for him, which resulted in his autism diagnosis in November 2014. His diagnosis was worse than his brother's, but he also was lucky enough to receive a placement at the centre very quickly and began there in February 2015.

We really didn't expect to see the same results that we saw with Jamahl, but Beau is doing very well at the centre. He is now (day) toilet trained and mostly has accident-free days. He also responds well to his name and he now shows affection to others. We have heard Beau say one word on three different occasions and we were all so excited, we screamed each time. Beau is progressing well with his PECs and we are very pleased with his results also.

Jamahl can use sentences with four or more words and is transitioning into prep. He will officially graduate from AEIOU in December this year. He has grown into a leader who is well-liked by his peers and he is a very caring and affectionate little boy. He knows colours, shapes, letters, animals, people's names, he counts to 20 and he loves my mum's cat and dogs. When he started he had none of the skills that a typical three-year-old would have had, but now he is on par with children of his own age and in some ways he is more knowledgeable in different areas.

He is so, so different to the boy we first took to the centre and he and Beau are very clever in the things they do; it just took being part of the program at AEIOU to unlock everything. Beau will have another year there next year and we look forward to his future progress.

All of the staff at the centre are so dedicated and caring, and patient with the children. They share our excitement when each child makes progress – no matter how small. Progress is progress.

They are like family. I would highly recommend AEIOU for any child who has autism, and I know that I made the right choice for both my sons by sending them there.

By Jaimi-Lee Mooney



Quality Food Services Country and Western Day raises funds for children with autism at AEIOU

It was a festival of food at the Quality Food Services Country and Western Day in September, where canteen managers from all over Queensland got together to taste a range of samples from leading food suppliers. All guests at the event were invited to make a donation to AEIOU Foundation and AEIOU was also presented with a \$10,000 cheque from the ASCA Foundation, a major sponsor of AEIOU's 10th anniversary celebrations.

Frank and June de Pasquale, owners of Quality Food Services, are long-term friends and supporters of AEIOU Foundation. Their son Joey was among the first children to be enrolled in our program. We've been delighted to watch him grow over the years, and to be able to pass this family's support onto a new generation of young hearts and minds.

Six years of Take a Hike Brisbane!



Take a Hike Brisbane is growing up ... this year, more than 220 locals laced up for a marathon effort on behalf of the children in our centres, raising a total of \$153,000. Hikers included AEIOU parents, friends, staff, corporate sponsors and donors, and others from organisations across the Great South East who simply sought an opportunity to give their time, effort and to help raise funds for a cause close to all of our hearts.

The event's **top team** fundraisers included Team Jacob (\$30,454), The Samsationals (\$16,026), Team Harris Black (\$14,772), Team Morton (\$14,929) and Pitcher Partners (\$16,309).

Our top **individual** fundraisers included Alan Smith, AEIOU's very own CEO, who raised \$14,760.80. At his heels was James Morton, AEIOU Chairman at \$13,178; Brendan Power, AEIOU Director at \$12,737; Steve Williams from Team Jacob at \$9,298; and Paul Innes from Team Samsational, who raised \$5,762.

Starting at dawn, the crew walked, ran and raced to the finish line, with the option to complete the challenge as an individual or team, in either a 10.5km, 21km or 42km course.

At the finish line, our participants celebrated with a Rotary BBQ and the opportunity to share war stories, have a massage, and reflect on their amazing achievement in the name of brighter futures for children with autism.

We send a very big thanks to all of our hikers for dusting off your trainers, and to those of you who didn't walk or run, but made a donation to a team or individual. With all of your help, we can make a true difference to the lives of the young people in our centres. We were thrilled with your support and participation and hope to see you at the starting line in 2016!

All this was made possible by Rotary, QFS and Active Rehab, our sponsors.



Teams in profile

Everybody who laced up for this year's Take a Hike Brisbane has a story and a reason to get behind our young people. This is especially true for our top fundraisers. Here, we share a little about Team Harris Black, Team Jacob and The Samsationals.

Team Harris Black

Team Harris Black, led by Brendan Power, has been behind Take a Hike Brisbane since its inception. The team finished in a great time of 7 hours and 40 minutes, including breaks. Despite being thrilled to finish so well, there were definitely some weary legs and sore feet, according to Brendan. They took 52,000 steps and burned more than 3,000 calories in their 42 kilometre hike. Not only has Brendan hiked in each of the Brisbane events, he has clocked up seven events in total, travelling 280 kilometres in 360,000 steps, burning more than 21,000 calories. For each hike, Brendan wore a 13 kilogram backpack, to represent the weight of a three-year-old child. In the last five years, through this event alone, Brendan has raised around \$130,000, and says he's learned a great deal about footwear selection, blister management and the wonders of Epsom Salts bath!

He extends a massive thank you to all who have supported him and his team during this time. An amazing effort Brendan and Team Harris Black. Thank you!

Team Jacob

Team Jacob began to 'Take a Hike' in 2013. The team is comprised of a group of great mates who are driven by a desire to give back to their community, and to AEIOU Foundation.

"We want to raise awareness about autism; to highlight the benefits of early intervention and raise funds to support the AEIOU Foundation. Our motivation is little Jacob and the enormous difference that AEIOU made to his life and that of his family."

"Having attended AEIOU Nathan in 2012 Jacob is now in Year 1 in a mainstream school and continues to make enormous progress thanks to the foundation provided by the AEIOU Early Intervention Program. Above all else though, he is a healthy and happy little bloke, who enjoys playing with his brothers, and the family dog."

In support of Take a Hike, Team Jacob's third annual fundraising Boutique Beer Lunch, sponsored by Fortitude Brewing Company, was held on Sunday 18 October and naturally, the event was a sell-out with 170 in attendance.

Guests enjoyed stunning views at The Landing at Kangaroo Point, with the delectable food perfectly matched with craft beers.

So far Team Jacob has raised a remarkable \$30,000 for AEIOU.

The Samsationals

The Samsationals joined Take a Hike, led by Paul and Mary Innes who enrolled their son Sam at AEIOU 18 months ago. "All children with autism should be able to experience the brilliance of AEIOU," they say. "Our gorgeous little Sam started at the Nathan Centre 18 months ago with roughly 50 single words, very little eye contact and minimal social interaction. Sam now talks in sentences, absolutely loves playing and interacting with his siblings, cousins and friends, and we are now looking at Sam transitioning to prep. This is all thanks to the evidence based early intervention program AEIOU provides."

Together, they say Take a Hike was a great day, shared by so many to support AEIOU Foundation. "We'd like to thank all of our wonderful family, friends and work colleagues who gave generously by donating to an amazing cause... and we'd like to personally thank TEAM SAMSATIONAL."



Pint-sized football fans ... When AEIOU, Hyundai Help for Kids and the Brisbane Lions converge



When the Brisbane Lions took on the Adelaide Crows in Round 13 of the AFL season, some of our wonderful AEIOU families were invited to be in on the action!

Eamon Brennan and Noah and Isabella Stroh were joined by their parents at the game, which marked the first time any of the children had attended an AFL game with their families.

Eamon's dad, Will Brennan says he had a wonderful day with his son Eamon, explaining he had considered taking him to a football or cricket match previously, but wasn't certain about how he would cope with large crowds and general atmosphere. "To be honest, we just weren't sure he'd handle it. If this opportunity hadn't come up with Hyundai Help for Kids, we simply wouldn't have done it. But he absolutely loved it and we had an amazing time. I still talk about it."

Will says that although Eamon hadn't shown a great interest in sport before the game, he has a fascination with cars, and the connection with Hyundai was motivating for him. "We prepared him by showing him pictures of what it would be like when we got there, and we were greeted at the entry before being escorted to our seats. They had thought of everything – there was a colouring-in station and a food station, and although we had every comfort, we really blended in with the crowd."

Eamon had the opportunity to meet some of the players, and he also met the team mascot. "At the end, Eamon also had a great run around on the grounds. He was super excited. We'll definitely do it again!"

Hyundai Help for Kids donates \$10,000 to AEIOU each year, and is also a major sponsor of the Brisbane Lions, and on behalf of our families, we send our sincere gratitude.



Nomadic Chefs at Maroochydore: degustation with a difference

Peak Wine Bar in Maroochydore hosted a Nomadic Chefs degustation dinner on 9 September, raising \$4,232 for AEIOU's children.

Peak Wine Bar was joined by four other local restaurants including Elliotts Bistro, Peak Wine Bar, Corbin's and The Dessert Architects.

The Velo Project Elliotts Bistro, Corbin's, The Dessert Architects and The Velo Project, tempting the taste buds of 50 diners with five exquisite courses, prepared by five chefs. Everybody had a tremendous time and we extend our warm thanks to Peak Wine Bar for sponsoring the initiative, and each of the restaurants and chefs who gave their time to make this a wonderful night.

Still behind AEIOU... St Laurie's celebrates centenary while stepping out to raise \$10,000

Not only did AEIOU celebrate a milestone year, 2015 marked the 100th year of operations for St Laurie's! This inner-city Brisbane school has supported AEIOU for five years running, with their big-hearted boys stepping out in their yellow AEIOU shirts for their annual walkathon, raising funds and awareness in one swoop.

We're simply thrilled with the friendship from St Laurie's, a school with a difference, making a difference to the lives of a new generation of children. Thank you boys and thank you to the team at the College for taking the time to coordinate and host this spectacular river-walk each year and continue to choose the young children at AEIOU as your inspiration.





Staff in profile

Katrina Ives // Parent Liaison & Fees Co-ordinator

How long have you been with AEIOU? Just over 5 years.

What did you do before you joined the AEIOU team? I worked for another not-for-profit in the area of homelessness and community development for over five years.

What is the most rewarding part of your job? Offering families places for their children and generally helping families wherever I can.

What do you like to do in your spare time? Lots of things; tennis, movies, seaside walks and I have a large family to take care of, they keep me busy.

What is an interesting fact about you? I was the first certified highland dance teacher in Australia; I have a very strong Scottish heritage.

Name someone who inspires you and why? Lots of people; everyday folk who do their best to achieve what they need, and working in a team that complements each other, works together to achieve goals and keeps their sense of humour and focus.

AEIOU Bundaberg's free behaviour workshops

Educators, child-care professionals, allied health workers and parents all had the opportunity to attend a series of free workshops in Bundaberg in November.

The workshops were presented by AEIOU Foundation Program Coordinator and Senior Behaviour Therapist Michael Scanlon, and covered topics including behaviour management strategies, verbal behaviour, and changing developmental trajectories in children with autism.

Michael, a graduate and former researcher at the University of Miami in the United States, says his career has been inspired by his brother who has autism.

"I am passionate about working with children to ensure they are able to live life to their full ability, and I'm always looking for opportunities to work with our community and share knowledge with professionals and families who support children with autism," Michael says.

Child care and education professionals attended a workshop on Understanding and Supporting Children with Challenging Behaviours in the Classroom, receiving easy-to-use strategies to manage challenging behaviours, advice to assist with self-regulation, and tips for working with parents to achieve behavioural goals.

Parents attended a workshop on Behavioural Strategies for Children which featured easy-to-use strategies to help manage challenging behaviours and advice to assist with self-regulation. Allied health workers, and also medical specialists were invited to attend a seminar which featured targeted advice regarding the latest evidence-based therapies that stimulate changes in developmental trajectories for children with autism.

The workshops, which were held at St John's Lutheran Primary School auditorium, were a great success, and we thank all of our participants for joining us.



Up, up & away - paper planes fly high for AEIOU

Inspired by the 2014 Australian film Paper Planes, Brisbane resident Dan Adler and sons Nate & Gabe dreamed up the concept of the Up, Up, Upper Mount Gravatt Paper Plane Championships, supporting three charities of their choice.

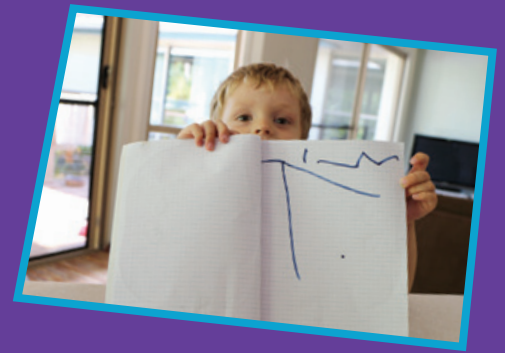
The inaugural event on 17 October was a huge success drawing an impressive crowd of children and parents who launched hundreds of colourful planes into the air, ultimately raising \$540 for AEIOU Foundation, which was one of the fortunate beneficiaries.

The record for the longest flying distance on the day was set at an impressive 32 metres.

We thank the Adler family for brainstorming this wonderful event which is sure to excite local children and the big kid in all of us for years to come.



Understanding Literacy in Children with Autism – CRC Study



We are excited to share updates on our collaboration with Griffith University and members of the Living with Autism Collaborative Research Centre (CRC) into an important area of research: literacy for children with ASD. These studies involve collaboration between Griffith University Speech Pathology Academics Dr Marleen Westerveld and Dr David Trembath, team members from the Autism Centre of Excellence, ASPECT and the Children's Hospital at Westmead, as well as AEIOU's Dr Jessica Paynter.

Literacy is an important area for all children, including children with ASD. Recent research suggests many children with ASD struggle to read with a high percentage of children showing difficulties in reading comprehension at school. However, very little research has investigated the development of early literacy skills in young children with ASD and whether it is similar or different to typically-developing children.

In 2015-2016 we participated in the first study, "Emergent Literacy Performance of Children with ASD." Thank you very much to all the families who participated in this study, including more than 30 children and their families from AEIOU centres. Thank you to the AEIOU staff who also supported this study.

Emergent literacy skills develop prior to reading acquisition and serve as the foundation for accurate and fluent reading with comprehension. Emergent literacy skills include print-related skills, such as letter knowledge, print concepts and early developing phonological awareness, and meaning-related skills including vocabulary, grammatical ability and story retelling and comprehension skills.

Our initial findings show that many pre-schoolers with ASD show real strength in print-related skills, such as letter name and sound knowledge. These skills will help support early reading development related to decoding new words.

Although most children were very happy to participate in the storybook task, many children struggled with the task, answering questions or retelling the story. These skills will be important for reading comprehension, i.e., understanding what the written words or paragraphs mean.

We are excited to share two further studies that have recently been approved for funding by the Autism CRC: 1) to track the children's progress in literacy as they enter school, and 2) to develop and trial a brief intervention around shared storybook reading. These studies will commence in early 2016.

If you would like to learn more about these studies please feel free to contact the project leader Dr Marleen Westerveld on 07 5678 7658 or email m.westerveld@griffith.edu.au. For more information on AEIOU research including this and other studies, Dr Jessica Paynter can be contacted on 07 3212 1106 or email jessica.paynter@aeiou.org.au



Tour de Office – peddle power

In September, Synergies Economic Consulting joined the Tour de Office cycling initiative, to raise funds for AEIOU Foundation. Tour De Office is an office-based cycling challenge inviting companies from across the country to combine cycling with fundraising, choosing an organisation close to their own hearts for their own personal challenge.

The added benefit is that it promotes healthy, active attitudes across a multitude of offices.

The team at Synergies featured in the top 10 on the Tour de Office leaderboard, having raised \$5,337 to share between AEIOU Foundation and Stepping Stone Clubhouse, in a terrific effort!

50:50 gives 100% to AEIOU children

In a tremendous effort, staff, parents and volunteers joined forces to raise funds and awareness for AEIOU's centres across Queensland, selling 50:50 raffle tickets at the Brisbane Broncos home game on 10 September.

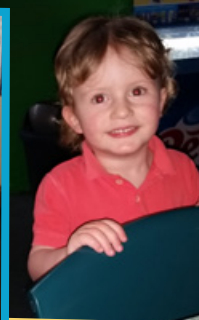
Adorned in bright green uniforms, this amazing team has gotten behind AEIOU twice this year, raising a total of \$32,000 at this event! Well done to all, and thanks to those who purchased a ticket.

We also extend our special thanks to the Brisbane Broncos for allowing us to join them as they marched their way into the NRL final. NRMA Insurance Broncos Co-Captain and AEIOU Ambassador Corey Parker kicked goals for AEIOU all year, with \$100 being donated to AEIOU for every goal he scored across the season. We've been honoured to have his, and the Team's support throughout the year!



A family story

Zander and Cole Threadgold



We have two sons, Zander (5) and Cole (3), who both attend AEIOU Foundation's Adelaide centre. They have some similarities, but also many different traits, so at first we didn't think Cole would have autism. Zander was initially developing in a very typical way – particularly with his fine and gross motor skills. Although he reached a certain stage where I noticed he seemed to 'stand still' while his peers began to talk or do different things he wasn't yet attempting. He has a number of sensory issues, and although he babbled as a toddler, he really only had about eight words before he began at AEIOU. Cole was different – he didn't babble at all, and found it particularly difficult to communicate his needs and wants to us.

So, Zander was four before he had a formal diagnosis, although we knew much earlier; it took about 15 months to access specialists, and finish the process. During that time, we were participating in a range of interventions, and we did the same thing with Cole while we sought funding to support his therapy and development. The private lessons we participated in helped show us what we needed to do to support their learning and development at home, but you also reach a stage where you're not sure what to do next – and I knew they would benefit from additional support. While there were some options for intervention across Adelaide, we have two other children, both Paul and I work, and it can be a real juggle. For that reason, having something local with a great community support network has been a wonderful find for us with AEIOU.

I found out about AEIOU Foundation through Facebook, after stumbling across an autism support page that was managed by a lady whose son attended a centre in Queensland. We became friends, and it turned out she had moved to Brisbane to attend the program. When she first heard AEIOU was going to open a centre in Huntfield Heights she contacted me immediately. We went straight on the waiting list – Zander began there in November last year, and Cole started in August this year. We haven't looked back!

Before we started at AEIOU, I would wonder if Zander knew who I was. Did he know that I was his mum and Paul was his dad? Did he understand what that meant? He began to call me Tash, but shortly after that, he started to call me 'Mum' and would come to me and ask for a cuddle, and when Paul arrived home he would run over and say "Daddy's home!" – I never thought that would happen for us. More than finally hearing his voice and his amazing vocabulary developing, it means more than I can say to know that he completely understands who we are.

Not only is Zander interacting with us, he is also starting to make friends. Until recently, Zander was completely oblivious to other children – I don't think he noticed them at all. Now, he initiates play. We went to a birthday party recently, and he played with three other boys solidly for about 40 minutes. That was huge for us. We always want our children to have friends and with an autism diagnosis, you wonder how they'll interact or if they'll have a good social life as they get older.

I think every parent dreams for their child's future, and also has the same types of fears and concerns. But, when you have a child diagnosed with a disability like autism, you do wonder what the future holds for them. Since the boys joined AEIOU, I've seen a huge difference in them and my fears have halved. Now I know Zander and Cole will have jobs, they'll play sport, they'll have partners, and they'll be part of the community.

Something else we've gained at AEIOU is peer support. You realise you aren't doing it alone, and your children can make friends with other children. There is no judgement when we catch up, we are all in the same boat and there's no need to explain what's happening, or why your child isn't able to do something. We feel accepted.

I sleep much better at night because of AEIOU. The staff know my boys inside and out, and I never worry when I drop them off. They love them and know them so well; not a day goes past where they aren't sharing something special that they've done with me.

I wish the world could see my kids the way I do, and the way the team at AEIOU does. We're so lucky, and while there are scary and challenging times, autism is not the end of the world. We work together to get past hurdles and I see my sons open up and grow all of the time. As a parent, you learn to appreciate every tiny thing they do and you see the world differently. This is part of their story, but not their whole story, and we can't wait to see how they grow.

Australian Government announces immunisation policy

The Commonwealth Government recently announced new measures to increase immunisation rates across the national community. As a result, from 1 January 2016, conscientious objection to vaccines will be removed as an exemption category, and children who are not immunised will be unable to receive the Child Care Benefit, and Child Care Rebate, as well as the Family Tax Benefit Part A end of year supplement payments.

Because AEIOU Foundation's early intervention program is embedded within a long-day care structure, and families accessing our service can apply these rebates to their fees, it is important all parents take the time to review this new Government Policy and understand how it affects them. It does mean that if a parent at AEIOU chooses not to vaccinate their child, they will be ineligible for the aforementioned rebates.

AEIOU does note that if your child is not immunised for other, medically approved reasons, this new policy will not apply. Please contact our enrolments team on 1300 273 435 in this instance. For information you can visit www.humanservices.gov.au/families, or contact Centrelink on 13 12 02.

No changes will apply to the out-of-pocket expenses for parents whose children have up-to-date immunisation records.

This Christmas...

...give a gift that gives all children with autism the right to shine.

Christmas is a time of joy, and magic for many. The holiday season brings with it time to reflect, and many great opportunities to make a difference to those we love. No matter how you celebrate Christmas, there are some things all parents have in common. It goes beyond the gifts under the Christmas tree. They include **hope for a bright future, opportunities to connect and contribute, the ability to learn important skills, and to communicate with confidence.**

There is nothing separating the children at AEIOU with the hopes every parent has, except they need more support. They have a right to life-changing therapy and education, and we can't do it without you.

As a generous donor, you make AEIOU possible. You make bright futures a reality. Thank you for giving to AEIOU Foundation.



Yes, I would like to help children with autism shine

Contact details:

Title: _____ First Name: _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please charge my:

MasterCard Visa **OR** Please find enclosed my cheque/Money Order.
(Made payable to AEIOU Foundation).

Card No: _____/_____/_____/_____ Expiry: ____/____

Name on Card _____

Make a single donation: (Please tick your selection) Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

- \$10,000 Child placement at AEIOU for 1 year \$5,000 Interactive whiteboard for a centre
 \$500 iPad for a classroom \$100 Colour cards to help with speech therapy
 \$50 Art supplies for fine motor skills \$_____ (Please specify amount)

Make a recurring gift: (Please tick your selection)

- Weekly Fortnightly Monthly Other _____ \$_____ (Please specify amount)

AEIOU Foundation respects your privacy. Please view our privacy policy www.aeiou.org.au/privacy-policy

Autism is not rare, it affects 1 in 100 children in Australia. There is no known cause and no cure, but research shows early intervention makes a big difference to a child's development.

AEIOU Foundation is one of Australia's leading providers of full-time early intervention for children diagnosed with autism, aged 2½ to 6 years.

Children with autism experience the world differently, and AEIOU's therapy and education support program gives these children the skills and tools for school, employment and beyond, changing the course of their lives.

Help us create brighter futures for children with autism.

Return to AEIOU Foundation:
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