

AUTUMN  
2022

Anja Rožen, a 13-year-old girl from Slovenia, won the Lions Clubs International Peace Poster Contest. "My poster represents the Earth and the fact that it brings us all together," said Rožen. "People are holding on to each other. If one person lets go, the rest of them will fall. We are all connected to the planet and to one another."

The theme of the contest 'We Are All Connected' resonates worldwide. Today, staying connected is probably more important than it has been in the past. Connections matter.

On an individual level, social connections can improve our physical and mental health and wellbeing. Whether it's spending time with a friend, chatting to someone, joining a sports team, a choir or a group of like-minded people, going to a place of worship, or offering to help someone else; staying connected can help keep us well.

So as we head into another autumn season, let's keep in mind Anja's positive message of hope and connection for ourselves, to the people we care about, and to the world around us.



## Programs

MAT (Marital Arts as Therapy) starts on Tuesday 3 May in Bayswater North and runs for 8 weeks.

The CHAMPS program starts on Wednesday 4 May in Ringwood and runs for 8 weeks.

Space4Us meets on the third Monday of the month from 4-6pm in Ringwood and surrounds.

Kids Club meets on Wednesdays from 4:30-7pm at various locations.

For more information: [fapmi@easternhealth.org.au](mailto:fapmi@easternhealth.org.au)

Newsletter produced by Elizabeth Fraser & the FaPMI team with Creative Content & Copy ([rachel@ccandc.com.au](mailto:rachel@ccandc.com.au)).

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### FaPMI Coordinators

4 Bona Street, Ringwood East Phone: 9871 3988  
[fapmi@easternhealth.org.au](mailto:fapmi@easternhealth.org.au)

CHAMPS Referrals Phone: 0408 291 580  
Michelle Hegarty (Mon – Thu)  
Becca Allchin (Mon, Tue, every other Wed)  
Elizabeth Fraser (Mon – Wed)  
Ingrid Forster (alt Tue, Thu & Fri)  
Michelle Jago (Tue & Fri)



# SCHOOL HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES & EVENTS



## Little Food Festival

A jam-packed program of workshops, performances and demonstrations for kids in the heart of the city that will make food fun!

Designed to help kids connect the dots between our food, its supply chain, and its relationship to the health of our bodies and the planet. FREE

**20-21 April, 10:00am-3:00pm**

**Federation Square**

<https://fedsquare.com/events/little-food-festival>



## Trash with a Porpoise

The Trash Puppets are on a mission to save our oceans and they need your help!

Join them as they navigate the depths in their trash submarine, sing with 'merfolk', crack jokes with a walrus, and learn how we can reduce our impact through everyday actions.

A fun, new sketch comedy show for families, Trash with a Porpoise is a thrilling journey full of puppetry, clowning, song and, of course, plenty of trash!

**Where: La Mama Courthouse,  
349 Drummond St, Carlton 3053**

**Cost: \$10.00**

**Email for details: [info@lamama.com.au](mailto:info@lamama.com.au)**



## Fed Kidz Films

It's action, comedy and excitement central this April school holidays, with an awesome program of family-friendly films on the Fed Square Big Screen. FREE

**Federation Square**

**Mon 18 Apr: 2pm Minions; 4pm Matilda**

**Tue 19 Apr: 2pm The Iron Giant; 4pm Babe**

**Thu 21 Apr: 4pm Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs**

**Sat 23 Apr: 4pm Dora and the Lost City of Gold**

<https://fedsquare.com/events/fed-kidz-films>



## Waverley Park Lake Playground

What about getting out to an amazing playground!!

This is a fantastic, fully-fenced play space. Highlights include a tower with a tunnel slide, huge sandpit with lots of equipment under shade sails, flying foxes, and a water play area.

**Where: Cavenagh Boulevard, Mulgrave**





# CRAFT

## Family Tree Art

Make a family tree with finger prints!



### materials

- one piece of white paper
- stamp pads or washable textas
- pencil, eraser and black texta



The Australian Psychological Society has released a set of tips to help people thrive socially. Some include:

**Think positive** – don't overthink your social interactions.

**Forget comparison** – quality over quantity.

**Expect change** – relationships shift over time and we may lose touch with friends who were once important.

**Listen well** – respond warmly, ask questions and really listen.

**Help** – helping someone gives you a feel-good rush.

**Join in** – embrace opportunities to join, volunteer or participate.

**Reconnect** – reach out to friends from your past.

**Chat to strangers** – unexpected moments of interaction can improve your mood.

**Tolerate discomfort** – continually reach out to others and your social skills will improve.

Picture from Moreton Bay Regional Council

### Preparation

Have a chat at home about who is in your family. Write a list of all the people you know who belong to your family. Parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles and anyone else important to you. You can include pets too!

1. Draw a tree with branches for each part of your family. For example, one branch would be for you and who you live with, another branch for your cousins and who they live with. Decide how many branches your tree will have.
2. Use a stamp pad or textas to ink your finger tips and put fingerprints on the branches to represent each person. You could ask family to use their fingerprints to represent themselves. (Did you know everyone's fingerprints are unique to them?!)
3. Write names next to each fingerprint.
4. You can use more fingerprints as decoration to fill out the tree.

Adapted from Good Housekeeping April 2016 and the Michigan State University 4H Youth Development Program.



# RECIPE

## Old-fashioned Canadian Oatmeal Cookies



### ingredients

- 3 cups oats
- 1 cup plain white flour
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup butter
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup hot water with 1 tsp baking soda

1. Cream the butter and sugar, then add the water and vanilla. Add the oats and flour and mix together.
2. Roll the dough into balls and place on a greased cookie tray. Press down gently with the back of a fork dipped in water so it doesn't stick.
3. Bake at 190 degrees celsius for 15 minutes or until golden brown.

## BENEFITS OF BAKING WITH KIDS

### 1. FAMILY BONDING

Bond, create memories learn & have fun

### 2. DEVELOP MATH CONCEPTS

Practice fractions, counting, addition

### 3. READING PRACTICE

New words and an instruction format.

### 4. SCIENCE LESSONS

Viscosity, rising, temperature

### 5. NEW FOODS, BETTER HABITS

Broadens exposure to different ingredients and textures and encourages healthier eating

### 6. LEARNING LIFE SKILLS

Teaches basic skills that your child will use as an adult.

### 7. CONFIDENCE & PRIDE

With accomplishment and praise comes confidence in their new skills

Taken from: <https://www.teawithmum.com/top-tips-for-baking-with-kids/>



Check out Beyond Blue's connections matter resource: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/personal-best/pillar/wellbeing/why-feeling-connected-makes-us-feel-good>





# BOOK REVIEW

## The Blue Polar Bear

**Author:** Samantha Tidy

**Illustrator:** Ian Forss

**Reviewed by:**

**Ingrid Forster, FaPMI Coordinator**

Billy Bear loves going fishing on the icebergs with his Father Bear and it's here that we meet him, enjoying the warm sun and the yummy Silvertail fish his father catches. He's a young polar bear who needs his grown-ups to get his food for him as he's still too little to do this for himself.

But on this day, Billy notices his father looking and acting strangely, familiar signs to Billy that his father is getting sick. When Billy's father sees a delicious yet poisonous Bluespike eel something terrible happens. Billy is filled with fear and dread as his father eats it and becomes very ill.

This book takes us through the eyes of a child whose parent is experiencing dual diagnosis. We see Billy's aunty come to care for him while other grown up bears look after his ill father. A child will readily identify with Billy's concerns and fears for his father's wellbeing – and confusion that his parent could do something which he knew could hurt himself. Poignantly, Billy questions if he could have done more to stop his father eating the poisonous eel and we feel his sense of responsibility for his dad.

Billy's aunty helps him to understand the situation by providing a calm, nurturing environment for him while his father is recovering. He's given information about why his father is unwell, in words a child will understand. His aunty answers Billy's questions about helping his father himself. She reassures Billy that it's not his job to do this – but the job of others.

Billy is fed, nurtured and able to play with the other young polar bears. It doesn't stop him from worrying about his father, but it gives him reassurance and some sense of security and structure during a very

frightening period. Some time goes by and Billy's father begins to look better. Billy is finally able to say goodbye to his aunty and cousin bears and return to his place "walking strong behind his father". Billy is safe again.

Billy Bear's story is sensitively told and explains a parent experience of dual diagnosis to a child. It validates a child's view, their fears for their parent, the impact of separation from their parent, and the experience of kinship care.

The book reassures and teaches that it's not the child's fault a parent is unwell. It highlights the strength of the child-parent bond and shows that recovery is possible.

The author's website states that this is a book to assist Australian children aged 5-7 with parental dual diagnosis (mental illness/substance abuse) transition towards understanding and acceptance. The addition of a note to the reader/adult regarding safety planning could have been a useful addition. But, mostly, I enjoyed reading this book. I think this is a useful resource for children as well as parents, family and carers, child educators and mental health professionals.



# NEW FaPMI TEAM MEMBERS

## Ingrid Forster, FaPMI Coordinator

I've been with the FaPMI team for 8 weeks now. Thanks everyone for making me feel so welcome! I've been working within family and children's services over many years across child protection, out of home care, and disability fields, as well as public hospital social work and private practice. I'm an accredited mental health social worker with postgraduate training in family therapy.

The FaPMI program covers such a broad mandate in working with and supporting families of parents with mental illness. It's wonderful to be working again with parents, families and carers at such an exciting time in mental health, of expanded services and increased resources; there's so much energy and enthusiasm in the air! And much work to be done. I'm looking forward to working in the team and with other services to increase awareness of families and children.

PS. Meet Lucy-Brown, my lovely fur companion. Lucy is a 13-year-old Labradoodle, almost blind and very deaf. She loves her walks and dinner, and has boundless energy for cuddles and love!



## Michelle Jago, FaPMI Coordinator

I'm a psychologist and the newest member to the FaPMI team, in the position until June. I'm really enjoying learning about and being a part of the amazing work the FaPMI team do in supporting and strengthening families.

I've worked at Eastern Health since 2006 and, as well as FaPMI, I also work for the Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault, supporting victim survivors and their families and supports in their recovery from trauma. I'm passionate about working with people and supportive services to make others feel more informed and empowered.

I'm a mum who loves camping and holidays to the mountains with my ginormous dog Anoushka. She's a loving girl who makes every trip an adventure. I also have a big cat called Moose who is extremely mischievous but sweet.

I look forward to meeting many of you in my time with FaPMI.



# MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



## Inner Eastern Melbourne

A free service for adults, children and young people who are experiencing, or have experienced, family violence, and for families who need extra support with the care of children.

- Women, children and young people's family violence services
- Child and family services
- Aboriginal services
- Men's family violence services

**phone: 1800 354 322 | email: [IEMA@orangedoor.vic.gov.au](mailto:IEMA@orangedoor.vic.gov.au)**

30-32 Prospect Street, Box Hill | 9am-5pm Monday-Friday (closed public holidays)



## **ForWhen: Mental health support for expecting and new parents**

ForWhen helps connect parents experiencing mental health challenges to services during pregnancy and in the first 12 months of parenthood.

Call **1300 24 23 22** to discuss your situation and find out what support is available.

For more information: <https://forwhenhelpline.org.au>



# Active April 2022

MONDAY

TUESDAY

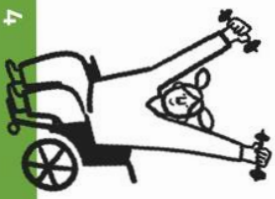
WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY



1 Commit to being more active this month, starting today

2 Spend as much time as possible outdoors today

3 Listen to your body and be grateful for what it can do

4 Eat healthy and natural food today and drink lots of water

5 Turn a regular activity into a playful game today

6 Do a body-scan meditation and really notice how your body feels

7 Get natural light early in the day. Dim the lights in the evening

8 Give your body a boost by laughing or making someone laugh

9 Turn your housework or chores into a fun form of exercise

10 Have a day free from TV or screens and get moving instead

11 Set yourself an exercise goal or sign up to an activity challenge

12 Move as much as possible, even if you're stuck inside

13 Make sleep a priority and go to bed in good time

14 Relax your body & mind with yoga, tai chi or meditation

15 Get active by singing today (even if you think you can't sing!)

16 Go exploring around your local area and notice new things

17 Be active outside. Dig up weeds or plant some seeds

18 Try a new online exercise, activity or dance class

19 Spend less time sitting today. Get up and move more often

20 Focus on 'eating a rainbow' of multi-coloured vegetables today

21 Regularly pause to stretch and breathe during the day

22 Enjoy moving to your favourite music. Really go for it

23 Go out and do an errand for a loved one or neighbour

24 Get active in nature. Feed the birds or go wildlife-spotting

25 Have a 'no screens' night and take time to recharge yourself

26 Take an extra break in your day and walk outside for 15 minutes

27 Find a fun exercise to do while waiting for the kettle to boil

28 Meet a friend outside for a walk and a chat

29 Become an activist for a cause you really believe in

30 Make time to run, swim, dance, cycle or stretch today



ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Happier · Kinder · Together



## CHAMPS MAT LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM

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**The CHAMPS MAT Life Skills program is for children aged 8 - 12 years who have a parent or family member with mental health concerns.**

MAT Life Skills program is a physically active therapeutic program that combines the basics of behaviour management with the principles of traditional martial arts. The program works around four basic teachings:

- **Be Strong**
- **Be Calm**
- **Be Kind**
- **Try Hard**



The program may be adapted slightly to meet COVID safe guidelines.

All participants must sign in and all attendees over 18 must have COVID vaccination in line with government requirements

**Where?** Arrabri Community House  
42 Allambanan Drive  
Bayswater North  
*Parking available onsite*

**When?** 8 weeks over Term 2  
4.30 -5.30pm Tuesdays  
**Commencing Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May**  
**No cost – but you must register to attend**

If you would like to find out more please contact Michelle Hegarty: Eastern Health FaPMI (Families and Parents where there is a Mental Illness) Coordinator on 0481913607

Or complete an Eastern Health FaPMI program referral form available at

<https://www.easternhealth.org.au/services/item/1182-families-where-a-parent-has-a-mental-illness-fapmi>

This program is generously supported by funds from the Yarra Giving Circle

# CHAMPS PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

## TWO NEW PROGRAMS

### APRIL SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

The school holiday group will run in Blackburn

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> April and Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April

10am – 4pm

### TERM 2

During Term 2 on Wednesday afternoons for 8 weeks in Ringwood

4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> May

1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> June

4pm – 5.30pm

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

### What is CHAMPS?

**CHAMPS** is a peer support program for children aged 8-12 who have a parent or family member who has a mental illness or mental health issues.

CHAMPS is based on the belief that children, parents and families do well when they have a shared understanding of mental health and wellbeing - and having a range of resources and supports can help when things are challenging.

Talking about mental illness and mental health can be tricky, but we know it helps a lot when families can talk about it together.

### What do we do at a Champs Program?

CHAMPS aims to provide education and support with lots of games and activities!

The Child peer support group aims to give children opportunities to

- Meet others in similar circumstances
- Receive information and support
- Learn about healthy coping strategies
- Share food together

In a fun and supportive environment



- Learn about some of the key messages that children will be discussing in their group

We encourage parents/carers to attend the parent peer support group but it is not essential.

### Who runs the Champs group?

The group will be facilitated by staff from NEAMI Life Connect, Wellways and Eastern Health. Our team is made up of mental health, carer support and peer support staff.

Michelle Hegarty (FaPMI Programs Coordinator) coordinates referrals for the group. All children attending the group must have a completed referral form. Michelle will contact all families prior to the commencement of the group.

### Is there a cost to attend?

There is no cost for children or parents/carers – but you must register to attend the group.

**We welcome opportunities to catch up with you either at the beginning or the end of group time or, over the phone. We welcome your feedback and will be distributing evaluation forms at the beginning and end of the program.**

**Please do not hesitate to contact Michelle on 0481913607 if you have any questions or concerns.**

All snacks and drinks are available so please let us know about any allergies

We will also have a range of fun activities and active games

If you or your child have additional needs, dietary requirements or allergies please let us know.

The program may be adapted slightly to meet COVID safe guidelines.

All participants must sign in via venue QR code and all attendees over 18 must have COVID vaccination in line with government requirements

***If you have any questions please contact Michelle on 0481913607  
or email: [michelle.hegarty@easternhealth.org.au](mailto:michelle.hegarty@easternhealth.org.au)***

***Or complete an Eastern Health FaPMI program referral form available at  
<https://www.easternhealth.org.au/services/item/1182-families-where-a-parent-has-a-mental-illness-fapmi>***



## **A ONE DAY COURSE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS**

**Learn how to identify and assist adolescents with  
mental health concerns and link to supports**

**2<sup>nd</sup> June 2022**

**Park Orchards Community House**

**9.30am – 5pm**

Please BYO Lunch

Tea, coffee and snacks provided

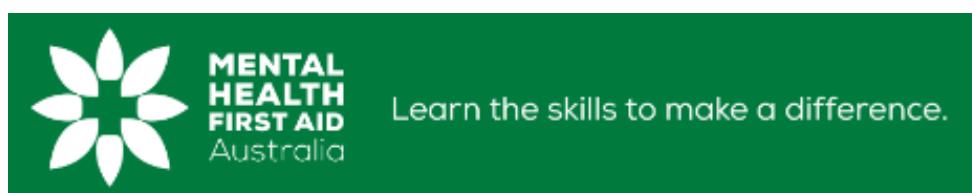
A 4 hour online module must be completed prior to the day

**FREE TO ATTEND – PLEASE REGISTER AS PLACES ARE LIMITED**

Contact FaPMI Co-ordinator Michelle on 0481913607

E: [fapmi@easternhealth.org.au](mailto:fapmi@easternhealth.org.au)

**SUPPORTING FAMILIES WHERE A PARENT, CARER OR SIBLING  
HAS A MENTAL ILLNESS**



Supported by: **VMCH** **Eastern Health**