

FaPMI Newsletter

(Families where a Parent has a Mental Illness)



Welcome to the Winter edition of the 2017 newsletter. Term 2 of school is almost complete. It's hard to believe that we are almost half way through the school year!

When interviewing Wendy for this edition of the newsletter, I became aware of how little I know about my local library, and what they have to offer. Whilst I have attended some Storytimes with my children, I was very excited to be informed that I could take in food a coffee! Some days this is really needed—exhaustion can take over as a parent.

Libraries really have a lot to offer, not only during the school term, but also the school holidays. Many offer 2 hour sessions for children and young people, which are free, and allow you to have a bit of a break from thinking about what to do to entertain the little people.

I thought it would be good to review a book for teenagers this time! So I sat down for some time to read this book, and found it utterly enthralling. It's so much easier to introduce new concepts and create conversations via a book.

FaPMI Coordinator Team

Bronwyn Sanders (M,T,W), Kirsty Jungwirth (M,T,Th)
Michelle Hegarty (M,T,W,F), Becca Allchin (T or W)
Ph: 9871 3988, Murnong Clinic, 4 Bona Street, Ringwood East

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If you would like to contribute to the newsletter in any way, please contact **Kirsty Jungwirth, Editor, on**
0457 544 096 or
kirsty.jungwirth@easternhealth.org.au

Programs:

CHAMPS After School Program :

When? Thursday 3 August—Thursday 21 September, (8 weeks), 4pm—5.30pm

Where? Batesford Community Hub, 94 Batesford Road, Chadstone

MAT (Martial Arts as Therapy) Program:

When? Wednesday 2 August—Wednesday 26 September, (8 weeks), 4pm—5pm

Where? Croydon Connections, 185 Mt Dandenong Road, Croydon

Contact **Bronwyn Sanders** to make a referral —**0408 291 580**

School Holiday Activities

Bug Lab: Little Bugs, Super Powers Exhibition at The Melbourne Museum

(Source: www.timeout.com/melbourne/kids)

Bug Lab: Little Bugs, Super Powers is a collaboration between Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington, and Weta Workshop, the creative studio who have won several of Academy Awards for their designs, costumes and props featured in the Lord of the Rings trilogy, King Kong, Avatar and more.



It is anticipated that this exhibition will fascinate children, young people, and adults alike. What could interest the young and not so young the most, are the large-scale models of bugs by Weta Workshop, as well as four 'Bug Chambers' that demonstrate the adaptive powers of bugs. There will be interactive lab tables, and cutting-edge research presented in a way that everything will find easy to understand.



Photographs by Joel Checkley

CHAMPS Facilitator Guide Review

We would love your input/feedback about the CHAMPS programs as we undertake a review of the facilitator guide. If you have been a participant, parent, sibling, grandparent, facilitator, and have some ideas to assist, please contact Bronwyn Sanders on **0408 291 580**

School holiday activities—Wet and Cold Days

Source: www.beafunmum.com

Often wet or cold weather precludes visits to playgrounds and it's preferable to stay at home. If you can ignore the name of this website (we can't be fun all the time, it's too much pressure!) it has listed a range of indoor activities for wet or cold days.

1. Make a cubby house under the table.
2. Make homemade pizza or ice biscuits.
3. Dance to music.
4. Have a theme day. This may be butterflies, pirates, princesses, fairies, dinosaurs or a particular colour.
5. Make an inside obstacle course with cushions, pillows, boxes, chairs and blankets.
6. Play dress ups and do a play.
7. Make a themed play space: in a large rectangle bucket or tray create your own play scene. For example: use a smaller container (like an empty margarine container) filled with water, and in the rectangle bucket place rocks, small twigs, bark or sticks from trees for an outdoor scene.
8. Go on a colour hunt in your house. Collect objects of a certain colour and take a picture of your finds to make a collage.
9. Buy a note book and get the child/ren to write a school holiday diary (or draw pictures every day for young children).
10. Reorganise the children's room (with their help).
11. Make fruit kebabs and add marshmallows for an extra zing
12. Write a letter to someone.

5 Ways to Resist Children 's Pester Power

Author: Michael Grose—www.parentingideas.com.au



Do you have a child who won't take "no" for an answer?

"Mum, can you buy me a treat?" "MUUUMM, can you get me some new clothes?"
"It's not fair. You never let me have any fun." Sound familiar?

Kids have a way of getting under your skin when they really want something. You can refuse their request for a treat, some extra time out of bed or some new clothes, and they can keep at you until you give in.

Some kids when they receive a knock back from one parent, will try the other parent out. Solo parents can easily become worn down by pester power as there is no one to share the burden with.

Pester power hasn't always been a problem for parents. In the days of large families, when four or more children were common, not only was there less propensity to give kids what they wanted but siblings had their own way of dealing with rebellious or 'prima-donna' type behaviour.

There is no doubt that kids' pester power is alive and well and living in Australian homes right now. In these times of smaller families the voice of one child resisting can be the only voice a parent hears. If your kids don't take no for answer, consider these well-tested resistance strategies:

1. **Keep explanations to a minimum.**

It's worth remembering that it's okay to say no... without always having to explain yourself. While kids should know why we don't give/allow them something that doesn't mean we have to give answers every single time.

2. **Make yourself scarce.**

My wife was an expert making herself scarce physically or psychologically when my kids used to argue the point with her. She would ignore attempts to change her mind, going about her business as if they weren't there.

3. **Communicate with your partner.**

Teenagers are adept at putting pressure on parents to acquiesce to their demands, particularly when it comes to going out. Get into the habit of bringing your partner into the picture. "I'm not sure about that. I'll check with your father/mother and get back to you" is a handy response.

4. **Draw strength from a friend.**

It helps, particularly if you are on your own, to phone a friend to check if you are being reasonable. It's easy to doubt yourself, and your sanity, when you are on your own.

5. **How can you make this happen?**

Sometimes it's best to put the onus on to kids, particularly when they pester you to buy them things. "Sure, you can have a new mobile phone. Have you got enough money to buy it now or do you have to save for it?"

Spotlight on a Service

What is your name? Wendy

Who do you work for? Monash Library, which is part of the Local Council

What is your role? Children and Youth Librarian

What does this involve?

Part of my job is to look after the children and youth collection of books and other resources. I also run programs for families— Baby Storytimes, Pres-schooler Storytimes, and Storytimes for primary and teenagers as well as school holiday programs.

During book week we read books, and had a 'reading hour' one week before book week. The book we read was "The Little Refugee" by Anh Do. Children talked and wrote about their own story. We had many copies of the same book. Everyone read the same book line by line and shared their experiences.

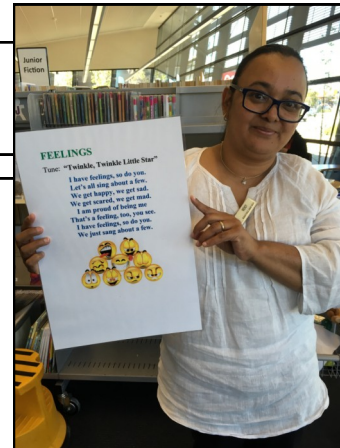
Recent primary school sessions were a Science Workshop. We worked in partnership with Monash University 'Engineers without Borders'. Also from Monash University there was a Legal Mindstorm by Robogirls. This group call themselves the Monash Chapter.

We have family nights covering the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) concepts schools teach. We recently did macano and hexbug. We also have a Lego Club once a month after school.

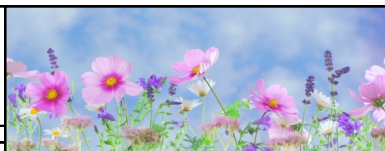
For secondary students we have a homework club run by volunteers three times a week, mostly from Monash University. It is from 4-6pm for teenagers and assistance is provided on a range of subjects. This has been running for 3 years.

What I love about working in the library is that it is not only a place where you issue books, but also have activities run by the community with and for the community. I love how volunteers give to the community.

We also have a 'Conversation Circle' for people who have trouble speaking English. They can practice their English in a neutral space, talk and meet people, and it can reduce isolation.



Spotlight on a Service ..continued...



How can families access this service/program?

Anyone can come into the library and access the resources. To borrow and take home books, DVD's, videos, and magazines you will need to obtain a library card. This is free, and there is not cost to borrow resources. To participate in many of the programs is free, and if there is a cost it is very minimal.

What is the best part of your job?

Meeting people. Deep inside you know you are this little person helping others to socialise. They may come feeling alone, but they walk out and don't feel alone. They have discovered something.

When I can see change, and know I brought this. I love the community and the people around me. I work to create trust and respect and make sure that people don't feel judged. We are all different and all awesome.

In my Storytimes I have times when we celebrate different cultural festivals. Dewali, the Indian Festival of Light was one occasion, and the Chinese Year of the Rooster was another occasion. We also sing songs in different languages and participants help me learn them.

Songs and books are not kept here—parents and families will use whatever you give them. The songs and books we read go beyond what we do here—they are then discussed and sung in a person's home and even on the street, or in a shop.

Editor's Comment: Libraries are a wonderful untapped resource. There is free internet access, and you are now able to bring food into libraries, which can be helpful when you have young children who need to constantly snack. They have changed since I was a child, and you had to be quiet in a library. I often go in the summer school holidays to break up the day and if it's too hot to be outside. It's also a place that can be helpful when it's wet and cold in winter and everyone has cabin fever at home. Just make sure that when you borrow books, you make a note of the date you need to return them, because fines are issued. (I'm notorious for being a late re-turner!) Check out your local library and see what it has to offer. You won't be disappointed.

Personal Story.. *"From Little Things Big Things Grow"*

This newsletter edition, I would like to acknowledge the work of several parents, carers, and children/young people (you know who you are!) for all the work they do providing 'Lived Experience' Panels for the FaPMI training sessions provided to Mental Health Clinicians and other professionals from a range of services, in particular Family Support Services.

Recently a 'Lived Experience Panel', enabled family support workers to hear the stories of families affected by mental health issues, and what was helpful and unhelpful in terms of the assistance services offered to them. The panel were also asked questions about their experience from the audience.

Hearing the direct Lived Experience is always a highlight of all workshop participants in terms of them having 'light bulb' moments and learning what is really critical in terms of respectfully working with families to make a difference in their lives. It takes courage and honesty from the panel participants and we very much value their input. If you would be interested in participating in a 'Lived Experience' Panel in the future, please feel free to contact the FaPMI team.



Eastern Health Employee Receives Award

Nilufer Kurtoglu was recently presented with an award from the Croydon Rotary Club for her ongoing passion and dedication for children and families where there is a parent with a mental illness.

Nilufer has been involved with the Central East Cool Cookies Peer Support Group, Wellways School Holiday Programs, and she has facilitated a CHAMPS After School Program. She is also a regular volunteer at the annual FaPMI Family Fun Day.

Eastern Health is very lucky to have people like Nilufer who go above and beyond their usual clinical roles to help support children and families. Congratulations Nilufer!!

Book Review

By Kirsty Jungwirth

Earth to Daniel

By Gwyneth Rees

This book, which may primarily appeal to secondary students, due to the fact that it is a chapter book with a lot of writing, and few pictures, explores some really difficult concepts with humour and compassion.

The story is about a teenager Daniel, written from his point of view. His mother has bi-polar disorder. She has been unwell in the past, but not for a very long time. She becomes head teacher at a school in a different part of England, and the family move locations. Daniel attends her school, and his father travels overseas to visit his family at this time. During this time Daniel's mother becomes unwell and the subsequent events, described by Daniel, highlight many of the challenges and also resilience of Daniel, his young sister, and his mother and father.

The story was very realistic, and outlines many of the principles that FaPMI discuss regularly with professionals and families—the benefit of information, support, and planning for all members of the family. I would highly recommend this book for teenagers and their parents.

