**FaPMI Summer Newsletter December 2023**

Sing and be merry! This picture is from our FaPMI Fun Day two weeks ago. There were so many families with children who showed up on the day and did all sorts of fun things. Despite the clouds and little bits of rain, the mood was generous, kind and joyful. FaPMI Fun Day always signifies the end of another year. Soon, children will be home for the summer holidays. In this newsletter, we have activities across town for families to get involved in, a fun craft to inspire creativity, and a yummy slice recipe that’s so easy to make and gluten-free.

Our hope to you all is that you find space to enjoy each other and the little things life. Our best wishes for a safe and happy summer.

**Programs**

All 2024 Term 1 flyers will be available in January on <http://www.easternhealth.org.au/fapmi>

CHAMPS will run in Term 1, 2024. Details to follow.

Marital Arts as Therapy will run in 2024. Dates to follow.

Kids Club – last Wednesday of each month starting Feb 2024 at various locations.

Space4Us – third Monday of each month starting Feb 2024 at various locations.

**SCHOOL HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES & events**

**National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) Triennial**

The NGV Triennial is back with 100 extraordinary projects; 120 artists across all four levels of the gallery. The exhibition is FREE and runs from 3 December to 7 April 2024. Check out times to visit at www.ngv.vic.gov.au/ triennial/home

**Summer By The Sea**

A range of FREE activities for families, including allabilities snorkeling, exploring rock pools, shell surveys, penguin talks, and Welcome to Country ceremonies across beaches in Victoria. Have a look at the activities on offer: What’s On | Summer by the Sea

**Dad and Me**

Lego Dads, granddads and male carers and their children are invited to this multi-generational Lego challenge.

Design your own Lego masterpiece or join in a Lego challenge. Suitable for children aged 4-12 years (older siblings welcome). When: Tue 23 January 2024, 7pm to 8:30pm Where: Mt Evelyn Community House 50 Wray Cresent, Mt Evelyn Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/CNLVB>

**Sensory Exhibition, Abbortsford Convent**

This summer, the Convent is joining forces with the incredible Slow Art Collective team for a FREE, immersive sensory exhibition — Pavilion 24. From 2–11 January, kids and their grown-ups are invited to become hands-on creators of immersive artworks made from recycled and repurposed materials. Together, they'll learn, play and build sustainable robotics, melodic structures, woven fabric sculptures and lighting devices. For more information: Slow Art Collective: Pavilion 2024 - Abbotsford Convent

**Choose Your Adventure**

A summer holiday program for 16-25 year olds in the Cities of Whitehorse, Knox, Maroondah and Yarra Ranges. This year’s activities include a day at Emerald Lake, a movie afternoon, a wilderness Bush Walk, and an indoor action sports day in Box Hill. Sponsored by EACH. Bookings are essential: youthandfamilyvic@each.com.au

**Dad and Me**

Pirate Story Time Dads, granddads and male carers and their children are invited to discover the world of pirates through stories, songs and craft.

Suitable for children aged 2-6 years. When: Wed 17 January 2024, 6:30pm to 7:30pm Where: Lilydale Library, 1 Jarlo Drive, Lilydale

**Art & Craft**

**Salt Dough for Ornaments and Method Hand Prints**

FROM: https://wholefully.com/make-salt-doughornaments

You need: • Mixing bowl and large spoon • Baking paper • Rolling pin & cookie cutters • Forks, steel wool, rubber stamps, other textural items—to add texture to the ornaments • Straw or toothpick—for poking a hole for the ornaments to hang from • Baking tray • White paint—optional, for giving the ornaments an even background to decorate • Glitter, glue, paint • Polyurethane spray or paint • Ribbon—for hanging the ornaments

Ingredients

• 4 cups of all purpose flour (bleached is best)

• 1 cup of table salt (this preserves the ornaments)

• 1½ cups warm water

Method

Make an ornament out of salt dough

1. Mix the salt and flour in a bowl and add the warm water slowly.

2. Stir until it becomes hard to mix and then mix with your hands.

3. Knead for a few minutes until smooth.

4. Place the dough on the baking paper with another piece of baking paper on top.

5. Roll it out until even.

6. Use cookie cutters or make hand prints and use the fork/stamps/textured items to put designs on your shapes.

7. Clean up the excess dough from around your cut-outs.

8. Use a straw to poke a hole through each shape before you cook them.

9. Place the baking paper with shapes on a baking tray.

10. Bake at 150 degrees Celsius for one hour or until hard.

11. Let them cool.

12. Paint and decorate your ornaments— remember you can use school glue to add glitter!

**Recipe**

**Gluten-free holiday fruit bars**

Ingredients

• 450g chopped, pitted dates

• one can sweetened condensed milk

• 1 cup chopped walnuts or pecans

• 1 tsp vanilla essence

• 3 cups shredded coconut

1. Line a square pan with baking paper.
2. 2. Mix all ingredients together in a bowl.
3. 3. Put the mixture in the baking pan and press it down firmly.
4. 4. Bake in the oven at 180 degrees Celsius for 25 minutes or until lightly brown.
5. 5. Remove the paper and place it on a rack to cool.
6. 6. Cut into squares or bars.

**YOUTH ConneXions Whitehorse**

FREE holiday activities for 12-25 year olds. Make a Mosaic Plate When: Tue 9 January, 2:30–4:30pm

Self Defence Class When: Tue 23 January at various times according to age groups Where: Youth ConneXions, Box Hill Bookings required. Contact: youth.worker@whitehorse.vic.gov.au

**Autism Family Swim & Social Event**

Join this private all-ages event on selected Sundays.

Next date: 7 January 2023 Time: 6 - 8pm with BBQ dinner included Where: Knox Leisureworks, Boronia Enquiries: ourevents@differentjourneysautism.com/events

**Book Review**

Author: Justin Heazlewood

Book review by Ash Bond

**Get Up Mum Of all the voices mum hears, I wish one of them could be mine.**

Get Up Mum is a memoir written from the perspective of author Justin Heazlewood as a 12-year-old boy. Focusing on one year of Justin's youth, Get Up Mum transports the reader into life as a kid growing up in the coastal Tasmanian town of Burnie in the early 1990s. In some ways everything seems pretty standard in the life of Justin. He is a curious and creative kid navigating the day to day of his late primary schooling; spending afternoons helping his Mum Maureen cook rainbow trout for dinner, riding his bike through the dusty streets of his neighbourhood, and having fun sleepovers at Nan and Pop’s on the weekend. Amidst these simple joys, Justin is also navigating what it means to be the only child of a sole parent living with schizophrenia.

Heart-warming and heart-wrenching, this book will make anyone who picks it up feel deeply, but especially those of us who grew up with parents navigating mental health challenges. It speaks of what is unspoken about young people in caring roles – the hopes and yearning, confusion, fear, and concern. It speaks of the hard work and skill of using clever tools to keep going. It speaks also of the days of absolute normalcy and the deep, unending love despite it all. What I especially loved about this book is how immersive it is. The text is scattered with Justin's handwritten drawings and journal entries, and he artfully imbues his reflections with sensory cues that make you feel like you are right there, watching the blue light of the TV glare in the lounge room late at night, or sitting on the back porch of his Nan's house watching the bees fly slowly in the fading summer light. It invites the reader to attune to a world both strange and familiar, and you find yourself enveloped in the warm, golden light of nostalgia.

Get Up Mum is suitable for young people and adults with or without lived experience of being in a family where there are mental health challenges. I hope you love it as much as I did. For more information about the author, you can visit his website (and subscribe to his fantastic columns) at [www.justinheazlewood.com](http://www.justinheazlewood.com).

**North East Metro Mental Health & Wellbeing Connect**

A warm and welcoming space for family, carers, and supporters of people living with mental health or substance use concerns. Services include: support from a peer worker with lived experience of being a family member or carer, information and resources, practical support, financial assistance, family counselling education sessions and group programs.

For more information call 8850 4150.

**VMCH Support for Carers**

Support for families, friends and carers of people with mental health challenges. Family services include: individual carer support, peer support, respite, carer activities, family and community education, young carer programs, NDIS navigation, and helpline referrals. Contact Suzi Tsopanas at stsopanas@wellways.org or phone 8873 2500.

**After Hours Mental health Nursing Service**

Ever feel like you’re not coping? Sometimes stress, anxiety, depression or grief can be overwhelming. Our Mental Health Nurses offer a chance to talk with someone on the phone, video call, or face to face to get on top of things early.

The After Hours Mental Health Nursing Service can help people experiencing mild mental health issues like anxiety, stress, depression and grief.

Speak to a Mental Health Nurse: On the phone: 1300 003 509 (freecall)

In person: 36 Wellington Road, Box Hill Available: 6-11pm Monday to Friday 2-7pm Saturday, Sunday & public holidays Contact: ahmhns@healthability.org.au

**FaPMI Family Fun Day**

The annual FaPMI Family Fun Day was held on Sunday 26 November at the Ringwood Bowls Club. Forty-four families attended with a total of 166 participants enjoying a wide range of activities including face painting, jumping castle, pony rides, arts and crafts, Santa and roving entertainers, sports, arts and crafts, food trucks, and live music. The day was supported by over 50 volunteers – with thanks to our partner agencies including Eastern Health Mental Health Program, Wellways, EACH, Tandem, Satellite Foundation, Headspace, VMCH, NEAMI, The Carer Gateway, Eastern Melbourne PHN, The Local Umbrella, Knox City Council, Maroondah City Council, Melbourne All Abilities Lions Club, Ringwood North Football & Netball Club, Imaginarium Entertainment, Ringwood Bowls Club and Maroondah Rotary.

**What do you enjoy most about FaPMI Family Fun Day?**

 ‘I love the atmosphere of the day, connecting with other families, the wide range of activities and the food.’

‘Freedom, safety, and knowing my kids … are ok. Acceptance is the biggest thing, being a neurospicy family. Safe and non-judgmental spaces can be hard to come by.’

‘I just felt welcomed here.’ ‘It’s so great to be surrounded by people who know what it’s like.’

‘Perfect location, lots of space. Good accessibility, comfortable.’

‘Thanks for offering such a vital service for families and giving them an opportunity for fun & relaxation.’