**Autumn 2023 FaPMI Newsletter Plain Text**

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Eastern Health FaPMI newsletter. As we say good bye to the summer months and make ready for winter, it’s time to enjoy what autumn brings. The changing leaves, the cooler temperatures and the harvest of autumn vegetables and fruit. This April is also full of important religious festivals for various communities, including Easter, Passover, Vaisakhi and Ramadan, and we send our best wishes to all. In this newsletter there are great ideas for the holidays, including a scavenger hunt, making healthy snacks for hungry children, and a neat interactive platform called Child Nation. There is also a range of information and activities for parents, children and families. Enjoy!

**Programs Term 2**

(see attached flyers for more information)

Martial Arts as Therapy (MAT) group begins 27 April.

Space4Us 17 April day out.

Kids Club every 4th Wed, 4–6.30pm

**FaPMI Coordinators**

4 Bona Street, Ringwood East Phone: 9871 3988

fapmi@easternhealth.org.au

Program Referrals: 0481 913 607

Michelle Hegarty (Mon – Thu)

Becca Allchin (Mon, Tue, every other Wed)

Elizabeth Fraser (Mon – Wed)

Bronwyn Sanders (Mon – Wed)

FaPMI is saying good bye to Ingrid, who has been with the team for the past 12 months. We thank her for her work and wish her the best in her new position.

**School Holiday Activities & Events**

**Julian Opie: Studio for Kids**

Kids are invited to create portraits in an inspiring studio setting featuring displays of the artist’s works selected from the NGV Collection.

Using a custom-designed digital interactive that relates to Opie’s recollection of looking into a mirror and carefully tracing his reflection, children can observe their image on screen, and experiment with line, colour and shape to produce a digital self-portrait in the manner of the artist.

Tues 21 March – Mon 10 April, 10am–5pm NGV, 180 St Kilda Rd FREE enquiries@ngv.vic.gov.au

**ArtPlay**

Sit in the circle inside the camp. Think of an issue you care about. Choose inflatable sculptures to represent it. Mount them on your tent, sit inside ... and it's time to turn your mic on! As visitors walk through the camp with magically lit up ideas on the tents, they can literally see what your thoughts are. Discuss things you care most about with the inquisitive audience. They can't see you, but they sure can hear!

Parent and carers are invited to experience the Air Camp Exhibition for the last 45 minutes.

Age: 9 to 13 years Cost: $15 per child 13&14 April, 10am–12pm & 2pm–4pm

Birrarung Marr behind Fed Square

Book: <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/arts-andculture/artplay/Pages/artplay.aspx>

**The Little Food Festival**

Join Beci Orpin, Melbourne Museum, United African Farmers, and more, for Australia’s first food festival created for kids. It combines education, exploration, creativity and fun to help kids re-imagine what the future will look like for them, their communities, and the planet. Plant seedlings, learn about bush food, get crafty, prepare nutritious meals, take part in a recycling relay race, discover a worm farm, and hear from Toot the Triceratops.

Wed 19 April & Thu 20 April, 10am–4pm

Fed Square, FREE, info@fedsquare.com

**Child Nation**

An interactive platform that guides kids from 7 to 11 years of age in creative place hacks –experiences that bring out their best imaginative headspace in response to the immediate world around them, celebrating their weirdest ideas and giving them permission to be themselves. Child Nation is choose-your-own adventure in the real world! <https://www.childnation.com.au>

**Outdoor activity: scavenger hunt**

Let’s get outside!! Autumn is a perfect season to get outdoors. It’s cooler and there’s a lot happening in backyards, parks and gardens. A nature scavenger hunt is a fun activity for the school holidays, birthdays or play dates. Use this poster or make up your own. Set the time, place and even a prize for the kids who give it a go. Download scavenger hunt list from: <https://www.ecoexplorers.com.au>

Check out Eco Explorers who provide a range of child-led and highly enriched sensory and outdoor bush programs for children and families of all ages. Their program has been developed to ignite your child's sense of curiosity, imagination and creativity through hands-on learning activities that support your child's development, social skills and physical development through movement and exercise. <https://www.ecoexplorers.com.au>

**Hidden Benefits of Scavenger Hunts**

<https://occupationaltherapy.com.au/hidden-benefits-of-scavenger-hunts/>

1. Social Skills

Making a scavenger hunt a group activity is a great way to help your child play with others and practise using concepts such as keeping their body in the group, following the group plan, and using their thinking eyes. It also allows them to make some close friends along the way.

2. Sensory Regulation

Scavenger hunts can provide the perfect play activity for kids to enhance their sensory development – whether it be simply exploring and becoming aware of their different senses or as part of a sensory diet to help keep your child regulated.

3. Mind and Body Exercise

Giving your child a scavenger hunt checklist (visual, written or verbal format) for them to go through and collect items to tick off is an enjoyable way of working on executive functioning such as sequencing, organising and reinforcing problem-solving skills. Scavenger hunting can also be a good exercise for the body, particularly those kids who are inseparable from their screens!

4. Connecting With Nature

If your kids are bouncing off the walls, then take the scavenger hunting outdoors and let them explore the natural wonders of our fantastic backyard here in Australia! The fresh air, vitamin D and green space are known to reduce stress and improve mood in adults and kids, so it’s a win all round.

**Recipes: Healthy snacks for hungry kids**

The following recipe ideas are from the Camp Australia Healthy Eating Cookbook for children and were tried and tested as healthy. These recipes also have kid approval!! They are easy enough to encourage children to get creative in the kitchen. Convenience snacks don’t have to come out of a box or cost a lot.

**Smoothies**

Ingredients

• 1 banana

• 1 cup milk

• 1 tsp cinnamon

1. Peel the banana and break into pieces.

2. Blend all ingredients until smooth.

3. Serve cold.

You can experiment with other fruit and even vegetables!

**Rice Bubble Hedgehog**

Ingredients

• 1 cup dried fruit

• 1/4 cup honey

• 1/4 cup cocoa

• 1/2 cup coconut

• 1/2 cup rice

1. Finely chop the dried fruit.

2. Melt the honey so it’s warm and runny.

3. Mix all the ingredients together well.

4. Rolled the mixture into balls, spoon it into muffin wrappers, or flatten it out into a slice tin.

5. Refrigerate until set and then serve.

**Cheesemite Scrolls**

Ingredients

• 4 cups self-raising flour plus extra for dusting

• 1 1/2 cups reduced fat milk

• 1 cup grated cheese

• Vegemite

Serves 6

1. Preheat an oven to 220°C.

2. Sift the flour into a bowl then mix in the milk.

3. When combined into a dough put extra flour on the bench and roll the pastry flat.

4. Spread a thin layer of Vegemite and grated cheese onto the dough then it roll from one side to the other.

5. Cut into 2-3cm thick slices and bake in the oven for approximately 30 minutes.

**Apricot Balls**

Ingredients

• 200g dried apricots

• 1/4 cup coconut

• 2 VitaBrits

• 1 tbsp water

1. Place apricots, coconut and VitaBrits into a bowl and mash until smooth.

2. Add water gradually and continue to mix until well combined.

3. Using wet hands, form mixture into balls and roll in coconut.

**BOOK REVIEW**

Er...Mum?

Author: Wendy Lauder Australian Authors (australianauthorsstore.com)

Er...Mum? by Wendy Lauder is based on a true story about when things don’t quite go as planned in families. A busy mum who meant to drop her three daughters off at school on her way to work finds them still in the car long after they should have been dropped off, and its stressful. We know that many times in parenting we make mistakes (ruptures) and have to set to work, sometimes digging deep, to make things right again (repair). The story reminds us that we only need to be good enough as parents (not perfect), and that the great thing about rupture and repair is that if we do the repair well, then life lessons are learned and the relationship can end up stronger than when we started.

Er...Mum? can just be enjoyed as a story, knowing these principles are involved, or can be used to discuss what it might be like for all involved, and talk about when ruptures happen in families.

Wendy Lauder is a Parent Infant Specialist and attachment worker and has been privileged to work with families for over 25 years in Central Victoria. For further details email wlauder@hotmail.com.au

**Family Relationship Support for Carers (FRSC)** is a Victorian statewide service that offers specialised support to families caring for someone with a disability. Support is offered to those directly involved in the care of the person with a disability regardless of age. FRSC aims to improve children’s wellbeing and prevent family breakdown by strengthening family relationships and building skills.

They recognise the role of young carers within our communities and are committed to providing tailored services to young carers to assist them in carrying out their responsibilities while also looking after their own health and wellbeing.

FRSC also runs Tuning Into Kids and Tuning Into Teens 6-week programs, at no cost to carers. These programs are available to any family member, parent, sibling, guardian, grandparent, or foster parent, caring for a person with a disability, living anywhere in Victoria.

General services are FREE to eligible carers. For more information contact us on 1300 303 346. <https://www.each.com.au/service/family-relationship-support-for-carers>

**Fiona's Let's Talk story**

Let’s Talk is a structured discussion between a mental health or family worker and a parent who experiences mental illness about parenting and their child’s needs. Let’s Talk supports healthy parent-child relationships, promoting the wellbeing of the child, parent and families. FaPMI Coordinator Bronwyn speaks to parent Fiona about her experience with Let’s Talk.

Bronwyn: When did you do Let’s talk?

Fiona: I did it with my family services worker a few years ago.

Bronwyn: What was going on for you at the time?

Fiona: I had several admissions to the inpatient unit at Northern Hospital but had not heard about FaPMI or Let’s Talk. The only resource I accessed at that time was the Let’s Talk About It flip book that I found in a brochure stand at the hospital. I was referred to family services because I wasn’t able to care for my children on my own. When I was discharged, I lived with my mum and 3 children at her house during the week and went home with my husband at the weekends.

Bronwyn: How was Let’s Talk introduced to you?

Fiona: I was still quite unwell at this time and was finding parenting a struggle. I had a good relationship with my family support worker and I knew that her main focus was to help me with the kids. She did not introduce Let’s Talk in a formal way but just casually suggested that we work through each child’s needs. One of my main concerns was the children squabbling with each other.

Bronwyn: How did you find using the log and working through the strengths and vulnerabilities for your children?

Fiona: I can’t remember if she used the word vulnerabilities initially. I find this word a bit awkward because I didn’t think of my kids as vulnerable, but I did have areas that I wanted to work on and change.

We were able to work through each child, identify their strengths and vulnerabilities, unpack these for each child and come up with specific strategies for me to try and help them deal with their own emotions and fight with each other less. I talked about the strategies with my mum and she helped me to implement some of them. It took several weeks to work through each of my 3 children and we did discuss other things along the way too.

Bronwyn: What was beneficial about Let’s Talk?

Fiona: Completing Let’s Talk was really helpful. It made me feel better about myself, it empowered me to deal with the kids, and it increased my confidence and really helped with my recovery. Let’s Talk provided a way for me to re-engage with my kids. I was feeling a bit hopeless and thinking ”I can’t deal with this” but Let’s Talk was a real empowerment tool which made me think ”Yes, I could try this”.

Bronwyn: If you were introducing Let’s Talk to someone else, how would you do it?

Fiona: When I was having trouble with my kids, I did this thing called Let’s Talk. It helped me to identify what my kids really needed at that time and gave me strategies to support the kids better than what I was doing previously. The clinician asked me questions about my kids and asked me what was happening with them. We talked about each child’s strengths and challenges and then came up with some strategies to work on the vulnerabilities. Let’s Talk is not about being a bad mum, it’s about making parenting easier!

**Making Kids Sport More Affordable For Families In 2023**

Eligible families can apply for vouchers of up to $200 to use at their registered Get Active Kids Voucher Activity Provider without having to worry about upfront costs. The vouchers can help pay for sporting equipment, uniforms and memberships in a range of activities – even learn to swim classes for toddlers.

To be eligible, kids must be aged 18 and under, a Victorian resident, named on a valid Commonwealth Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card, and named on a valid Medicare Card at the time of application. A special consideration stream is available to support children residing in Victorian Care Services, temporary or provisional visa holders, undocumented migrants, and international students aged 18 and under, at the time of application.

Applications for this round of vouchers close 10 May. Families can also continue to claim reimbursement for expenses already incurred from 28 November 2022 up to 10 May 2023.

For more information: <https://www.getactive.vic.gov.au/>

**Take a look at What’s On in the Satellite space** including upcoming programs, workshops, andactivities!<https://www.satellitefoundation.org.au/programs/program-calendar>

APRIL SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Ready Steady Balance – Mobiles workshops (online)

Wed 12 April, 10am–12pm AEST, ages 8–11 approx. Thu 13 April, 1– 3pm AEST, ages 12–14 approx.

Satellite Camp @ Urban Camp, Melbourne

Mon 17 April – Wed 19 April, ages 9–12 approx.

Our next Satellite Connect program (ages 18–25 years) will start in April. It will be followed by a FREE overnight retreat in May. Online info session, Thu 13 April, 6:30–7:30pm.

Three workshops starting Thu 27 April, 5–9.30pm.

**Walk in Together**

FREE, stand-alone, sessions of family therapy, without the waiting list! For all Victorian families, including those with alcohol/drug or serious mental health issues. At least two family members must attend together. For more information: Website <https://tinyurl.com/WalkInTogether>

For more info: Contact The Bouverie Centre on (03) 84814800 bouverie.centre@latrobe.edu.au

**A special donation to FaPMI**

FaPMI has received a very special donation from Marcus Reeves, founder of She Won’t Be Right Mate. Marcus Reeves, the founder of mental health fundraising event She Won’t Be Right Mate, hosted his second She Won’t Be Right Mate car and bike show at the Yarra Glen Racecourse, drawing more than 1500 people and over 100 cars to the event. They raised $18,000 which he donated to the Eastern Health Foundation for FaPMI. Marcus says his own experiences of the Eastern Health Mental Health Program led him to want to give back in some way and help support men and young people going through similar issues. The cheque was gratefully received by Lisa Gill, Associate Program Director for the Eastern Health Mental Health and Wellbeing Program.

The donation will be put to good use supporting young people, parents and families by helping funda range of peer support groups for children, information for parents, and the annual FaPMI Fun Day at the end of the year. With big thanks to Marcus!

[**https://www.shewontberightmate.net.au**](https://www.shewontberightmate.net.au)

