



CRAIG FAMILY CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

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Our Purpose and Service Philosophy

We strive to ensure that individuals and families of all kinds are respected by, connected with and engaged in our local community.

The Craig Family Centre is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation providing activities, support and educational services to local residents and families since 1957. We are committed to working with and for the community.

The Craig Family Centre is involved in early learning and developing new programs that encourage information sharing, mutual support and community participation in local and social issues. The Craig has a strong community development focus and encourages participation and involvement by people of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, beliefs and cultures.

About Us

The Craig is an incorporated association with a long history of community inclusion and development. Established in 1957 as a children's centre, the 'Craig' has grown into a multipurpose hub offering children's services, community and Neighbourhood House programs. The Craig is co-located with Access Health and Community and Maternal and Child Health. Strong connections and cross referral is a key feature of the 'wrap around' model that our 'hub' facility provides.

As an incorporated association, the elected Committee of Management is charged with the responsible management of services in accordance with the Constitution on behalf of its members. Day to day operations are run by our Executive Director leading a team of professionals across core funded program and fee for service areas.

Our Vision

The Craig's vision is driven by our belief that people, regardless of income, ethnicity or any diversity that defines them for who they are, should be equally respected and given the same opportunities and access to the same services.

Historically, Ashburton had a large proportion of public housing and low income families but over the past decade rapid gentrification has seen a rise in the overall social and economic index for area (SEIFA) scores that measure disadvantage.

The challenge for our centre is to meet the needs of the broader community whilst not letting low income and socially disadvantaged individuals and families fall through the cracks. We do this with a strong network of partnerships with other service providers in the area, coupled with policies that balance any restrictions to full social inclusion.

Importantly, we are also a strong advocate for sustainability – both in the environment and in our approach to the services we deliver.

Our People

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

OFFICE BEARERS 2021

CHAIR	Lil Barac-Macey
VICE CHAIR	Joy Vogt
SECRETARY	Bob Stensholt
TREASURER	Bob Stensholt (Acting)

GENERAL MEMBERS

Winnie Waudou
Eva Conley

MANAGEMENT

Executive Director - Peter Sizeland

Administration

Administration Officer – Claire de Vos
Finance Officer – Dan Ryan
Assist Admin Officer – Sophie Allen

Community Programs, Neighbourhood House

Community Programs Coordinator – Mary Heath

Early Learning Support

ELSP Coordinator – Rose Camwell (until June 2021)
ELSP Assistant – Lucinda Totney (until June 2021)

Homework Support Group

Program Co-ordinator – Sarah Hearn

Mandarin Program

Program Co-ordinator – Jessica Jiang

Children Services

Children Services Team Leader– Margot Serena
Educational Leader – Shelley Bussell

Joey's Occasional Care

Room Leader - Margot Serena

3 Year Old Kindergarten

Kindergarten Teacher- Shelley Bussell
Co-Educator– Shakiba Shams

4 Year Old Kindergarten

Kindergarten Teacher- Liz Shea
Co-Educator - Maree Nolan

Childcare Assistant Educators

Eleni Fotiou
Emily Fung
Marzia Samad
Nasreen Patel

Our Partners

CO-LOCATED SERVICES

Access Health and Community
Ashburton Maternal and Child Health

MAJOR FUNDERS

City of Boroondara
Department of Education & Training (State)
Department of Health & Human Services (State)
Department of Human Services

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Balwyn Rotary
Bendigo Bank – Ashburton Community
Chadstone and Malvern East Rotary
The Edge Community Fund
Lions Club – Boroondara Gardiners Creek
Shelter Real Estate
Samarinda Ashburton Aged Services

COMMUNITY USER GROUPS

Al-Anon Ashburton
Ashburton United Soccer Club
Australian Breastfeeding Association
CamCare
Country Women's Association (CWA) - Ashburton
Egg Decorators Guild of Victoria
Growing Old Living Dangerously (G.O.L.D)
Lion's Club – Boroondara Gardiner's Creek
Mindfulness Melbourne
Prada Willie Association
Salvation Army
Real Mandarin
Theta Healing
Victorian Guild of China Painters

SERVICE PARTNERS

Access Health and Community including CamCare
Ashburton Baptist Church, House of Hope
Ashburton Community Centre
Alamein Neighbourhood House
Neighbourhood Houses Victoria
Playgroups Victoria
EDVOS
Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY)

Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre
St Kilda Mums
Power Neighbourhood House
Neighbourhood Houses Victoria

AUSPICED GROUPS

Growing Together
Winton Road Food Forest

Report from the Chair

For much of 2021, we focused on getting through the challenges of the pandemic but equally, our team retained a strong focus on setting up for the future by:

1. Assessing how our children's services offering will need to adapt to accommodate changing family needs.
2. Exploring community and neighbourhood house opportunities in a post-pandemic world.
3. Securing funding for early learning support that targets socially and economically vulnerable families in our community; and
4. Developing landscaping plans that enhance our 'place-making' options.

Children's Services Assessment and Rating: "Exceeding" across all 7 quality areas

2021 also saw our management and children's services team dedicate significant time to an Assessment and Ratings review by the Department of Education. I am proud to confirm the enhancements made to our children's services offering has resulted in our centre achieving an 'Exceeding National Quality Standards' rating across all seven quality areas of the National Quality Improvement Program. Led by educational leader Shelley Bussell, with strong support from Liz Shea, Margot Serena and executive director Peter Sizeland, our result was outstanding, and recognises the Craig as one of the best early learning and kindergarten services in Boroondara. Well done team!



Other 2021 Highlights

Wellbeing at the Craig

In 2021, we continued delivery of a centre-wide wellness program incorporating current practice models, including PERMAH (a wellbeing model used by educators throughout the early childhood sector).

Community and Neighbourhood House

A consistent challenge for all neighbourhood houses throughout 2021 was ensuring in-house programs were available online for community members. Well done Mary for coordinating the many community groups as they migrated their service offering to an online format.

Children's Services

During lockdown our centre remained open to cater to vulnerable families as well as children of essential workers. Our children's services team also designed online learning experiences for children in 3- and 4-year-old kinder, distributing home learning packs to keep the little ones engaged.

Grants

We successfully secured Commonwealth funding for an additional three years of early learning support programs at the Craig. This much-needed funding will allow our on-site social worker to identify families in need of early intervention and inclusion support. In the coming year, we will also be developing an early learning community outreach program.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Margot and Shakiba who have each achieved 20 years of service at the Craig, joining Eleni who has been with us for 22 years and who recently returned from maternity leave. All three ladies have taught my own children whilst they attended the Craig, and I know our educators continue to be well-regarded in the Ashburton and broader Boroondara community.

New beginnings

This year will be my last as chair of the Craig Family Centre committee. The past four and a half years have been incredibly rewarding – and challenging – as my fellow committee members and I steered through the pandemic’s many complexities. Departing will be somewhat bittersweet as there are so many great things on the horizon for the Craig (!) however the time is right to hand over the reins to a new chair in May 2022.

Special thanks

I would like to thank our executive director Peter Sizeland who, with the support of our educational leaders, oversaw an exceptional assessment and rating result for the Craig. He navigated the uncertainty of 2021 and associated financial challenges with a steady hand and will be missed by the team. Peter has

since retired but will be welcomed back onto the CFC committee for 2022 and beyond. We welcome Louise Ippolito as our new executive director for the year ahead.

As I wrap up my tenure as chair of the committee, I’m reminded by the exceptional service standards of our team; the camaraderie among committee members; the resourcefulness of each employee and volunteer during the most difficult months of 2020 and 2021; and last but certainly not least, I’m reminded by the high level of care and support our people continue to give to families, to members of the Craig community, and to each other. My dearest thanks go out to our children’s services team and to our community-facing team members, all of whom ensure our centre continues to be a hive of activity and energy. Your efforts are recognised and much appreciated.

To our wonderful committee of management, your dedication and resourcefulness this last year was outstanding. I thank each of you for your wise counsel and ongoing support. Outgoing committee members this year include Eva Conley. Thank you for your time and support Eva.

My sincerest thanks to the team at City of Boroondara (who provide annual funding and who coordinated several ‘Bouncing Back’ workshops for neighbourhood house this year). Thank you to our local Members of Parliament, Federal and State Governments, and to our major funders and partners, all of whom provide support to the Craig, allowing us to continue to serve our community.

Lil Barac-Macey

Chair, Committee of Management

Executive Director's Report



The year 2021 was a significant year for the Craig, not only did we endure another year of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we achieved 'Exceeding National Quality Standards' for our children's services and successfully applied for a grant to continue the early learning support program. We also took the opportunity to review our children's services programs and to provide professional development activities for our staff.

This is my last report as Executive Director, as the Committee has appointed a new Executive Director, Louise Ippolito, who commenced in February 2022. I welcome Louise to the Craig and no doubt families will get to know her during the year.

Although the Covid restrictions proved challenging, nevertheless we were able to provide our high quality Community Programs online and continue with our activities including

Movies, Musicals and Popstars, Yoga for Kids, Family Yoga and Bright Brains Homework Club. Our Mums 'N Bubs playgroups proved very popular and the participation continues to grow.

During the year the local federal member of parliament, Katie Allen, visited the Craig and discussed our plans for the development of the community courtyard. Katie also took the opportunity to present our chair, Lil Barac-Macey, with the Volunteer of the Year Award. Congratulations Lil!

I attended the 'Bouncing Back' series of workshops run by Boroondara Council over the course of the year. This was a great opportunity to catchup with other local Neighbourhood House managers and discuss how the pandemic impacted on our activities and the innovative ways that were implemented to continue to provide services to the local community.

We were successful in our application to the Commonwealth Government for a grant to continue the Early Learning Support Program at the Craig. This program aims to provide support to those children and families who are vulnerable through social or economic circumstances. The first program commenced in 2018 and was very successful and the continuation for another three years is welcomed.

In 2021 we completed the Commonwealth funded Mutual understanding, support, tolerance, engagement and respect (MUSTER) program. The goals of this successful program was to build community resilience through support, education and connection.

During the year the Craig engaged consultants to provide advice to the Committee regarding our children's services programs. The result is that

we introduced an additional 3 year-old kinder day from Thursdays in Term 4 2021 and extended our opening times from 8.30am to 3pm from Term 1 2022.

The Craig is considering further changes to our children's services programs in the future to meet the needs of the community.

For part of the year in 2021 our children's services sessions were restricted to only vulnerable children, and those of essential workers. Home learning packs were provided to enable children to continue their activities at home.

Also, during 2021, the Craig achieved 'Exceeding National Quality Standards' in all seven elements under the National Quality Improvement Program. This result was achieved through the efforts of the children's services leadership team and the commitment and efforts of staff to enhance their skills in these standards. Well done to all!

I would like to thank our many supporters, volunteers, members of Parliament, Federal and State Governments, City of Boroondara, Bendigo Bank Ashburton, funders and partners in supporting the Craig in delivering services to the local community.

I would also like to thank our staff for their professionalism, enthusiasm and dedication during the past year. To our Community Programs Coordinator, Mary, our Early Learning Support Program assistant Lucinda, our administration staff, Claire and Sophie, Dan, who keeps a tight rein on our finances and staff from children's services team, Liz, Shelley, Margot, Emily, Nasreen, Maree, Shakiba, Eleni, Marzia, Heather and our kinder inclusion support, Anne. Thank you for another successful year at the Craig.

I would also thank the Committee of Management for their commitment and dedication to the Craig and their support to management and staff.

Peter Sizeland

Executive Director

Treasurer's Report

The following comments have been based on the audited Financial Statements presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Craig Family Centre for the 2021 financial year.

Overall Comments

The Craig Family Centre incurred a deficit of \$143,407 compared to a surplus of \$249,164 in 2020. The main contribution to this result was due to the cessation of funding from the Government's stimulus package provided because of COVID-19.

The Craig prepares its budget based on a breakeven or minor surplus. However, in 2020 the Craig received funding for the COVID-19 stimulus package which ceased in 2021. This action contributed to the net result for the 2021 financial year.

Further, reduced activities in community programs meant that fees for room hire at the Craig also impacted on revenues for the year.

During the year the Committee engaged consultants to provide advice regarding the Children's Services program and the potential to increase these services in the future. The committee has also taken the opportunity to review its fees to ensure the Craig can provide sustainable services in the future.

Revenue

Total revenue for the year decreased by \$339,668 to \$857,246 (\$1,196,914 in 2020). The main reduction is the cessation of the Government stimulus package. The main revenue items were Children's Services fees \$434,018 and grants from Government and local organisations totalling \$316,578.

Expenses

Total expenses for the year increased by \$52,903 to \$1,000,653 (\$947,750 in 2020). Minor increases were incurred for Employee Benefits of \$6,905 to \$768,942 and Program and Other Expenses of \$44,316 to \$225,947.

Assets

Total Assets were \$540,849 compared to \$677,345 in 2020. The main change was due to a reduction in Current Assets (including cash) of \$143,681 to \$526,122 (\$669,803 in 2020).

Liabilities

Total Liabilities increased by \$6,911 to \$269,628 (\$262,717 in 2020). This is mainly attributable to increases in provisions for employee benefits partly as a consequence of changes in employee Awards, offset by a reduction in fees paid in advance for children's services.

Equity

Equity (Net Assets) was \$271,221 compared to \$416,628 in the previous year, a decrease of \$143,407.

Other issues

There are no outstanding issues that have not been reported in the audited Financial Statements. Current arrangements regarding funding from Commonwealth agencies and State and local governments are expected to continue in 2022.

Bob Stensholt

Acting Treasurer

Membership Report 2021

Groups / Members	2021
Craig Family Centre Children's Services	
Sessional Care	
3 Year Old Kindergarten	
4 year Old Kindergarten	
Total Number of Children's Services Members	328
Craig Family Centre Programs and Community Groups	
Committee of Management	5
Neighbourhood House Programs	193
G.O.L.D Group	31
Total Craig Family Centre Members (2021)	557

Children's Services

Joeys (sessional care)

A year of rolling lockdowns was not on the agenda at the beginning of 2021!

As we moved into the early months of the year however, it became clear that program delivery would be quite disjointed. As a professional team, we rose to the challenge and responded effectively to the changing environment to maintain stability within our service.

With fluctuating child numbers, uncertainties due to the lockdowns, families spending a great chunk of the year managing child drop-offs and pick-ups in the carpark of the Craig Family Centre, a major plus was observed as to how resilient the children became, the ease with which they accepted the situation and just got on with their lives!

Where possible, we integrated our service offering with quality incursions and inclusion support programs, supported by community grants at the Craig. For example, once a week the children would take part in two music programs and mandarin Chinese language program – they even tried kids yoga in between lockdowns!

The 'Social Wellbeing' Program, delivered by Anne Muscatello (a qualified early childhood specialist and play based therapist) was particularly popular as it provided educational based sessions to assist with the development of the whole child, and focusing on enhancing social/ emotional wellbeing. Anne created adaptable environments fostering sensitivity, empowerment, and confidence within each child with the view to guiding the children towards reaching their full potential.

As further lockdowns loomed, we were able to squeeze in our annual dental visit from our co-located service, Access Health, who provided a free dental check-up for all

children, plus a session on healthy eating/drinking and general dental hygiene.

The annual CFC Children's Services Open Day went ahead as scheduled. Given the quieter pace of the Centre due to rolling lockdowns mid-year, visitors who came to our open day gave very positive feedback with a couple of families signing on for the rest of 2021.



Throughout the second half of the year, we went into 'Zoom' mode with meetings and family catchups for those children not able to attend in-person sessions. Our Music programs became quite a valuable online experience, allowing children at the centre to see those learning from home, and vice versa.

The third lockdown of the year was most noticeable, with only children of essential workers and vulnerable families attending, and our numbers dropped to half.

Despite this setback, the smaller groups in attendance each day allowed the educators to observe more closely how these children developed a strong sense of self, particularly how each child directed their own learning and gaining the ability to influence their peers in play.

The passion for open-ended play-based and child-centred learning remains the hallmark of a creative and innovative educational program offered in our Joeys room.

All educators worked tirelessly throughout this somewhat disconnected year, placing great importance on minimising the disruption to children's learning.

My sincere thanks go to Emily, Nasreen and Eleni for all your amazing support.

I also want to thank Claire De Vos, our super administration guru for her dedication and professional work ethic providing and streamlining her admin support, in order to maintain communication within our community in what were times of huge stress.

As we reflect on 2021 and look to the coming year with optimism and promise, we hope to continue to provide enhanced collaboration between our families, the Craig, and our broader community.

Margot Serena

Joey's Room Leader

3-year-old Kindergarten

We began the year with a small group, which gave us plenty of time to build strong positive relationships with each child. The group soon filled up and we found most of the children very settled and busily developing social connections with each other and building play skills. We focused on learning about the 3Rs: Rights, Respect, & Responsibility. Through discussion, story, and role-play we were able to explore understandings about emotions, thoughts, and behaviours; how these can be linked but different; why choice is important; and ways we can help ourselves manage them. The children practiced recognising and expressing different emotions, learning to identify emotions in themselves and others, talking about the different physical sensations linked to each emotion, and sharing ideas about how to cope with tricky feelings until they pass. We regularly practiced mindfulness activities to nurture self-regulation skills and enjoyed extending these through yoga and music, as well as group games.

We talked about diversity and identified different ways in which people learn, live, eat, travel, play, and work. We compared these differences to the similarities that link people all over the world, including emotions and needs.

In learning about the United Nations' Rights of the Child, the children were able to increasingly identify ways they could actively respect other people and take on responsibility for caring for themselves, others, and the world around them. They learned about and practiced personal space, consent, and respectful relationships, with educators intentionally supporting the children to use and interpret verbal and non-verbal communication. We looked at all the different places we had come from in the

world and learned about the First Nations People and the importance of respecting and acknowledging the Indigenous custodians of the land and Elders past, present and emerging.

It was wonderful to see children sharing their understandings together.

Using open-ended materials we explored line, shape, colour, sequence, pattern, symbol and image. Over the year the children's artwork became increasingly complex as their ideas extended and abilities and creativity developed. Regular opportunities for transient art nurtured the children's development of skills in sharing, concentration, imagination, fine-motor control, visual-spatial reasoning, and responsibility.



After settling into the year, 2021 was periodically interrupted with lockdowns. Managing fluctuating restrictions and protocols soon became the norm. Some children continued attending onsite while others enjoyed the remote learning program. We provided well-stocked take-home packs, including craft resources and numerous learning activities. It was wonderful to receive

positive feedback from families about these packs and to see samples of the children's work done at home.

We provided regular live online sessions and music classes, as well as pre-recorded activity sessions with accompanying handouts as part of the wellbeing, literacy, and numeracy areas of curriculum. This helped to maintain connection with most children at home.

We were very impressed with the children's capacity for attending screen-based activities, including story-time, songs, puppetry, literacy and numeracy games, and frequent conversations. Many children were enthusiastic about participating and enjoyed showing us all samples of their remote learning, introducing us to pets and siblings, and confidently singing and reading to the group.

In addition to these programs, we were able to provide every family with weekly online Nature Play activity packs from Eco Explorers Little Blossoms education program. This fantastic program provided many resources, including links to songs and stories, printable handouts, and clear instructions for a variety of Nature Play learning experiences. Each activity was linked to the Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework (VEYLDF) and the program addressed each of the five Learning and Development Outcomes in early childhood curriculum.

It was so exciting when everyone was able to return to kinder! The children settled back in so quickly and we were soon enjoying a jam-packed program of play and learning.

Throughout the year the children enjoyed many gardening experiences, and they loved the Little Sprouts Sustainability program over the last four weeks of the year. Nurturing the garden and interacting with the natural world

taught the children about respecting and caring for the land. We studied the biology of worms and set up the worm farm and compost bin, learning about and practicing responsible waste management.

We learnt about resilience, what it means, and how to achieve it through the three daily practices of gratitude, mindfulness, and kindness.

The children developed strong friendships and became enthusiastic in caring for each other, as well as actively recognising and expressing appreciation for the positive behaviours, kindnesses, and learnings of others.



2021 was a very successful year despite the additional challenges. The children developed a strong sense of agency, personal confidence, and social connection within the learning environment. They became enthusiastic learners, successfully seeking help when needed and sharing their interests. The overall sense of cohesion and camaraderie within this group was very heartening.

Shakiba Shams & Shelley Bussell

4-year old Kindergarten

2021 ended with the recognition of our kindergarten receiving an EXCEEDING Assessment and Rating evaluation in November! The Department of Education observed children and staff interactions and perused four and a half years of explicit documentation, provided in many formats, to arrive at her decision to rate our kinder as EXCEEDING across all seven quality areas.



Our play-based educational programme incorporates an innovative approach to learning. Underpinning the wide range of experiences offered at our kinder is a pedagogical awareness of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework curriculum guidelines. Every effort is made to kindle children's curiosity through provocations frequently changed, creating an inviting and charming ambience in our kindergarten room. Children's desire to learn through play is met by the enthusiasm of our experienced team of educators, who promote learning through creative adaptations of educational concepts.

As always, our kindergarten community in 2021 included a multi-cultural mix that broadens our global knowledge in many ways, providing stimulus to our program planning. Some of the quality multicultural activities included Australian Indigenous experiences,

Mandarin classes, African Drumming, and an overall enriched curriculum that embedded cultural respect and awareness.

The children thoroughly enjoyed the ingenious delivery of yoga from *Hello Yoga Kids*. The facilitator cleverly incorporated a wide range of concepts and integrated emotional literacy into the practice of yoga. Emotional literacy and personal development was also addressed through the School Readiness Program (SRF) which promotes the philosophy of embedding gratitude, empathy and mindfulness in the daily experiences at the Craig.

We are grateful to parents who contributed clothing and toys for recently arrived refugees; a project that we will continue to support; Craig Family Centre has a history of supporting people in the community.

With the possibility of additional lockdowns, we held parent-teacher meetings early in the year to provide parents with insight into the overall goals we aimed to achieve during the year to prepare children for their transition to school. Meeting proactively proved to be reassuring for parents, who were supplied with take home packs at the onset of lockdowns and informed regularly about strategies we would use to remain connected to their children.



We are happy to report that we achieved all our goals in preparing children for their transition to school, having continued the inter-personal social resilience skills initiated collaboratively by all Craig staff, and successfully supported the holistic development of pre-school foundational skills.



During the lockdown periods, children received many online learning sessions delivered by educators, supplemented by the take home-packs. Our strong relationships with families enabled children and parents to phone educators to have casual chats and often sharing snippets of activities they were doing at home. The return of all children to regular onsite sessions was naturally celebrated by the children!

Our educators consistently seek to advance the delivery of quality programs and incorporate varied experiences (all documented in our Quality Improvement Plan). In 2021, these included road safety, a zoo excursion, sustainability incursion from *Little Sprouts Program*, specialist art with generous access to art supplies for children to develop their creativity, dental and speech therapist assessments from Access Health, plus a very high focus on staff professional development.

Our children's interests are valued and incorporated into the 'Emergent Curriculum Planning.' One such example began with the

children finding a crow's egg and looking up to spot the nest high up in the tree. This developed in to an interesting inquiry learning project about all types of birds and attracted quality input from one of our parents, both in the class, as well as a beautiful series of bird paintings done by her, to enhance the walls around our lovely bush garden. The ambience outdoors has also been developed with consultation from children, to provide a charming Fairy Garden setting, partly funded by our generous parents, some of whom also contributed time to a working bee to bring the project together.



In 2021, our kinder 3 and 4 team was also involved in the pilot program trial of an assessment tool being developed by the University of Melbourne.

Kindergarten 4 Teacher: Elizabeth Shea;

Co-educators Maree Nolan and Emily Fung

KIS staff: Anne Muscatello and Effie Redman

Working With Our Community

Due to the intermittent lockdowns and social dislocation of the pandemic, 2021 was a challenging year. Never was there a more important time to focus on strengthening our local community and the connections within it.

As a Neighbourhood House, our key objective throughout this time was to support the wellbeing of the greater Ashburton community. We focused on combating social isolation and remaining accessible to members from our least advantaged communities, as well as new parents.

We know that providing adequate social support for individuals during the transition to parenthood can profoundly impact on the health and wellbeing of the entire family unit.

Whilst many of our community programs were delivered in-centre outside of lockdowns, others remained online throughout. This allowed members to interact socially, learn and support each other regardless of COVID lockdowns and room capacity restrictions.

Much time was spent redeveloping and improving Covid-Safe Plans, as community members were repeatedly asked to adapt to ongoing changes.

Playgroup

The first half of 2021 saw the return of both facilitated and parent-led playgroups. We welcomed the following new programs:

- Tuesday Morning Music with Jo, facilitated by Jo Kitley

- Creative Play with Squiggle Kids, facilitated by Lauren Gardiner and Debbie Isaac
- Mums 'n' Bubs Yoga, facilitated by Susanna Lee Shirtcliffe
- Wednesday Parent-Led Playgroup, and
- Friday Parent-Led Playgroup

Groups were all well attended, and more programs were added to the suite, scheduled to commence in Term 3. However, the onset of new COVID-19 lockdowns and room limitations significantly affected programming for the remainder of 2021. Many playgroups and Early Years program scheduled to take place between June and October were cancelled or deferred, including Mandarin Playgroup, Mini Maestros, Paper Making workshops, Kids' Gardening workshops, a 'Woodwork & Sausage Sizzle', and a Father's Day event.

Existing groups where children and carers had established relationships with facilitators and one another continued online. Craft packs were regularly distributed to the doors of participating families prior to each session, via 'contactless delivery'.

October saw us opening our doors yet again,



and we welcomed playgroup families back to the centre. Highlight group activities included three Creative Workshops with Squiggle Kids, capturing the themes of 'Spring', 'Summer' and 'Christmas'.

2021 Children's Week

The theme for Children's Week 2021 was to celebrate the right of all children to choose their own friends and safely connect with others.

To help celebrate Children's Week 2021, we facilitated a poetry competition for primary school-aged children and delivered an online play workshop for families of young children aged 0-6 in partnership with community partners.

Poetry Competition

Students were asked to reflect on their experience in lockdown and tell us how they stayed connected to their friends. They were also asked about things they were looking forward to beyond lockdown.

The response was tremendous, with many expressive and poignant poems submitted. Finalists were selected from the following schools and kindergartens:

- Ashburton Primary School
- Solway Primary School
- Parkhill Primary School
- Camberwell South Primary School, and
- Canterbury Primary School

'Ways to Play' Workshop

The 'Ways to Play' Workshop was Facilitated by EDVOS, free to local community members. It was designed to bring families together, build connections and teach parents of young children new ways to interact with their baby, toddler, or pre-schooler in a variety of ways that supports their learning and development, free from gender stereotypes.

This project was delivered in partnership

with Access Health & Community and Boroondara Maternal and Child Health.

The workshop was delivered online. Play kits were arranged by contactless pick-up and delivered as required.



Bright Brains Homework Club

The Bright Brains Homework Club (BBHC) provides a safe and supportive out-of-school learning environment for students from years 1 to 10. Trained Volunteer Homework Tutors assist students to develop their academic skills, such as numeracy, literacy, advanced mathematics and essay writing.

Throughout 2021, BBHC was remained online. Our priority remained the social and academic wellbeing of our students, particularly throughout Melbourne's lockdown and periods of 'remote learning'. We focused on maintaining a weekly ritual for students, providing a fun and safe place to learn and to be and offering a sense of community, familiarity, connection and belonging.

Upon homework and study completion each week, students enjoyed a group game, where they were provided with the opportunity to practice their conversational English skills, as well as practice turn taking, collaborating and testing their concentration skills. A lot of fun was had along the way!

We supported students from the following schools:

- Ashburton Primary School

- Canterbury Girls Secondary College
- Canterbury Primary School
- Glendal Primary School
- Hartwell Primary School
- Parkhill Primary School
- St Joseph's Primary School
- St Michaels Parish Primary
- Wattle Park Primary School

We finished the year with an in-centre end-of-year pizza night, where students and tutors participated in a STEM-based science incursion, facilitated by Labcoat Learning.

This saw students mixing, testing, and hypothesising as they made dry ice, polymer slime, and giant bubbles.



As well as supporting our students we also provided opportunities for our volunteers to engage in their local community in a meaningful way. This supported their willingness to foster new social connections and ease isolation and loneliness, whilst acquiring new skills through the tutor training program and potentially increase their employment opportunities.

Our Volunteer Tutors came from diverse backgrounds and predominantly consisted of university students. Many were also confined to remote learning and were without work because of the pandemic.

Many training programs were provided to our Volunteer Training Tutors including culturally responsive practices, literacy strategies, mathematics tutoring support and mental health first aid.

We are most thankful to all our Volunteer Homework Tutors who generously contributed their time each week to support the learning needs and social wellbeing of our BBHC students. Their support has been invaluable, they provided a great range and depth of skill across a broad range of subjects. But above all else, they demonstrated warmth, humility, adaptability and enthusiasm.

Bright Brains Homework Club was managed by Homework Club Coordinator Sarah Hearn throughout 2021.

Movies, Musicals & Popstars!

'Movies, Musicals & Popstars!' is a musical theatre program, designed to engage senior primary school students wishing to pursue their creativity and build their confidence through the performing arts.

It was wonderful to invite the students back to in-centre classes late in 2021 and have them perform a short presentation for parents and their families.

Online Parenting Events

We delivered a range of online workshops and seminars in response to community needs, and to support parents 'juggling' working from home whilst overseeing their children's remote learning.

Online events included the following:

Body Safety Superstars

Provided a comprehensive overview of body safety techniques and awareness for children in preschool to late primary school.

Understanding & Supporting Children with Anxiety

With anxiety on the rise in young children, it was important to provide information on the foundations that help prevent, support, and

manage anxiety.

Online Gaming Awareness for Children

With a significant increase in screen time for most young people during lockdowns, it was important to invite parents and carers to join in this information session, where we discussed the potential negative consequences of modern gaming.

Life Beyond the Pandemic, Goal Setting Workshop

This workshop looked at ways to plan for life beyond the pandemic, helping people to narrow their focus on what is truly important and establish meaningful and achievable goals into the future.

Safe Seats, Safe Kids Program

The Safe Seats, Safe Kids (SSSK) program continued throughout most of 2021, delivering free child car restraint fitting and safety checks to all local parents, grandparents and carers.

Chinese Seniors Group

With funding from the Commonwealth, the Chinese Seniors Group was developed to assist local Mandarin-speaking seniors develop their English skills, make new social connections, and assist with integration into mainstream Australian culture.

Community Groups

Most of our community groups started the year in-centre and moved back online mid-year and for the remainder of 2021, where they were able to maintain their social and community networks.

2021 Community Groups included:

- Ashburton Food Forrest
- Australian Breastfeeding Association
- Country Women's Association Ashburton

- Edge Community Fund
- G.O.L.D. Group
- Lions Club Boroondara
- Real Mandarin Language School
- Victorian Guild of China Painters
- Victorian Guild of Egg Decorators

Special Thanks

During this difficult year, we wish to acknowledge the professional networks and community partnerships who provided us with the relevant support, information and specialist knowledge required to remain operational and helpful to our members.

Special thanks to the following organisations:

- Access Health & Community
- Boroondara Maternal and Child Health Service
- Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre
- Boroondara Youth Services
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Digging Deeper, Mental Health Educators
- Edge Community Fund
- EDVOS
- Monash Youth Services
- Neighbourhood Houses Victoria
- Network of Inner Eastern Community Houses
- St Kilda Mums

Overall, we are proud of a very successful 2021 under difficult circumstances and we look forward to building on our strengths to further develop our local community.

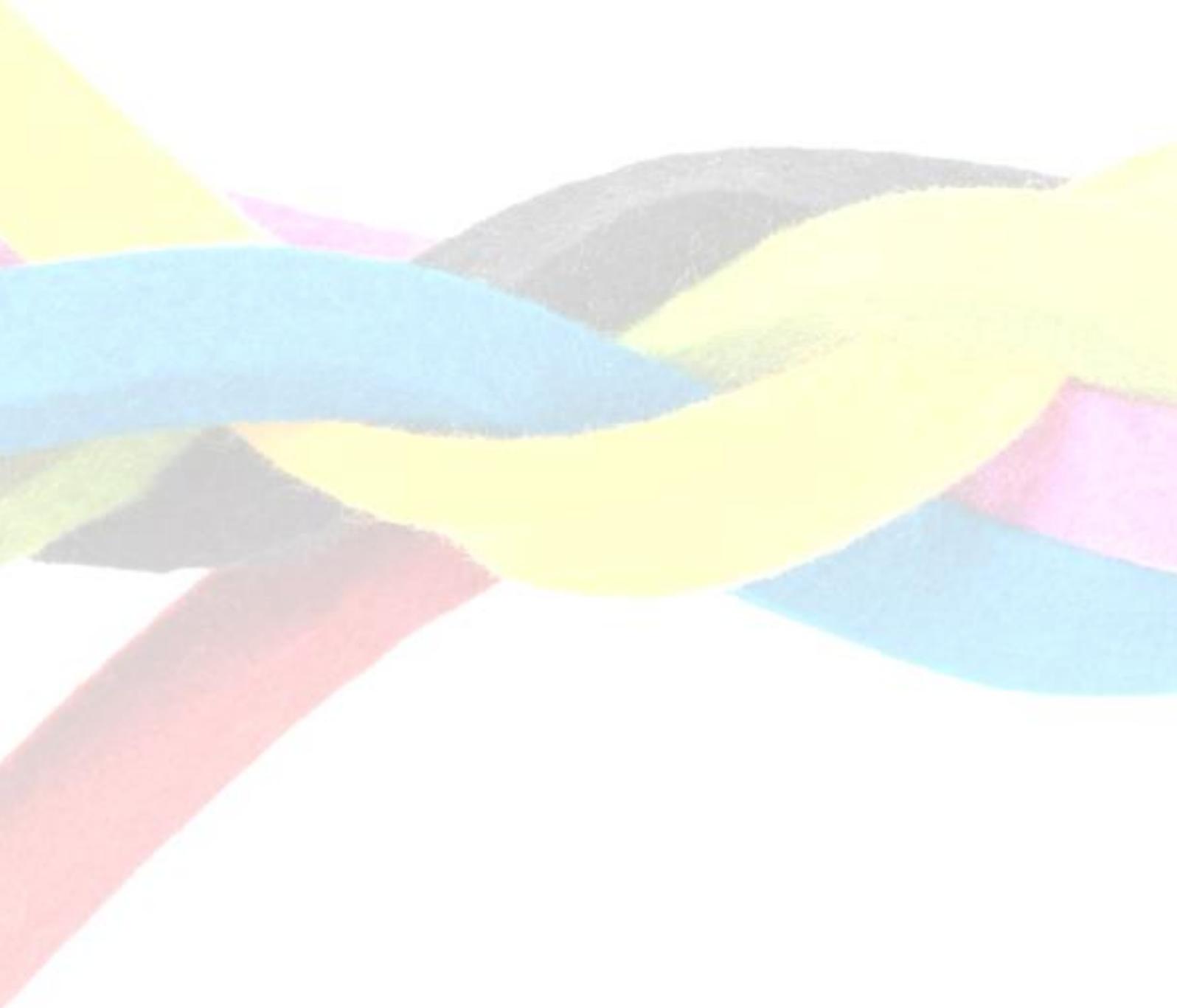
Mary Heath

Community Development Manager

Financial Statements 2021

Please refer to the separate document titled:

Craig Family Centre Incorporated – Financial Statements for the Year Ending 31 December 2021.



Contact us

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