

# Giving children and families the bestchance in life.



## Hope, support and a sense of belonging that is accepting of difference...

The Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Program provides a range of specialist services for families with children who have a disability or developmental delay, prior to school entry. Some of the services offered include information addressing the individual goals of the child and family, support to help a child's development, linking families to services, education and developmental programs, improving access and participation in the community (including child care and kindergarten), assistance with transition to school, parent support and accessing funding for additional services/resources.

Adrial and his family were referred to the ECI Program at **bestchance** when he was quite young. A developmental delay saw the family with a painfully shy, hesitant little boy who was easily overwhelmed and hitting out through sheer frustration because of his lack of communication skills. As a family they were distraught and overwhelmed by this and at a loss as to how to best help their son and themselves. Through therapy, counselling and information sessions the team helped the family realise that there were strategies they could use to help Adrial communicate.

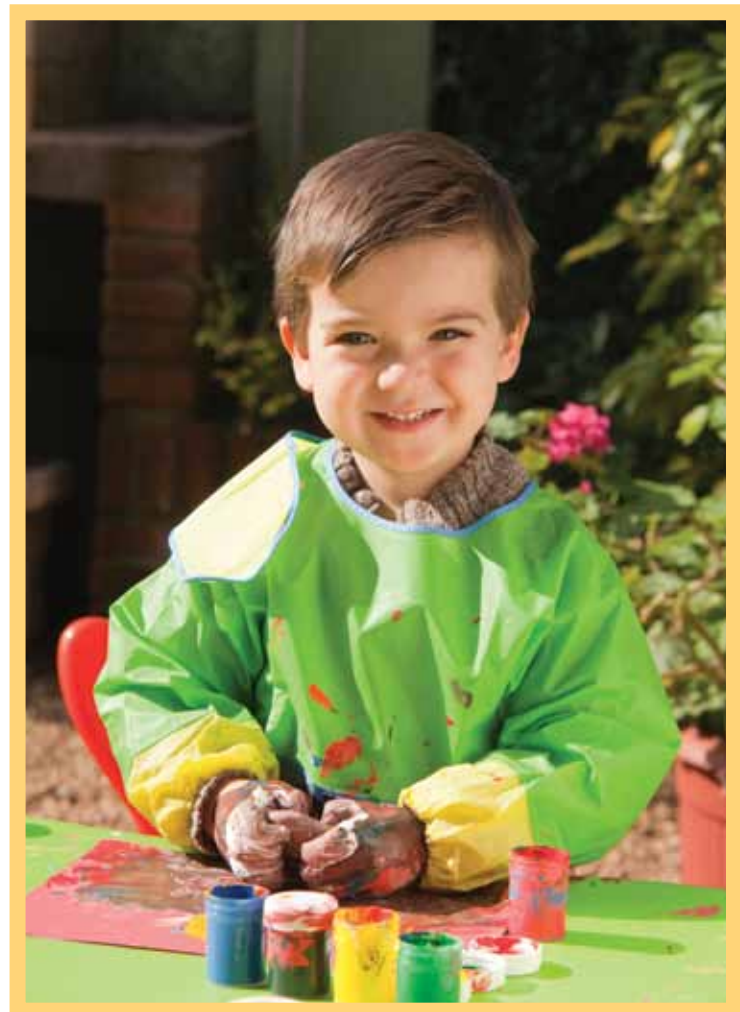
He is going to start Kindergarten next year and the ECI team have extended the inclusive and supportive environment to help the family with this transition. When it is Adrial's time to move on from **bestchance**, he will be a confident 6 year old ready to take on new challenges and happily embrace new experiences. His mum June says it will be her who will have the harder time moving on.

Within **bestchance**, the ECI Program is part of the integrated service offered to families, and is able to both provide and use the expertise of all programs to assist families to receive a broad range of high quality services.

For more information on this Program and others offered at bestchance, visit [www.bestchance.org.au](http://www.bestchance.org.au) or telephone 03 8562 5100.

*"The ECI Program gave our family advice, hope and a sense of belonging in a comforting space that is accepting of difference. All the staff helped our family realise that there are strategies that we can use and that in the tough times - when it is all a bit overwhelming - the **bestchance** team are there for support".*

**June (Parent)**



### In this issue:

Hope, support and a sense of belonging	1
Message from CEO	2
Look out chickens... here we come	2
Opportunities to come together	2
The Value of Volunteers	3
In Profile column	3
Challenging Behaviour Seminar	4
Provide food to our Pantry	4
Charity Ball update	4

## Look out chickens... here we come!!

As soon as the long knotted rope comes down from its hook, the children of Playroom 1 (1 to 2 year old group) know they are going for a walk... an adventure. They're off to visit the chickens that live in a chicken coup on **bestchance** grounds - quite a walk away for little legs.

The children all hold onto the rope and walk along, one behind the other, as much as one year olds' can. As they go you can hear them singing "Old MacDonald had a farm", a favourite song for all. Once at the coup, the children are free to wonder around - they point to the chickens, watch them walk around, and hear them talk. Looks of delight and wonderment fill their little faces.

The children are then told about what chickens eat, where they sleep, and are shown the eggs they lay. Playroom staff go on to explain that chickens have two legs, like us, wings instead of arms and a beak instead of a mouth. When it's time to go back to their room all reluctantly wave and say in unison 'bye, bye chickens'.

Visiting the chickens is an exciting addition to life at **bestchance** Child Care. It provides a great experience for the children, making learning visible and stimulating curiosity as children start to discover beyond their immediate experiences.

**bestchance** Child Care provides integrated, inclusive and developmentally appropriate programs for children up to 6 years, which reflect the latest research in play-based and child-directed learning. For more information please contact Child Care Manager, Helen Kane, on 03 8562 5100 or visit [www.bestchance.org.au](http://www.bestchance.org.au)



## Message from the CEO



Welcome to the Spring issue of our newsletter. We look forward to sharing with you, the many ways your support truly makes a difference to children and families in need. We hope you will be inspired to become more involved and for those of you who are not, get involved in some way.

In this issue you will read about some amazing **bestchance** children, families and supporters. We highlight program activities, profile one of our valued volunteers and keep you informed of upcoming events and initiatives.

More specifically, you will read how through the generosity of groups and businesses we were able to upgrade our Playroom playground, benefiting the many in our community who use it. See that time spent exploring our grounds and visiting the chickens can help our children learn. We say thank you to our many valuable volunteers who so generously give their time to support our programs. And we are grateful and deeply humbled by those of you who donned your finest and/or opened your pockets to support our Charity Ball, it raised \$25,000 for the Children's Centre.

On a more personal note, after 15 years of service to **bestchance**, this is my last newsletter as I enter retirement. I have seen and been a part of many changes and improvements over the years, and without your continued support, much of what we have achieved would not have been possible. I would like to welcome new CEO, Kevin Feeney, and wish him many successes at the helm. Along with it will come the challenges; and maintaining levels of support is an ongoing battle with demand for our services on the rise. I leave encouraged that you will continue to support **bestchance** as you have all these years - and yes it does make a big difference!

Finally, I wish to extend my gratitude to all those wonderful people that have gone on this tremendous journey with me and acknowledge their every contribution. Yourselves, an army of donors, trusts and benefactors always forthcoming in your generosity; the Committee of Management, supportive staff and volunteers for sharing our great vision.

Thank you for your continued support and I wish you well for the future.

**Lodi Francesconi**

## Opportunities to come together and share information & support through play

The Parent and Child Support Playgroup is a referral-based program that meets on a weekly basis during school term. It provides an important link between the home and community for families with babies and young children, and gives both parents and children the opportunity to meet friends and socialise in a caring and supported environment. For many families, attendance is their only means of social support, and one of few opportunities to engage their children through structured and guided play.

The group uses Playroom 8 facilities at **bestchance** and the playground was recently upgraded thanks to the generous support of the Rotary Club of Glen Waverley and Bendigo Bank. The project provided for a new shade sail, sand pit cover, bike track, trikes and even a pedestrian crossing with traffic lights. The age-appropriate outdoor play setting has brought delight to families, allowing young Playgroup participants to safely explore and develop their social and motor skills. The Lions Club of Oakleigh also funded the purchase of safe climbing equipment which enhances the safety and skill development of the group's pre-walkers.

Playroom 8 and other **bestchance** training and meeting room facilities are available for use by community and leisure/sporting groups as well as local businesses. For more information on rooms and hire charges, please contact our Facilities Coordinator, Verena Spencer, on 03 8562 5100.



# Our volunteers...their commitment

**FACT:** Grassroots volunteering is on the rise – 34% of Australian adults contribute their time each year, according to Volunteering Australia.

## Going Green

At **bestchance** “going green’ isn’t necessarily about improving the environment - although that can be one outcome. It is not about St Patrick’s Day – although there are some Irish involved. It is all about thinking and wearing green on one particularly special day of the year, when we acknowledge and celebrate the huge contribution of our volunteers!

In other words green reminds us of the presence of volunteers and on Recognition and Respect (R & R) Day, it is the colour worn by staff, volunteers and even some of the children, to show our appreciation.

This year R & R Day was held on 30 June and volunteers came together for some fun and TLC from **bestchance** staff and children. After a morning get-together which combined updates on the latest happenings and an entertaining talk from well known journalist and cartoonist, George Hatton, our volunteers adjourned to Café Quantrelle for a delicious lunch.

By way of ‘giving back’ to volunteers, staff helped with the set up and decoration of tables (green themed of course) and waited on the volunteers throughout the luncheon. Entertainment was provided by the children of **bestchance** kindergarten, who sang their songs with great gusto and much action-movement. The students from Cheshire School also contributed enthusiastically with especially composed poems.

As a token of appreciation all volunteers received small gifts encompassing the message “You light up our lives”. It was an enjoyable day of celebrations, but also just one more way of trying to say **‘THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS – WE COULDN’T DO IT WITHOUT YOU’**.

## In Profile - Volunteer

**Name:** Yvonne Askew  
**bestchance** Volunteer

**Position:** Volunteer, Community Support Program

### How are you involved with **bestchance**?

I volunteer in the Community support area. I help with the op shop days, sorting of donations, I am in charge of linen and crockery, blankets and curtains.

### How/why did you first get involved?

When **bestchance** owned Wanda Road Op Shop I used to go in and purchase items and as I lived close by I got to talking to the ladies. I built up a friendship with them and so got involved. This gave me an outlet and extra interest.

**Hobbies:** Crosswords and code crackers

**Favourite TV Show:** Time team and Minuscule on ABC, Midsummer Murders and Miss Marple. Nothing too heavy, I enjoy a laugh and puzzle to solve.

**Worst Habit:** I’m a hoarder but I’m working on it!

### If you were an animal, what would it be and why?

I definitely want to come back as a Kitten so I can be pampered.



**FACT:** In the last 12 months volunteers at **bestchance** contributed over 9,000 hours to the organisation providing support to programs and services

**FACT:** **bestchance** has the invaluable support of over 90 volunteers

## The Value of Volunteering



“I enjoy meeting and working with different people. We have lots of fun together.” **Anne**

“As a retired kinder teacher I wanted to help others and I found what I was looking for at **bestchance**.” **Dot**

“I love being involved in projects and the company it brings. Here there is always something to laugh about together.” **Val**

“As an ex teacher it was important to give back to children and families. The volunteers all enjoy each others company.” **Jo**

“I enjoy giving back to the community. It’s the combination of adult company and the personal satisfaction of doing something as an individual (not a mum or a wife) within a great group of like minded people.” **Yvonne**

## Are you a professional who deals with children and adolescents with challenging behaviour?

If so, you **MUST** attend this Seminar!

**Date:** Monday 17th October 2011

**Time:** 9.00am – 3.30pm

**Speaker:** Ian Luscombe

Principal mentor and trainer/coach in Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

**Venue:** Syndal Baptist Church Activity Centre, 588 High Street Road, Glen Waverley 3150

**Cost:** \$190 p/person OR \$160 p/person for groups of 3 or more

**RSVP:** 9th October 2011

**For more information or to register, visit [www.bestchance.org.au](http://www.bestchance.org.au) or telephone 03 8562 5100.**

## Help us provide food to those in need – Please donate now to our Pantry

The **bestchance** Community Support Program supports families and individuals in need at times of crisis by providing material aid, food hampers, financial assistance, advocacy and emotional support.

This program relies heavily on the support of the community for donations. The pantry which provides staple foods to families to stock their store cupboard is low and we are calling for donations of non-perishable food items to fill it, food vouchers or for financial contributions to purchase necessary items.

**If you would like to help and make a donation, please contact us on 03 8562 5100 or visit us at 583 Ferntree Gully Road in Glen Waverley, Victoria.**

## Going, going sold!

It was a night of fast and furious bidding at our “Show Your Tune for Charity” Ball. Not only was there an amazing array of auction items up for sale, the atmosphere was inspiring and the generosity, humbling! This year a record amount of \$25,000 was raised for the Children’s Centre.

Attended by over 200 guests, the Hon Michael Gidley, Member for Waverley and Councillor Jieh-Yung Lo from the City of Monash came to lend their support for such a worthy cause. All were entertained by TV personality Des Dowling and band “I do 2”.

Our special thanks to all who contributed to the Ball’s success whether by way of attendance, financial support, product or in-kind donations. We must acknowledge event sponsors, the AMP Foundation and Woolworths Liquor Group, for their generous support of the evening. We extend our gratitude to business supporter Barry Plant Real Estate (Wheelers Hill and Mount Waverley) for attending and looking after the live auction on the night. Thank you also the many businesses who offered their support including Bartercard South East, Clive Steele Partners, Fratelle, McArthur Management Services and Wilkore Construction.



### Child and Family Care Network Inc.

Assoc. Inc Reg No A0023502D

ABN 53 094 161 974

583 Ferntree Gully Road,  
Glen Waverley VIC 3150

PO Box 4190, Mulgrave VIC 3170

Tel: (03) 8562 5100

Fax: (03) 8562 5111

info@bestchance.org.au

Newsletter supporter

**tomorrow**

  
CHILD > FAMILY > CARE  
**bestchance**  
[www.bestchance.org.au](http://www.bestchance.org.au)