

NEWSLETTER WINTER EDITION

ARDOCH 2013 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Ardoch's Annual General Meeting (AGM) for 2013 was held on Wednesday, May 21st. This was the second year in a row that it was hosted by our pro bono auditors, KPMG.



We were honoured to have two special guest speakers for the evening. Our first speaker was Danielle Fatchen, a *Play, Learn, Read* volunteer who helps with the Stonnington Parents and Children Drop-In Project every Thursday. Danielle spoke thoughtfully about her volunteering experience and about how she can see it impacting positively on the children. She said, "I am really glad to be part of the project and believe, with the warm welcoming feeling, the play time, the stories, the yummy food and the general positive vibe, we are doing something which I think is downright beautiful."

Our keynote speaker was Professor Frank Oberklaid, the Founding Director of the Centre for Community Child Health at the Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne and Professor of Paediatrics at the University of Melbourne.

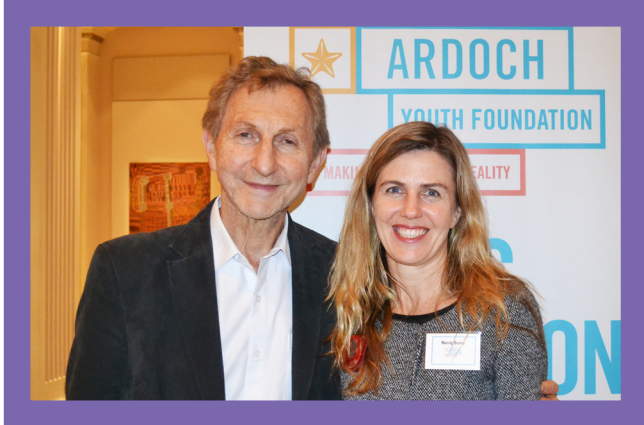
Professor Oberklaid captivated the audience by linking early childhood development and the importance of establishing a solid foundation for future learning and behaviour early on in a child's life. With the shocking statistic that one in four Australian children are starting school developmentally

vulnerable, he said, "If you look at some of the societal problems we face like crime, welfare dependency, illiteracy, poor school outcomes, mental health, obesity, heart disease, the list goes on; they don't suddenly appear in adolescence and adulthood.

"Many of those conditions begin in pathways that start early in life. There are clues from a very early age. That's where we should be investing... all of the science is screaming out: prevent those problems from occurring, intervene early."

Ardoch's work in the field of early childhood education was commended by Professor Oberklaid. Ardoch programs such as *Play, Learn, Read* and *Talking the Talk*, focus on early literacy and oral language development for children who have been identified to be at risk of falling further behind their peers.

We were grateful to be able to bring together our philanthropic and corporate supporters, volunteers and school partners to for an evening of sharing and learning about early years development. Thank you again to KPMG for hosting our AGM.



PROFESSOR OBERKLAID WITH ARDOCH CEO MANDY BURNS

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FROM OUR CEO

Federal Budget Woes



The May federal budget pledges fiscal responsibility for the future, an end to unsustainable borrowing and spending and, the death of the 'age of entitlement'. We are told this involves difficult choices and that we all must share the burden. This budget, however, does not share the burden fairly, it disproportionately affects the

most disadvantaged members of our community.

The National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) analysis exposes that the poorest 20% will be hit much harder than the richest 20% of our population. This budget focuses on reducing government spending for low and middle income Australians while avoiding revenue raising from those who are better off.

This approach to improving the budget bottom line leads to a future Australia that provides insufficient income support for the disadvantaged; that does not provide access to universal healthcare; does not target investment in education, despite our widening gap in achievement; does not value access to university for all, and; fundamentally fails to recognise and

help raise the odds for the 17.3% or 575,000 children living in poverty in Australia.

For those experiencing poverty, the reduction of the funding available to schools will make removing barriers to education even more challenging.

Ardoch is already working with schools to remove the barriers to education with breakfast clubs and our learning essentials bags of food, toiletries and stationery; we recruit and place trained volunteers to work in disadvantaged communities to support learning and wellbeing. With families and public schools bearing the brunt of 'our fiscal responsibility', we know this will create more pain for those least able to bear it.

As the effects of the federal budget ripple out, our community will experience its impact. This is a time where we must reflect on what we want as the key foundations of our nation for all our citizens. It is a time to agree on what the fundamentals are. Strong education and healthcare are not only just social rights, they are also key to our economic prosperity.

Mandy Burns

Chief Executive Officer

FRANKSTON KINDERS GET READY FOR LEARNING THANKS TO GE

Ardoch's *School Readiness Packs* are a wonderful learning resource that enables families from an area of significant disadvantage to engage and support their children's development at home. Ardoch's Education Partnerships Coordinators designed these packs after consultations with kindergarten staff revealed the need to provide resources and raise awareness of simple ways parents can support their children's education. The packs, which include instructions for using the books, beads, memory cards and toys, address a number of key developmental areas: pre-literacy and numeracy, fine motor, communication and cognitive skills. The packs have also been translated into several languages.

The *School Readiness Packs* were created in 2013 with Ardoch partner kindergartens in Sunshine being the first recipients. Several GE volunteers helped to assemble the packs. The volunteers were so inspired by the impact that the packs would have on young children that they arranged additional funding to purchase more pack resources in 2014.

With the expansion of Ardoch's early learning work in Frankston to six sites, the funding couldn't have come at a better time. In Term 3 each partner early childhood centre in



THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING GE VOLUNTEERS

Frankston will receive 72 packs and hold a launch to introduce parents to this great resource that will help them support their child's education.

The passionate GE team couldn't resist being 'hands on' with this project again and as part of the GE Global Volunteering month activities in June, 13 volunteers worked on this most colourful assembly line.

GE has worked in partnership with Ardoch for more than 14 years and through projects like this, they continue to demonstrate a great commitment to understanding problems, directing support to effect positive impact.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Colin's Story



COLIN IN ACTION AT SUNSHINE COLLEGE

Colin volunteers once a week working for about six hours in literacy classes for newly arrived migrants at Sunshine College.

"I retired from teaching a few years ago but wanted to use my skills and keep working with young people. I was impressed by the work Ardoch does and decided to offer my time to them.

"Although I was a teacher, I'd like to stress you don't need to be a teacher to work in these situations. The classroom teacher does the hard work and gives clear information to help you work with the students. Ardoch also provides training to help you work in a variety of situations.

"I like helping them to write. They are keen to learn. They have many great ideas and are willing to talk to you about their experiences, but some struggle to put these thoughts into words on paper. I have been working with some of the students for three years now and it's great to watch them develop their skills and confidence.

"Two of the students told me of their experiences in refugee camps and of their journey coming to Australia in a boat from Indonesia. For me, it put a human face on the media's and politicians 'Stop the boats' campaigns.

Some of the students are very gifted artistically and I marvel at the beautiful pictures they create and share with me."

Thank you Colin, for your dedication to volunteering!

Would you like to become an Ardoch volunteer?
Please contact Iris Simpson or Adele Stowe-Lindner at volunteers@ardoch.asn.au or on 03 9537 2414.

13-STOREY TREEHOUSE ADVENTURES

At the end of Term 1, over 240 students from Ardoch partner schools (Seaford Park Primary School, Mother of God Primary School, Sunshine North Primary School and Sacred Heart Primary School) enjoyed literacy-themed excursions to the Arts Centre Melbourne to see 'The 13-Storey Treehouse', an inspiring production of Andy Griffith's popular children's book.

The children's anticipation could be felt as the lights dimmed and sheer joy and excitement as Terry and Andy brought the Treehouse to life on stage. They were fascinated by the giant gorilla, sea monkeys, monster mermaids, flying cats and the range of props, sound and lighting used. This production inspired the children's imaginations through creative storytelling and we received great feedback, including: "I loved how you got everyone to use a lot of imagination unlike movies" and "The 13-Storey Treehouse was the first play I had ever seen!"

Thanks to the support of the Andycinc Foundation, Carman's, Nelson Alexander Charitable Foundation and the Arts Centre's First Call Fund, we were able to provide this opportunity for primary school children. This was the first visit to the Arts Centre for many of these children and this amazing experience helped to broaden their horizons and enabled them to enjoy a play that inspired their imaginations and encourage them to read.

ARDOCH IN FRANKSTON



PLAY, LEARN, READ VOLUNTEER HELEN IN FRANKSTON

Earlier this year, the Ardoch office in Frankston was relocated to Ebdale Community Hub. This move helped us to establish an important new partnership with Community Kinders Plus, enabling *Play, Learn, Read* to be expanded into four new early childhood centres, Bruce Park Pre-School, East Karingal Pre-School, Frankston Pre-School and Wirilda Kindergarten.

We're also happy to welcome Monterey Secondary College on board as a partner school. We look forward to working with our new partner sites to make education a reality for vulnerable children and young people.

Ardoch is seeking enthusiastic volunteers for these new partner sites in Frankston. If you, or anyone you know, is interested in volunteering, please contact us at volunteers@ardoch.asn.au or visit www.ardoch.asn.au.

CONNECT WITH US!



DAVID BRIDIE VISITS OUR GUITAR PROGRAM



Ardoch Ambassador David Bridie (*My Friend the Chocolate Cake*) was welcomed with a rock star reception at St Brendan's Primary School. One starstruck fourth grader was overheard asking the special guest "are you THE David Bridie?!"

David led guitar workshops for three classes of students in Grade 4, 5, and 6 where he sang and encouraged the children to play along with him. Thanks to a passionate Ardoch supporter and our amazing guitar group volunteers, students have been receiving guitar lessons every Thursday.

Much to the enjoyment of the children, after the workshops, the rest of the school was invited in for a special performance.

We would like to say a massive thank you to David Bridie. This is the third time that David has visited an Ardoch partner school to share his love of music with the children. We look forward to many more visits!

GO AWAY MR WORRYTHOUGHTS!

Thanks to kind support from the McKern Steel Foundation, over 250 Grade 3/4 students from Ardoch's partner primary schools in the northern suburbs of Geelong took part in inspiring drama workshops designed to help them deal with their worries and anxiety in a fun and non-confrontational way.

The play is adapted from the acclaimed picture book, '*Go Away, Mr Worrythoughts!*', by Nicky Johnston, whose son, aged 5, was diagnosed with generalised anxiety disorder. The production (developed by Frankston Arts Centre) has been used extensively and successfully in Melbourne schools as an effective tool in addressing mental health issues for children. Drama is a very effective way to engage children on serious topics and this workshop explores creative ways to zap Worrythoughts!

By addressing children's mental health and building emotional resilience early, this project helps children to become more confident and happy adolescents and adults.

STU GRADUATION

"I spend most of my time smiling at school now."

This powerful statement was by a student who graduated at the end of Term 2 from the Southern Teaching Unit's (STU) 18 week program. In front of an admiring audience that included parents, teachers, Ardoch community volunteers and NAB employee volunteers, each student told the story of why they were referred to STU, what they had learnt and what they would do when they returned to school. Common story threads were about peer group pressure, not having good relationships with teachers, not liking authority and not respecting or understanding the role of education in their lives. It was a powerful reminder of the challenges facing young people and a celebration of their empowerment.

To address both the academic and social issues that bring students to STU, the curriculum combines individual literacy and numeracy plans with personal and social development group work. In addition to being introduced to great role models such as Nelson Mandela, STU runs a ground breaking health program that teaches kids about the distorted view of sexuality presented in the media and the negative impact it has on self esteem, personal relationships and social behavior. Many of the graduates commented that this was the most valuable learning.

Ardoch works with STU by providing trained volunteers who give regular learning support, connecting the school with NAB Bayside Business Centre employees who volunteer at a weekly lunch funded through workplace giving donations, and the Holding Redlich Community Justice Fund provides critical funding for camps and cultural excursions that enhance the curriculum and provide opportunities for experiences to develop social and life skills.

If you would like to volunteer with students in schools, please contact Iris Simpson or Adele Stowe-Lindner at volunteers@ardoch.asn.au or on 03 9537 2414.



The feedback from students and teachers was extremely positive. Students told us that had learnt that they should "talk to someone about a Worrythought", "tell Mr Worrythoughts to go away" and "ignore Worrythoughts because they aren't important".

McKern Steel is a family run business based in regional Victoria and we are very grateful to the trustees of the Foundation for their grant towards this project.

STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE WEST FROM THE



The Besen Family Foundation is supporting Ardoch's 'Growing Community Connections' project to make education a reality for vulnerable children and young people in Melbourne's West, one of the most culturally diverse areas in Victoria with high levels of social and economic disadvantage. The Foundation funded the establishment of our Sunshine Education Support Centre in 2006 and have been strong supporters of our work in the West ever since.

Through this project, Ardoch is supporting disadvantaged students in partnership with schools and early education centres in Sunshine, Ardeer, Braybrook, Albion North and Sunshine North. We have mobilised resources and skilled volunteers to provide great learning opportunities and targeted support to disadvantaged students and families in the area. This project has enabled Ardoch to leverage corporate and community support for inspiring programs, experiences and resources that have a direct impact on improving children's learning, wellbeing, engagement with learning and increase their aspirations.



We are very grateful to Debbie Dadon, Executive Officer, and her fellow trustees for their transformative support of Ardoch and thousands of disadvantaged children and young people in Melbourne's West.

KIDS HELPING KIDS

A big thank you to the Year 8 students from Mount Scopus Memorial College who recently visited the Ardoch office to donate food and stationery items which they collected for Ardoch's Learning Essentials Bags.

Ardoch partner schools have found that families are increasingly struggling to provide the basic needs for their children, including food, toiletries, uniforms, stationery and transport. As a result, this negatively impacts on attendance, behaviour, and children's ability to learn and fully engage in the classroom.

Learning Essential Bags contain emergency food, stationery and toiletries which are distributed to children and families in need at our partner early childhood centres and schools.

If you would like to hold a donation drive for Ardoch's Learning Essential Bags at your school, workplace or community group please contact Rachel Morley on 03 9537 2414 or at rachel.morley@ardoch.asn.au.

LITERACY BUDDIES® MEET VIRTUALLY



The Little Buddies at Sunshine North Primary School and their Big Buddies at GE recently participated in a Skype introduction session, a first for Literacy Buddies®. School Principal, Ken Ryan, introduced the concept with the goal of positively engaging his students with technology.

Mr Ryan sat at the front with each Little Buddy and encouraged them to speak to their Big Buddy, asking questions about their favourite foods, colours and pets. There were a few shy Little Buddies, but all in all there were a lot of laughs and the Buddies thoroughly enjoyed their first 'face-to-face' meeting. They are now eagerly looking forward to their midyear visit at the school in August.

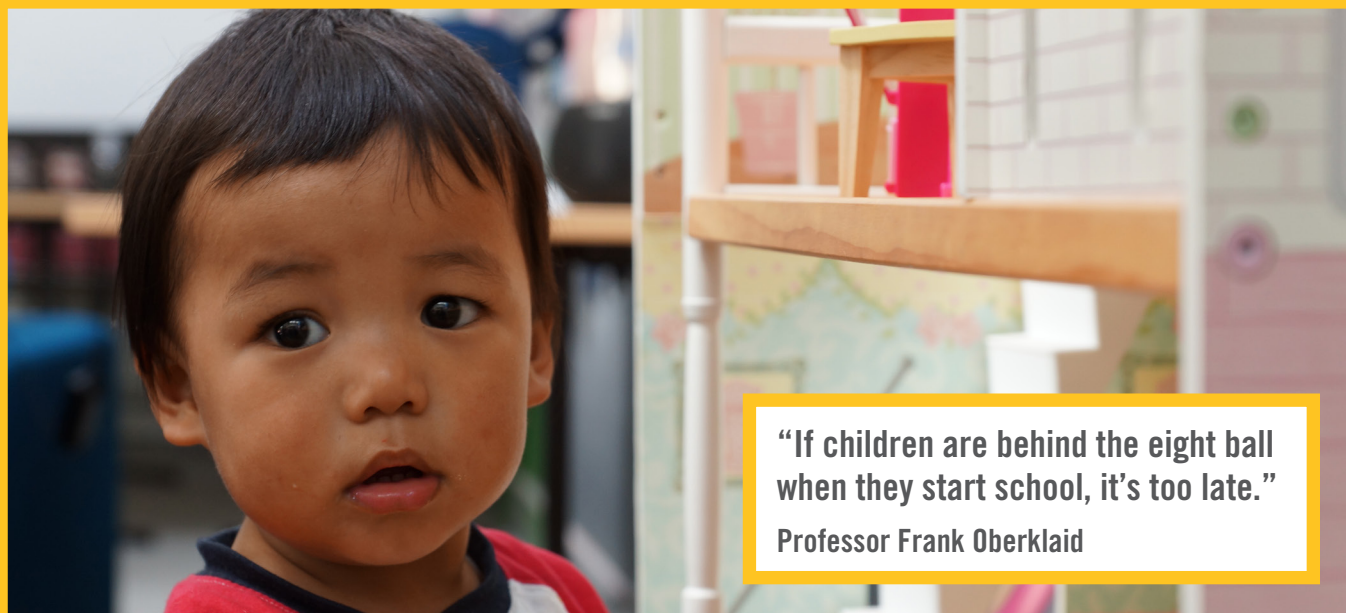
Ardoch's Literacy Buddies® involves a class of students (approximately 25 'Little Buddies') and their corporate volunteer 'Big Buddies' exchanging monthly letters. The goal of the program is to encourage students to read and write and provide meaningful interactions with positive working adult role models.

Ask your organisation to support education and inspire disadvantaged kids in 2014 by volunteering with your team. To find out how, contact Danielle Griffin at corporate.team@ardoch.asn.au or on 03 9537 2414.



MOUNT SCOPUS MEMORIAL COLLEGE STUDENTS DELIVER THEIR DONATED ITEMS

THE IMPORTANCE OF 'TALKING THE TALK'



“If children are behind the eight ball when they start school, it’s too late.”

Professor Frank Oberklaid

Tommy was repeating a second year of kindergarten due to delays in his language and social development. Like many of the children we support, Tommy’s family experience significant disadvantage and he doesn’t have books or anyone to read with him at home so he spends lots of time watching TV or playing video games.

With the support of an Ardoch *Talking the Talk* volunteer working with him every week, Tommy has become much more talkative and confident, has had a dramatic increase in his vocabulary, descriptive language and has clearer speech.

Ardoch’s *Talking the Talk* program trains volunteers to support children with language difficulties to develop their speech and oral language. Experienced Speech Pathologists have helped to develop the volunteer training, resource kit and activity guide and assess the children before and after the program.

Four-year-old Kim had developed very little ability in her home language or English and took a very long time to settle into

kindergarten because of separation anxiety from her parents. She had limited vocabulary and used lots of gestures and pointing to try to communicate. *Talking the Talk* made all the difference – she built a close bond with her volunteer and she seemed to know that this special Ardoch volunteer was there just for her and could spend lots of one-on-one time simply talking, playing games and doing puzzles, whilst kindergarten staff worked with other children in groups. Kim is now a much more outgoing and bubbly little girl, settled in the kindergarten and better able to communicate and use language as she prepares to start at school next year.

Early Childhood Centres provide rich environments for children, however large group sizes mean that children who need one-to-one attention to develop their language skills fall further behind without intervention from Ardoch’s *Talking the Talk* program.

Your support is urgently needed so that Ardoch can continue to support disadvantaged young children like Tommy and Kim.

YES, I want to help children reach their full potential!

Please accept my donation of \$35 \$65 \$100 Surprise Us \$

OR please deduct \$..... each month from my credit card below.

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Please find enclosed my cheque to ‘Ardoch Youth Foundation’

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Please also send me further information about:

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Thank You