



THE  
port  
MELBOURNE

# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As we welcome in another great year of The Port Magazine, I want to take the time to acknowledge all the participants who give their time so that the stories of our local business people can be brought to life in these pages. A great team of folks work tirelessly to find and share the stories of people doing great things in Port Melbourne.

In this fantastic edition we're exploring some amazing businesses that serve our local, and greater community of kids. From Australia's best range of organic snack foods for the littles, to the amazing work of a truly great not-for-profit – there are really some wonderful things happening right here in Port Melbourne.

And whilst Christmas is long behind us, it's important to acknowledge the amazing performances at our 2015 Christmas in Port Melbourne event. Now in its second year, the 'Mike Brady' School Students Christmas Composition Competition for School Choirs & Ensembles award went to a stunning performance by The Port Phillip Special School. A special thanks goes out to Mike Brady for his ongoing support of this great local musical initiative.

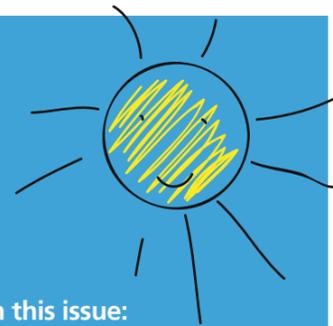
2016 is an important year for Port Phillip. 22 October 2016 will see Port Phillip voter's head to the polls to elect councillors in the upcoming general election. Instead of seven single councillor wards, this year's election will result in a total of nine councillors across three new wards. Approved by the Minister for Local Government last year, the increased number of councillors, but fewer wards, was recommended by the Victorian Electoral Commission due to Port Phillip's growing population. So if you're interested in the direction of Port Phillip, and more specifically, Port Melbourne and surrounds, I encourage you to get involved. We all have an important contribution to make in shaping this great suburb –so please, find your voice, and be heard this year.

And on that note, the Port Melbourne Business Association is seeking to get the wider Port community engaged through social media. With so much going on in the local area – it's time to get social and share what's new, fresh, on sale and on fleek (flawlessly styled/groomed; for the uninitiated)! If you are a community organisation, passionate local, social media professional or just love to share what you know about our local community – WE WANT (to hear from) YOU!

I hope you enjoy this fantastic edition of The Port Magazine. Don't forget to enter our 2016 Ultimate Mother's Day Competition. One lucky winner and their mum can again enjoy the best Port Melbourne has to offer with an Ultimate Mother's Day of pampering, fine food and shopping in Melbourne's best beachside strip!

So go on, get reading, get involved and get social with us in 2016!

Paul Littmann  
President of the PMBA



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# PORT COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD



## WE WANT CONNECTED PORT PEOPLE!

Do you know Port? Do you have your finger on Port's pulse? Do you walk Bay Street regularly? Do you love to snap photos of what's happening in Port?

We're looking for people passionate about Port Melbourne to be our eyes and ears in Port. If you're connected to the community, know how to snap a photo and love to share what's happening, please contact us at [social@3207port.com.au](mailto:social@3207port.com.au)



# FOSTERING A LOVE FOR LEARNING SINCE 1954

## Kumon Education Centre Marcia Libman

Little has changed in the Kumon philosophy in over 60 years. Founded by a Japanese high school maths teacher to help his second grade son, Kumon was the brainchild of the late Chairman Toru Kumon. Using a series of handwritten materials focussed on developing strong calculation skills, Toru Kumon was able to quickly advance his young son's skill to the level of high school mathematics.

Now in its 31st year in Australia

and with over 4 million students around the world, Toru Kumon's original handwritten A5 work sheets have been refined into an extensive series of Kumon 'workbooks'. The mathematic workbooks begin with colourful counting activities and 'number lines' to progressively establish a solid foundation in the fundamentals of maths. The philosophy has also been applied to the Kumon English Programme which takes excerpts from a wide range of texts to develop vocabulary, basic reading skills, sentence structure, paragraph building, summarisation and critical reading - in the same

systematic way. A pen and paper based, self-regulated model of learning, Kumon is delivered in twice weekly afternoon classes and structured homework exercises. Kumon's company owned Port Melbourne centre teaches both English and maths, allowing students to progress through a curriculum which gives them an in-depth understanding of the fundamentals seen in the state education system. Student's studies are based on their individual abilities rather than their age, allowing them to participate in the program to revise and strengthen skills, catch-up with

their peers or even accelerate their learning.

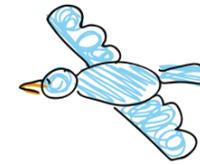
Qualified primary school teacher, Marcia Libman is Port Melbourne's Kumon Instructor. Her role is to design the individualised learning programs of the centre's students, facilitate student's progression and give feedback to parents. In an environment that bears resemblance to a school classroom, Marcia directs students through their sessions which vary in time from 20 minutes to one hour. "Whilst we may look a lot like a conventional classroom, our emphasis is on developing students work and

learning skills. Even when students raise their hand, we encourage them to read the instructions and just give it a go. It's amazing what children can achieve when they take a moment to think and progress independently."

The result of this focus is a classroom of kids who look to their work for instructions, and to themselves for the answers. And as Marcia explains; "it engenders a confidence in kids that they can learn."

Aided by a number of classroom Assistants, Marcia and her team are able to provide individual support to students where required. A cost effective alternative to private tuition, and run 50 weeks a year, Kumon is accessible and truly family-focussed. "I tutored privately for some years before joining Kumon. Whilst there's always a place for private tuition, Kumon provides far better value for parents seeking assurance that their kids have truly mastered the fundamentals of the school curriculum."

But what parents enjoy most is the focus brought to learning and by an effective study routine. "Parents of young kids know that having routine makes life so much easier and Kumon gives children a structured learning time each day. This routine benefits students in the long-run because they have more experience in managing their time and completing work without a second thought."



With all aspects of the program assessed on both timing and accuracy, students build concentration and perseverance through daily practice. Timing the students work helps them learn to work efficiently and use their time productively. In return for their productivity, students are able to leave the class at the conclusion of their workbook.

For Marcia, it's the ultimate culmination of her skills and passion. "I love seeing how much children can achieve, and with Kumon's philosophy of developing confident and independent thinkers, the sky's the limit."

Interested in exploring Kumon for your child? Kumon Port Melbourne is currently taking enrolments for preschool and primary aged students. With two start dates each month, enrolments are NOT tied to the academic year or term. To attend a FREE 30 minute parent information session, call 0413 875 919 or email [mllibman@kumon.com.au](mailto:mllibman@kumon.com.au) for details. Prospective parents can experience the Port Melbourne Kumon Centre at 150 Rouse Street, Port Melbourne, Monday to Friday. [www.au.kumonglobal.com](http://www.au.kumonglobal.com)



## BENEFITS OF KUMON

- Fosters a love of learning
- Allows students to experience 'success' in learning
- Focussed on students progressing at their own pace
- Develops effective study habits and self-learning abilities
- Can advance skills beyond school grade level
- Involves parents in the learning process



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# CHANGING THE WORLD, ONE EDUCATOR AT A TIME



## Ingles Street Early Learning & Kinder Stacey Long

Now in its third year of operation, Ingles Street Early Learning & Kinder is a hub of quiet, organised activity and rest.

The purpose built centre and former home of Wonderkindy has done a great deal of work to become a model centre for the care and education of children aged 6 weeks to 6 years. It's a fact that Irish born Director, Stacey Long is rightly proud of. "Our reputation

within the community is growing everyday, the feedback from current and new families is always so heart-warming."

Privately run, Ingles Street Early Learning & Kinder provides high quality long day care, school-readiness and government-approved full-day kindergarten programs in an environment worthy of its prime, city-centric location. Close to public transport and with plenty of undercover car parking, the centre serves the area's working parents from 6:30am to 6:30pm.

With parents able to quickly and

easily enquire, submit a waitlist request, register and manage and request changes to their childcare bookings online, Ingles Street Early Learning & Kinder is taking their operations to the space their families are operating in – online. It's an essential part of meeting families needs and keeping them updated with the daily learning, activities and individual observations of their children.

Driven by love and a passion for providing every child with a foundation of curiosity and life-long learning, the Port Melbourne centre is spread over three levels.

With a range of covered and open outdoor play areas, the centre's eight care rooms are dedicated to caring for children by age and stages of development. But it's the little things at Ingles Street that really set the centre apart. As Stacey noted, "we have a comfortable parents room for our breastfeeding mums, a dedicated space for our educators to plan their sessions and a commercial grade kitchen with a full-time cook, experienced in managing special dietary requirements and allergies such as Asthma and Anaphylaxis. And, the meals are actually really delicious."

But for the children in their care, a visit to the ground floor foyer to feed the resident turtle, Ninja, is a very special event. It also sits well with the truly play-based approach to learning implemented by Stacey and her team. "We are child-centred, which allows our children to direct their own learning based on their interests and capabilities."

With more renovation works planned for the outdoor play areas, Stacey can't imagine working anywhere else. After ten years working in the child care sector, eight of them in her Irish homeland, it's a career she truly loves, "I thought I would pursue a career in paediatric nursing, but I started

working in childcare and just loved it."

After following an old Irish flame out to Australia two years ago, Stacey and her fiancé now call Melbourne home. And whilst they visit Ireland regularly, there's no shortage of Irish good will at Ingles Street. The centre's co-director, Fiona Pollard is also Irish and together they are working to make Ingles Street Early Learning & Kinder a centre of choice for working parents.

The best endorsement of Ingles Street Early Learning and Kinder is the number of staff that have children in care at the centre. As Stacey explained, "four of our educators have their own children in care here. They're passionate about our centre and the work they do."

With services fully registered and approved for the government Childcare Benefit, limited places are still available at Ingles Street Early Learning & Kinder. To arrange a personal, full-access tour of the centre and to register your child, call 8658 1050 or go to [www.inglesstreetelc.com.au](http://www.inglesstreetelc.com.au).



## WITH PLAY-BASED CARE, A CHILD'S IDEAS AND INTERESTS ARE USED TO:

- Plan experiences and routines
- Offer a variety of play environments and materials
- Enable self-selection of play materials
- Allow children to play for extended periods without interruption
- Allow children to work alone or with others
- Offer flexibility and adaptability



# GOOD FOR KIDS, GOOD FOR THE WORLD

## Whole Kids Monica Meldrum

Monica Meldrum knows a lot about “unjunking”. The founder of organic snack food company Whole Kids has successfully “unjunked” a range of kids snack foods from artificial colours, preservatives, flavours and other added nasties.

Available nationally at Coles, Woolworths and in a range of independent kids venues, schools and airlines, the Whole Kids range has come a long way from the

early days of organic sulphite free dried fruit. It’s a story of almost legendary proportion for this little company that ‘could’. “We started the range in my kitchen before launching at an organic food expo in Sydney. We presented only a handful of commercial samples and mock packaging, but walked away with over 90 orders.”

From there, this St George Banking Group 2015 AusMumpreneur of the year committed herself fully to the idea that she could create a business that supported both the bottom line, the community and

the environment. Today, some 10 years later, Monica, her husband James, and a staff of 12, support 36 individual product lines, local distribution and a growing international market.

Now a local resident and mother to two children aged 6 and 18 months it is surprising to learn that Whole Kids was not the brainchild of a desperate mum. “It was actually participation in an Indonesian aid program in my former role with the Department of Foreign Affairs that inspired me to reassess my career priorities and the

meaning of success. The extent of the need I witnessed amongst the disadvantaged children of Indonesia gave rise to a nagging desire to make a meaningful difference to children’s health and well being.”

An aunt to some 19 nieces and nephews made the issue of accessing safe, nutritional snacks for children familiar territory for Monica, and coupled with her growing resolve to positively impact children’s health, created the perfect storm for the inception of Whole Kids.

With a branding strategy that focuses more on healthy, happy lives than “food”, Monica has built a strong community around the health choices she’s providing for families. “We’ve recently partnered with South Australia Little Athletics to encourage healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. We see ourselves as a company that is so much more than a food brand. Getting behind programs such as Little Athletics is perfectly aligned with our ‘unjunkit’ philosophy.”

But talking to Monica, the range of certified organic snacks that started it all seems to take a backburner to the ethical, environmental and philanthropic aims of her business. “We’re proud to be the first food business in Australia to become a certified B Corporation. We are committed to the belief that purpose and profit can co-exist without having to trade-off one for the other.”

Monica’s purpose is manifest in Whole Kids’ commitment to their Whole Kids Explorer Program, Unjunkit Campaign, Healthy Fundraiser Campaign, and the Small Seeds Community Grants Program. “Small Seeds aims to support grassroots organisations and groups that are working hard in their local communities to improve children’s health and wellbeing through innovative and impactful projects. We’re immensely proud of the projects we’ve supported and the positive changes they’ve made.”

To date the Whole Kids Small Seeds Program has supported programs improving the lives of children in Australia’s detention centres, programs that promote reading as a route out of poverty and a Guide Dogs assistance program to support children with autism.

Their latest initiative to reduce waste from product packaging has seen Whole Kids team up with TerraCycle to create the Kids Pouch and Snack Brigade. This free recycling program provides a second life for Whole Kids food pouches and caps, food bar wrappers, snack food bags and other packaging waste – turning them into carry bags, pencil cases and lunch boxes. “We’re the only company able to recycle our pouch packaging, but it’s important to us that we’re not just the best in the world, but best for the world.”

You can support Whole Kids and their wholesome, wholehearted approach to nourishing and nurturing the world’s children, by exploring their range of certified organic kids snacks where all good food is sold or visit [wholekids.com.au](http://wholekids.com.au).

For an easy, healthier choice for your next fundraiser, visit [www.healthyfundraiser.com.au](http://www.healthyfundraiser.com.au) to learn about Whole Kids school and sporting group fundraising program. With profit margins of 50% a Whole Kids Healthy Fundraiser could be the financial kick-start your organisation is looking for!



## WHAT IS A B CORPORATION?

There are now 70, B Certified Corporations in Australia. B Corporations are a new type of company which use the power of business to solve social and environmental problems.

There are over 1,395 Certified B Corporations internationally across 121 different industries and 38 countries. B Corporations are a diverse community with one unifying goal: to redefine success in business.





## FROM KAZAKHSTAN WITH MUSIC...

### Music Teacher, Pianist, Educator & Composer Natalya Vagner

Natalya's journey so far has spanned four decades and an equal number of continents. But underpinning it all has been a dedication and passion for music that is truly inspiring.

The only child of a German piano teacher and Russian father, Natalya's instruction in music started

with the piano at age seven. A passionate musician, Natalya's mother would spend hours just listening to her daughter play. "From the youngest age, I remember loving to play the piano with my mother. I had the most nurturing education in music."

Born in Kazakhstan (former Soviet Russia), Natalya enjoyed a traditional, classical music education at the Temirtau College. Shortly after graduating, and in the early days

of the Soviet collapse, Natalya left Kazahstan for Russia, in the pursuit of opportunity.

It was a chance encounter in Moscow's first foreign restaurant, located in Red Square that Natalya was given the opportunity to work as an Au Pair teaching piano in the United States. It was there, in Washington DC, that Natalya met and fell in love with her Australian husband.

Moving to Port Melbourne in 1998, Natalya set about establishing herself as a Piano teacher. Walking the local streets each evening, she would distribute flyers offering her services as a piano teacher. On the corner of each flyer, a small hand-drawn piano and Russian church spoke to her heritage and musical education. "It's funny to me now, that little drawing on a flyer I printed myself. But I was determined to teach. Determined to share my love of music."

What has followed is an 18-year love affair with both the Bayside area and teaching children music. For Natalya, teaching music has always been more than just a job. "I fundamentally believe in the importance of music in children's development. I can always find a connection through music. I have been blessed with amazing teachers and mentors during my life. One, Bella a wonderful local Polish piano teacher – encouraged me to do a Diploma in Education so that I could teach music at schools."

Gaining a Bachelors Degree in music, followed by a Diploma of Education from the University of Melbourne, enabled Natalya to establish her teaching career in the local school system. A strong advocate for music education, Natalya has been integral to the development of the music education programs at Glenhnutly Primary School, Albert Park Primary and now Middle Park Primary schools.

Deeply connected to the creative process surrounding music, Natalya's work has now moved away from classroom teaching to the development and facilitation of choirs, ensembles, bands and instrumental groups in our local schools.

A passionate musician and composer, Natalya is a member of the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Choral, accompanist to a German Choir, runs the Community Children's Choir at St Silas, leads a passionate group of women in a Ukulele Club, organises an annual



Musical Community Christmas event at St Silas Church, and now in her greatest organisational challenge to date, runs the 'Mike Brady' School Choral & Instrumental Competition for Primary and Secondary Schools in the Port Phillip area and associated Bay Street Festival Christmas Concert.

But it's Natalya's work as a composer that is now taking centre stage. Her inaugural participation in last year's International Asian Composers League has inspired a collaborative, cross-cultural reflection of her musical journey to date. "I've now spent equal time in both Kazakhstan and Australia, so it's the perfect time to look forward, to look back, and to find my creative expression in the space in between." Planning a visit to Kazakhstan in 2017, Natalya is tracing her roots through a work of music that will explore traditional Kazakh and Australian instruments including the Kobyz, a shaman two-horsehair-stringed instrument and

the didgeridoo. "For me, music is always about the process. That's how I can compose and sustain a love for working with kids. If you focus only on the output, you have missed the essential soul of music."

Natalya continues to teach Piano, singing and composing from her home studio in Port Melbourne.

Teaching students of all ages, Natalya helps budding musicians to find their own creative journey through music. To learn more about Natalya's music tuition go to [www.natashavagnerstudio.com](http://www.natashavagnerstudio.com).



## GIVE YOUR KIDS A VOICE!

Community Children's Choir  
St Silas Church, 99 Bridport St, Albert Park

Open to ALL Primary School Aged Children  
NO experience required/NO audition

Run During School Terms  
Friday's 4pm, \$5/week

For more info. email: [natvag@inet.net.au](mailto:natvag@inet.net.au)





# MOVING LIVES

## Blu Earth Wendy Gillett

Being asked how many chairs you have in your house can seem innocent enough. But coupled with the data on how many hours you've spent sitting in them can be sobering.

With a well kitted-out road bike leaning against the desk in Wendy Gillett's Port Melbourne office, it would be safe to assume that this active CEO cares a lot about health and well being – and spends less time sitting than most.

Founded by Malcolm Freake OAM, in 2000, Bluearth brings a lot of passion to activity and movement. With a staff of 35 nationally, they have delivered physical activity programs to over 330,000 kids in 20% of Australia's primary schools.

But it's the statistics about inactivity that tell the 'why'. As Wendy explained, "one third of our Aussie kids are not meeting the activity recommendations known to be vital to healthy, happy lives. And we're here to change that."

And it takes a big change. Wendy and her team up against a lot, not the least of which are the generational patterns of inactivity, a lack of resources in schools and the cultural and environmental changes in our society. But as Wendy rightly points out "that's where the challenge and the need is."

And Bluearth is meeting the challenge head on. With an extensive range of health promotion resources, teacher-training programs and movement programs, Bluearth is nurturing children to be active everyday so that they can reach their full potential. And in doing so, they're addressing the burden of disease associated with our increasingly sedentary lifestyles.

A philanthropic venture from the outset, the passion of the Freake Family has seen this heavy hitting little non-profit go from strength to strength. With a degree in human movement, and an extensive background in health promotion and advocacy for women's participation in sport, Wendy joined their growing ranks a little over three years ago. "I'm a 'mover' in more ways than one, so the idea of contributing to an organisation committed to building a nation of kids who love to be active, really resonated with me."

Working extensively in urban, remote and rural school communities to engage kids in the joy of movement is now a big part of Bluearth's agenda. "Activity is a great language to engage disadvantaged children and we have the tools and resources required to effect some really meaningful change."

Adopting a unique, evidence-based approach to movement that improves outcomes in academic performance, physical health, focus, concentration, social behaviour and confidence through

participation, not competition – Bluearth is showing students that you don't have to be an outstanding athlete to participate in sport and live a healthy lifestyle.

"We collaborate with government, education, community and the corporate sectors, to deliver our programs, but what really sets our work apart is the reflective practice we build into all our programs. What we aim to achieve is a continuous cycle of reflection, self discovery, and mindfulness for movement – we're seeking an intrinsic change – and a nation of kids that love to move."

In a whole-of-life approach to movement and activity, Bluearth also works with practitioners in the fitness industry, through their Physical Activity Australia division. With shared values and interests, PAA provide support to the sport and recreation sector and through advocacy, are bringing physical activity to the forefront of the health agenda in Government, and the wider community.

If you're one of the two thirds of Aussie adults who don't move enough, or are just looking to move more and sit less in 2016, head over to [www.movemoresitless.org.au](http://www.movemoresitless.org.au) Here you can take the online sitting and household chair calculator test and join a community of like-minded 'movers' in your quest to be more active.

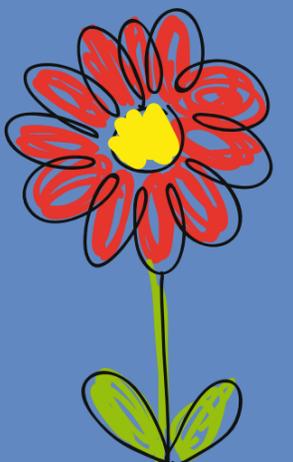
## HOW MUCH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DO CHILDREN NEED?

- Children birth to 5 years should not be sedentary, restrained or kept inactive for more than one hour at a time (with the exception of sleeping)
- Toddlers and pre-schoolers should be physically active for at least 3 hours (spread throughout the day)

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IS ESSENTIAL FOR CHILDREN TO IMPROVE:

- Social & motor skills
- A sense of accomplishment
- What their bodies are capable of
- A sense of self in the world
- School readiness
- Strength, confidence, concentration & coordination
- Attention span
- Life-long healthy habits
- Joy & achievement

[www.movemoresitless.org.au](http://www.movemoresitless.org.au)



# PRECIOUS CARGO



## Lilies Josh Littmann

Anyone with kids knows that while it's fun to get dirty, it's even better to get clean. Operations Manager, Josh Littmann of Lilies Pram Cleaning sees firsthand just how messy life can get for little ones on his daily rounds to collect some of Melbourne's most loved prams and car seats.

Backed by Daisy Dry-cleaning's

world first carbon neutral, chemical free, credentials, Lilies Chemical Free Pram cleaning plays a critical role in an emerging pram cleaning market. As Josh explains, there's good reason to get a professional clean of infant equipment. "Recent studies by Birmingham University shows that children's car seats have twice as many potentially dangerous germs as a household toilet." To tackle the grime, Lilies has developed a safe, effective and easy

way to banish the bugs on prams, infant car seats, highchairs and children's equipment with a 100% chemical free method.

"A Lilies clean is better than 'all natural' or 'safe'. A Lilies clean is 100% chemical because we use the bacteria-busting capabilities of 190°C high-pressure steam. Our cleaning processes leave no toxic or harmful residue and won't stain fabrics or damage the plastic components of your equipment."

An effective antimicrobial heat agent, the steam used by Lilies is capable of cleaning, degreasing and eliminating active traces of bacteria like Enterococcus, E Coli and Staph aureus – and returning prams and car seats to as new condition.

It's a service Melbourne mums love for taming the messes too tricky to tackle with the back yard hose. The convenient pick-up and drop-off service, 48-hour



turn around and the availability of an accredited child restraint installer make accessing the Lilies service as simple as a phone call. "Families love the convenience of our door-to-door service and the assurance that their equipment is being professionally cleaned in a commercial environment. The fact that we're also accredited to reinstall their child restraints after cleaning is a bonus."

With nearly 10 years of experiencing in the dry cleaning industry, Josh didn't expect to find a career path to pram cleaning. A qualified educator, his skills are being put to good use building the Lilies brand and looking to the future. "There's so much potential in the industry, but even in these really early days, we're seeing such a positive response to our service."

Now a frequent visitor to the Port area, the massive blue and pink Lilies van is serving as a mobile billboard and fully equipped cleaning centre for this burgeoning pram cleaning service. "The van is doing its job because we tend to get calls from areas that it's been."

A volunteer at St Kilda based not-for-profit, St Kilda Mums, Josh is inspired by the team of helpers rehoming pre-loved infant goods including prams and car seats. "We're really looking forward to creating more opportunities for Lilies and St Kilda Mums to work together. They're doing such important work for the community."

If your car seat, pram or stroller needs a 100% chemical free clean, please call 1800 LILIES to make a booking. A FREE collection and drop-off service is available in the Port Phillip area Monday to Friday, or you can leave your infant equipment at Daisy Dry-cleaning, 130 Rouse Street, Port Melbourne.

[lilies.net.au](http://lilies.net.au)  
1800 lilies



## NO LONGER NEED YOUR PRAM OR CAR SEAT?

No longer need your Pram or Car Seat?

Established in 2009, St Kilda Mums is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit organisation based in St Kilda. They rehome new and pre-loved baby goods and nursery equipment for families in need. Donations are distributed to families experiencing hardship in Melbourne and surrounding towns through partnerships with maternal and child health nurses and local social service agencies. For more information about St Kilda Mums, please visit [www.stkildamums.org](http://www.stkildamums.org).

Up until June 30 2016, you can drop your pre-loved pram, stroller or car seat at Daisy Dry Cleaning. Equipment in good, reusable condition suitable for donation will be cleaned by Lilies and delivered to St Kilda Mums to assist in their efforts.





# PLAY IN PORT

## Play Central Tony Gaudry

When two self-confessed “house Dads” met in the playground of Albert Park Primary School, they probably didn’t expect to find themselves planning a joint business venture.

Directors of Port’s first indoor kids play centre, Play Central, Tony Gaudry and James McIntosh’s kids were classmates long before their keen business idea was hatched at the school gate. Both former executives in the

finance and commodities sector, Tony and James were no strangers to Melbourne play centres. Doing the rounds of weekend birthday parties in kid-centric centres was a frequent bugbear. But it was a casual conversation at the school gate one Monday morning in 2014 that inspired Tony’s idea to do it better. “It was bemoaning the hours lost at another terrible play centre, that set the whole thing in motion.”

Fast-forward 18 months and the exhaustive search for a property that would meet all of their needs

was finally secured. “Our vision was to be part of the community, we saw no point in being tucked away in an industrial area. The biggest priority for us was to have an accessible location that parents could walk to, catch the tram to, or ride a bike to.” And they’ve certainly achieved that in their Bay Street location. Unrecognisable from its former life as Mitchell Plastics, Tony and James have completed an extensive restoration of the roof and rear of the Play Central building to create a space that is light, bright, clean and capable of accommo-

dating one of the largest indoor play installations in Melbourne.

The 18m by 10m play structure includes a range of play zones from floor to ceiling height. Including a massive webbed climbing vault, ball-pit, trampoline, air guns and enclosed slide with four complete revolutions, the structure is suitable for kids and adults. With universal appeal and a myriad of climbing and exploration opportunities, it is not surprising to learn that one of the most frequent requests is for adult only play sessions!

Describing themselves as ‘kids at heart’ Tony is rightly proud of the vision they’ve brought to life. “We did an extensive amount of research both here and overseas about what works in the kids indoor play space. We’ve created zones for both active and imagination-based play that encourage clean, fun, safe play in a bright and friendly environment.”

And knowing exactly what they didn’t like about play centres provided Tony and James with a laundry list of things that their centre must achieve. High on the list was the absence of caricatures, kid-centric motifs and mascots, and the availability of high quality beverages and food. “We wanted a gender neutral environment that would have equal appeal for parents and kids. The development of our café has been a big part of our business model because we understand just how important that offering is to parents. We have two full time chefs onsite, serve Sensory Lab teas and St Ali coffee, and source all our ingredients from local community providers where possible.”

But it’s what you won’t find at Play Central that is attractive to parents. As Tony explained, “you won’t find any electronic game machines or the ubiquitous claw machines that demand extra-spend here. But most appealing to parents is that you won’t find a jumping pillow or other equipment that can encourage rough play.”

Play Central’s imagination zone including a supermarket, construction zone, animal hospital and book reading nook are popular with children under four. For Tony, this was critical to the development of their centre. “Our overseas research demonstrated a big demand for role based play opportunities. Children can learn critical social skills such as communication, problem solving, and empathy through early pretend play. It is also known to benefit a child’s capacity for cognitive flexibility and creativity.”

With a variety of play options including their very popular indoor dodgem cars, volcano mountain and tunnel slide, and soft play areas for younger children, Play Central can meet the play needs of children aged 1 to 12 years. Party rooms catering for events ranging from 6 to 20+ guests are

also available in a range of themed options to suit. 37 - 53 Crockford St, Port Melbourne

Play Central is open for Play MON-FRI : 9:30am – 5:30pm SAT-SUN : 9:30am – 6:00pm

Casual & Membership pricing is available at [www.playcentral.com.au](http://www.playcentral.com.au)





# KIDS IN THE KITCHEN!

## Itsy Bitsy Chef Deanne Bogusz

For local mother of two and chef, Deanne Bogusz, teaching is a passion that runs deep. The fourth child in a family of nine, Deanne has been cooking for as long as she can remember. "I was a strong student at school, but it just wasn't for me. I was more interested in getting out into the world and really doing something."

That something was solidified by Deanne's father who made it very clear that leaving school in year 11 was dependent on getting a job. Two weeks later, at the tender of age of 17, Deanne had landed a job in a local restaurant as an apprentice chef. "It was hard work, but I loved it. I really found myself in the kitchen."

Often considered a baptism of fire, Deanne's apprenticeship was hard work over long hours, in an indus-

try dominated by men. "I spent all my breaks practising my skills, learning through trial and error. It was a time when you just had to work things out – or you were out."

A born 'teacher', experience had Deanne believing that there was a much better way to bring chef's through the ranks. "I thought there's no reason this can't be different. I love to teach – I can show these young chefs another way."

Taking over 15 years of industry experience into the Tafe sector gave rise to Deanne's greatest passion – watching people grow and develop their skills. But it wasn't until the later stages of maternity leave for her second child that Deanne began to toy with the idea of teaching cookery to children. "I saw the delight my eldest child had in the kitchen and thought, there should be more opportunities for kids to learn real cooking skills."

With quite a few cooking demonstration classes available for young children, the Itsy Bitsy Chef cooking school for children offers something very different. "We offer a skills based program that runs to the school-term. With 16 levels to master, our classes offer kids the chance to get hands-on with foundation cookery skills and food science principles, in a supported environment."

It's a program that focuses on expanding children's food vocabulary, teaching them how to taste, smell and experience food, how to prepare and cut foods safely and correctly, how to roll, knead, pour, mix, sprinkle, sieve and measure ingredients, along with the nutritional properties of foods in a balanced diet. "I want to teach children the life-long skill of cooking and the joy of sharing a table of beautiful food – but at the same time, they're practically applying their maths knowledge, learning how to interpret directions and building their fine and gross motor abilities."

Opening just over a year ago in the Community Centre above Coles in Bay Street, Itsy Bitsy Chef's term-based programs are now complimented by an extensive School Holiday Program, themed cooking parties and a specialised on-site program for childcare providers, kindergartens and primary schools. Deanne is also looking to introduce an advanced cooking program for students ready to master more complex kitchen skills.

And when it comes to kids and kitchen safety, Deanne is resolute; "Kids can't learn what they aren't taught. We teach kids how to handle knives and kitchen equipment safely." Using Australian designed 'Kiddies Food Cutter' child-safe knives, children learn cutting skills that impress even their parents. With stovetop cooking introduced only in the advanced classes, the dishes children prepare are cold, or baked, to ensure child safety in the foundation classes.

But for Deanne, Itsy Bitsy Chef is all about the teaching, "I truly believe that cooking gives children skills and confidence in the kitchen that will last a lifetime."



## SCHOOL HOLIDAY COOKING PROGRAMS

Get creative with cooking in the school holidays! With hands on experience and learning, children aged 4-13 get the opportunity to work through foundation cooking skills while having fun in the kitchen. Holiday programs fill up fast so be quick to secure your place!

### School Holiday Program Times

Wed & Fri: 9-1:30pm (2 sessions + 30 min break)  
Thurs: 1-5:30pm (2 sessions + 30 min break)

### Place

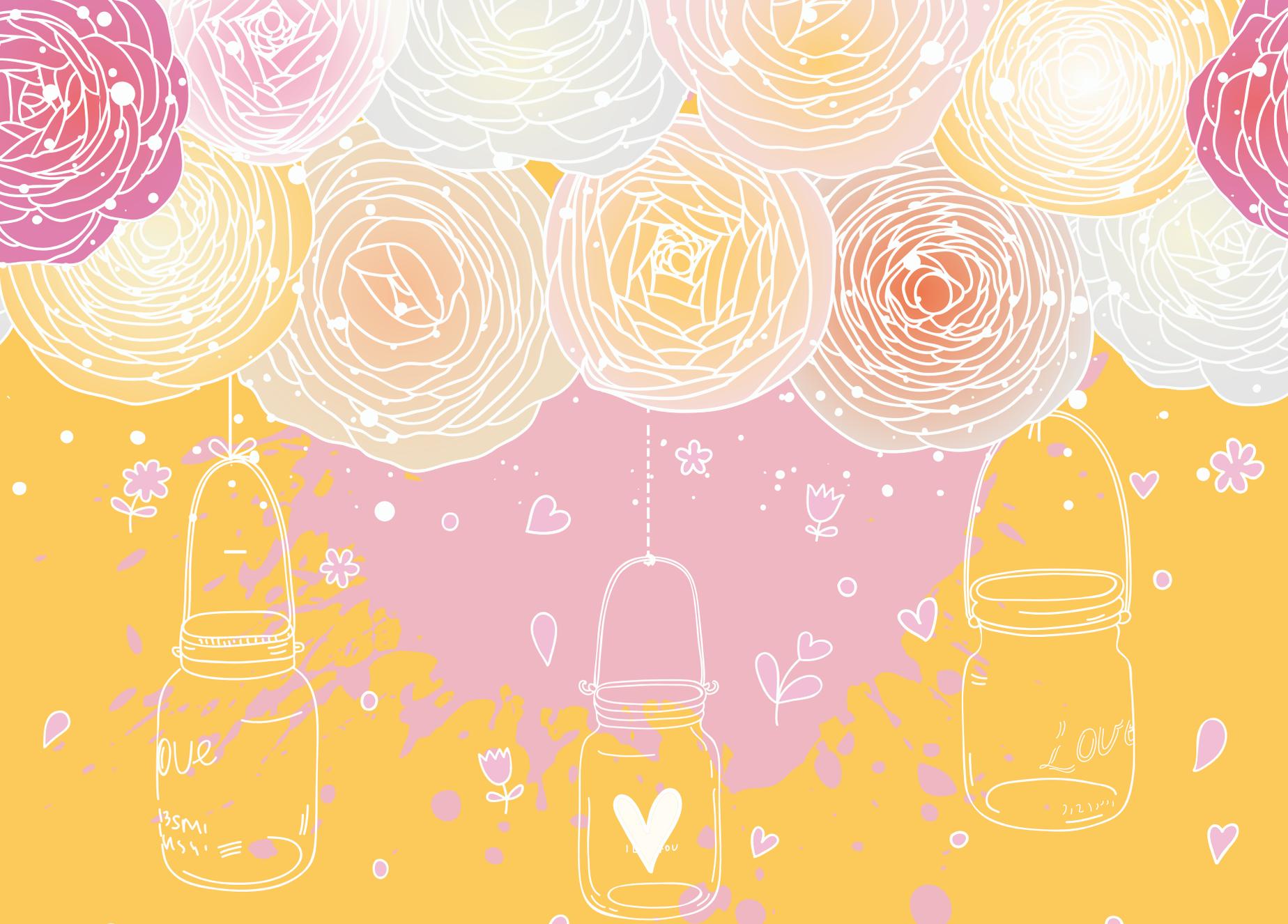
147 Liardet Street, Port Melbourne

### Cost

\$30 for one session or \$60 for both sessions.

For more information call Deanne on 0425 745 784 or go to [www.itsybitsychef.com.au](http://www.itsybitsychef.com.au)





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Pod, Seven AM, The Graham, Noisette, Pizzingrillo and the PMBA.**



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