



ST ANTHONY'S FAMILY CARE HEART MATTERS

Easter 2024



A Message from our CEO



Dear Friends,

It is so hard to believe Easter is already here, it feels like just yesterday we were ringing in the New Year. As we bid farewell to the scorching summer days, I couldn't help but notice the early darkness creeping in, signaling the imminent end of daylight savings and the arrival of cooler weather. Our summer was a whirlwind of excitement at Figtree Early Learning Centre and Disability Services programs.

From splashing in water play to enjoying ice blocks, our little ones soaked up every moment of the warm weather. And for our Disability Services, it was all about picnics in the park, refreshing swims, invigorating bushwalks, and seaside fish and chips – making memories that will last a lifetime.

As we welcomed back existing families and welcomed new families to Figtree, at the start of the year, the energy is full of positivity and excitement as we are able to establish rooms with appropriate age groups and enjoy the additional space. Reopening the centre in the new year allowed us to increase services and operate under our full licence of 86 children per day. This required the appointment of additional staff to support the increased number of children per day. We have been very fortunate to appoint several new staff and room leaders to provide positive learning environments for our little ones at Figtree.

Our successful recruitment process has helped to ensure continuity in providing the best care to the children. We are committed to maintaining high standards and look forward to continuing our partnerships with families and the community and creating positive and enriching experiences. The journey wasn't without its challenges, though.

After enduring significant storm damage in 2021, our Early Learning Centre underwent months of refurbishment, culminating in a fresh start for 2024. Despite the hurdles, we're thrilled to welcome back familiar faces and embrace new families with open arms, energised by the expanded space and our talented new team members.





In late December, SAFC Disability Services underwent the rigorous National Disability Services external audit, a testament to our commitment to excellence. We emerged with flying colours, demonstrating best practice across all areas, and reaffirming our dedication to quality care and participant empowerment.

As we dive into the new year, our Forge Day program for young adults continues to flourish. The Forge program is approaching its third year of operation and it is wonderful to see so many school leaders attending the program. The program is specifically designed for 16-to-25-year-olds for whom further education or employment is not an option. It's incredible to witness the growth and enthusiasm of our participants as they embark on a journey of social engagement and lifelong skill development.

St Anthony's Family Care continues to exist and grow thanks to our various supporters who are so dedicated to the work that we do in supporting children and young people with disabilities to be the best versions of themselves.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the exceptional team at Les Clefs d'Or NSW (Concierge Society) for their unwavering support over the past two decades. Their dedication shines through as they actively champion SAFC through various initiatives, including organising fundraising raffles during the tourism expos they host.

This invaluable partnership provides SAFC a platform to showcase our work to diverse audiences and raises crucial funds to bolster our services. I extend a special thank you to Ros Jackson, whose enduring commitment as a volunteer, despite retiring years ago, continues to enrich our cause.

With each passing day, we're filled with excitement for the adventures that lie ahead at SAFC. I can't wait to share more stories of our journey with you as the year unfolds. Until then, I wish you all a joyous Easter filled with peace, love, and gratitude for your unwavering support of St Anthony's Family Care.

Warm Regards,

Joanna Najdzion
Chief Executive Officer



Hugo's Starting to Thrive

Our St Anthony's Family Care Journey has just begun, but already it has become a beacon of support and warmth for our son Hugo. The community has embraced us wholeheartedly, providing a nurturing environment that we know is perfect for Hugo. It's been a life changer for our family.

At the start of 2023, Hugo began attending Figtree Early Learning Centre based on numerous glowing recommendations regarding its exceptional support for children with additional needs. The decision came after we noticed Hugo struggling to meet developmental milestones compared to his peers.

We sought help from physiotherapists and chiropractors when he was just nine months old, receiving exercises to aid his development. However, it was not until Hugo turned one and underwent assessment at an early diagnosis clinic that we received the devastating news: he had mild to moderate spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy.



We were advised that this was something that would affect Hugo for the rest of his life and would require extensive therapy on an ongoing basis. This news was extremely devastating for my partner and I as this was something we never expected. We were worried that without help we wouldn't be able to give Hugo the full scope of care he needed to get the best start in life.



We'd heard so many horror stories about families enrolling their children into centres ill-equipped to support children with special needs. So we were determined to find an inclusive, secure, and reliable daycare for Hugo. Following Hugo's diagnosis in March 2023, the team at Figtree stood by us every step of the way, adapting their care to align with Hugo's condition and evolving routine. He now undergoes physiotherapy twice weekly and occupational and speech therapy once a week.

We still have a long road ahead of us, but despite his challenges he is a curious and resilient child. Nothing stops him from wanting to learn and we couldn't be more proud.



His gross motor skills have shown remarkable improvement, as he can now transition from lying down to kneeling up! Our current focus is on enhancing his ability to stand and walk with the assistance of a walker.

Our time at Figtree has already yielded significant progress. Hugo's fine motor skills have flourished, bringing him on par with peers his age. The staff at Figtree are not only welcoming and supportive but also receptive to feedback, providing us with regular, insightful updates on Hugo's progress. Their eagerness to learn new techniques and strategies to aid Hugo's development reassures us that he is in capable hands.

Since joining Figtree, Hugo has expanded his vocabulary and eagerly anticipates daycare. Hugo is always excited to see his daycare friends and get warm hugs from his favourite educators. His love for learning shines through activities like painting, playing in the sandpit, and singing.

We are confident that Hugo will thrive under the attentive care of St. Anthony's. We look forward to seeing how Hugo develops in the warm and caring environment provided by Figtree!

– **Anna** (Hugo's Mother)



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**Thank You for your support in helping
children with disabilities to reach their
greatest potential...**

**...Wishing you all the
blessings of a peaceful and
safe Easter Season.**

HAPPY EASTER



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provide your feedback:**
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A collage of two images. The top image shows a young boy with glasses and a grey t-shirt, smiling and holding a red and black motorcycle. The bottom image shows three speckled Easter eggs (yellow, white, and light blue) on a wooden surface.

A photograph of three speckled Easter eggs resting on a light-colored wooden surface. The eggs are yellow, blue, and green, each covered in small, dark brown speckles. A small portion of a fourth egg is visible in the bottom left corner.

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