



the infants' home
CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

each child, every opportunity • Autumn 2017

HAPPENINGS

Donors and Supporters • Thank you from The Infants' Home to those who help make our work possible

Arianna's Story A rare disease journey

Arianna (Ari) was born with medical and developmental concerns, and spent her first seven weeks of life in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). Following extensive testing, doctors suspected Sotos syndrome: a rare genetic disorder affecting 1 in 14,000 people, characterised by distinctive facial features, overgrowth in childhood, and learning and physical developmental delays. Despite these challenges, Ari has shown remarkable resilience, and her family are full of hope for her future.

Ari's early months were a worrying time for her family. Following her stay in NICU, Ari underwent a barrage of tests, but doctors were still unable to find a correct diagnosis. Ari's parents, Heather and Alberto, spent their days driving from one appointment to the next to explore her range of symptoms. As months went on, Ari was hospitalised several times with severe respiratory illness, exacerbated by low muscle tone and an inability to cough effectively. Ari's development was delayed, and she experienced sleep apnea and hyperinsulinism. At just 8 months old, Ari survived emergency surgery to treat accumulated liquid around her heart. Ari's parents were overwhelmed by her need for 24/7 care, frustrated by the continuing mystery surrounding her condition, and concerned that her sister Erica was not receiving the attention she deserved.

Heather first became aware of The Infants' Home (TIH) when she met Vinsensia (Vin) Christanto, director of Murray House, at a fundraising event with our charity partner Westfield Burwood. Heather worried that Ari's additional needs (for example, being tube-fed) would prevent her from participating in childcare, and Vin explained that TIH provides childcare as well as a range of early intervention and health support services to children with additional needs. During the intake and orientation process, TIH staff worked collaboratively to develop a family support plan to manage Ari's needs. For example, our maintenance officer, Maté, designed supportive seating for Ari with a custom-made footplate and padding (her low muscle tone leads to fatigue when supporting herself for long periods); and TIH's Early Childhood Health Consultant, Meryl Burn, worked with the allied health team and Murray House educators to ensure that her needs would be met.

Arianna joined Murray House early this year, and has not looked back. Her focus educator, Yi, has trained the team in Ari's tube-feeding routine. At 1 year old, Ari's condition remains undiagnosed, and she receives multiple therapies each week. Despite these complexities, Ari's family are looking forward with positivity and strength, ready to deal with whatever the future holds. Ari is now sitting up by herself, and even preparing to crawl. Heather is excited that Ari is receiving the support she needs and is able to be with other children, and looks forward to spending more time with Erica and having the opportunity to go back to part-time work.



Arianna is a happy little girl, despite the challenges she faces every day

“When I found out that The Infants' Home could accommodate children with special needs, I was completely overwhelmed.

I actually cried at the idea that I could put her in day care, as I never thought I could do that. Caring for a child with special needs 24/7 can get you down. I can be more patient, and a better mum when I am with her, if I have the variety of something like work in my life. Having suitable childcare makes this possible.”

HEATHER, ARIANNA'S MOTHER

You can help ensure the continuation of our programs for vulnerable children and families.

To donate, please use the form on the back of this newsletter, visit theinfantshome.org.au or call 02 9799 4844.

Thank you.



Farewell to Anita Kumar

This year we have farewelled our beloved CEO, Anita Kumar, who maintains her passion in children's services with a new role in the sector. Anita worked at The Infants' Home for 17 years. In her 6 years as CEO, Anita built an inclusive staff culture; greatly raised our profile and forged strong relationships in business, philanthropy and government. This helped ensure support for our existing services as well as vital expansions, and was pivotal in determining our participation in think tanks and policy formulation. Anita was a lynchpin in ensuring the successful completion of the Stage 1 Early Learning and Care Facility which increased our service capacity for children and families by 30%. Anita leaves The Infants' Home in great shape and greatly enriched by her achievements. We wish Anita every success in her new role and know that she will do a superb job.



Anita Kumar and Denise Taylor;
L-R: Jenny and Ray Craigie, Cilla Barrand and Anita Kumar



The Infants' Home wins national award for Excellence in Building Inclusion

The Infant's Home is thrilled to have won the Excellence in Building Inclusion category of the HESTA Early Childhood Education & Care Awards, announced at the 2016 Early Childhood Australia National Conference. Judges said: 'The team at the integrated early learning childhood education service were awarded for their holistic approach and innovative strategies to embed and promote inclusion across the entire organisation'. HESTA and ME bank (who supported the award grant of \$10,000 towards publishing a booklet about inclusive practices) kindly provided a morning tea and monster cheque to celebrate this win with some of our team (pictured above).

We learn on Wangal Land

For several months, the children of Gorton House have been learning about the traditional owners of The Infants' Home site, the Wangal people. With help from educators, the children composed a song honouring Wangal Country. This song has become a favourite. The children eagerly sing this song every day, many seeking to sing it frequently with their friends, and singing it at home so much so that now some families know it off by heart.



Nicky Roditis, Early Childhood Teacher at Gorton House, with Gorton Preschoolers

*We live on Wangal land
We play on Wangal land
Every day we come together and learn on Wangal land*

*Thank you Wangal land
Thank you Wangal land
Thank you Wangal people for sharing your land*

A video of the children singing the song has been published on Facebook, viewed over 28,000 times and shared over 200 times to reach more than 64,000 people.

Visit from the Honourable Sarah Mitchell MLC



L-R clockwise:
Sandra Cheeseman, Joan Wilson, Leslie Loble, Lynn Farrell, Sarah Mitchell

In March we had a visit from the Hon. Sarah Mitchell MLC, Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education. Ms Mitchell was joined by Leslie Loble, Deputy Secretary, External Affairs and Regulation at the Department of Education

and Communities. Ms Mitchell toured our early education and care facilities and was eager to learn about our innovative approach to integrated services and early intervention.

Introducing our new CEO, Elizabeth Robinson

After a comprehensive, competitive recruitment process, the Board has appointed Elizabeth Robinson to be the new CEO of The Infants' Home. Elizabeth's career in early childhood education and care spans twenty years. For 14 years she promoted quality assurance in early childhood services at the former National Childcare Accreditation Council. From 2012-2017 Elizabeth was CEO of the Australian Institute of Training and Development. A passionate advocate for children, Elizabeth has long admired The Infants' Home for the collaborative way in which families in need are supported. Elizabeth believes "Children and families experiencing disadvantage need assistance. The Infants' Home is making a real difference through its integrated model of service delivery which provides families with a holistic, responsive approach." In April, Elizabeth met staff at a welcome morning tea. She said, "I am delighted to have been appointed to the role and look forward to working together to ensure the future success of The Infants' Home." We hope you join us in welcoming Elizabeth to The Infants' Home when she commences with us on Monday 3rd July.



Our new CEO Elizabeth Robinson (centre) with Joint Acting CEO's Joan Wilson (left) and Lynn Farrell



the infants' home
CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

The Infants' Home is a leading provider of:

- early childhood education and care,
- early intervention and
- clinical health services for children from birth to school age.

Each year we provide services for over 2,600 children and their families. One third of these services are directed to children and families with additional physical or emotional needs, or those living in vulnerable circumstances. For 142 years The Infants' Home has been a dynamic and innovative organisation, championing the rights of children, women and families.

Our services include:

- Early Childhood Education and Care centres
- Family Day Care
- Supported playgroups
- Parent education and family support
- Postnatal Clinic
- Allied Health Clinic
- GP Clinic

Our programs are funded through Government, Trusts, Foundations, Corporations, local clubs, business and donors.

Donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible.

Please see donations form overleaf.

Established 1874

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Leaving a bequest to The Infants' Home will ensure that each child is given every opportunity to reach their full potential.



Professor Jenny Harasty, Principal Doctor of Child Think

Our new onsite allied health community clinic is now up and running

Our Allied Health clinical services onsite in Ashfield have been expanded to address an identified gap in service provision. The new Clinic operates in partnership with established allied health agency Child Think Pty Ltd, and provides a number of professional services including occupational therapy, speech therapy, developmental assessments, and clinical psychology. **To make an appointment or to find out more information, see www.childthink.org or call 0419 636 613.**



TIH's new kitchen facility

New Kitchen Completed March 2017

Fit out of our new kitchen facility is now complete! The ability to manage and control our own menus is a critical part of providing freshly prepared, nutritionally balanced meals for over 400 children every week, and this new facility will enhance our nutrition education programs and help us better support children with complex nutritional needs. The kitchen is located in our main reception building and will be operated by our long term friend and community partner Wests Ashfield Leagues Club. Stay tuned for news of the official opening date!

Follow us on Facebook

To keep up to date on news and events at The Infants' Home, we invite you to follow us on Facebook here: <https://www.facebook.com/theinfantshome/>

How you can help

Every contribution helps a child. If you would like to support us, please send this form with your donation to:

**The Infants' Home, 17 Henry Street, Ashfield NSW 213
ABN: 71 174 918 661**

Yes, I would like to make a difference to children and families.

Please accept my gift of:

\$50 \$100 \$200 \$500
 Other \$ _____

Please find enclosed my:

cheque/money order OR please debit my Visa Mastercard

Number:

Signature _____

You can donate online, visit www.theinfantshome.org.au and click on the 'Donate' button.

Yes, I would like you to debit my credit card \$ _____ per month.

Expiry date /

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone (H) _____

(M) _____

Email _____

Yes, I would like to give a lasting gift. Please send me information on leaving a bequest.

Yes, I would like to know more. Please send me information about your services.

Donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible. A receipt will be issued or all donations. The Infants' Home respects your privacy. We do not disclose personal contact information without permission.

Please remove my name from your mailing list.

Police officer visits Wangal Playgroup

Children, parents and carers at our Wangal Playgroup had a visit from Constable Lisa Latu from Ashfield Police this month. Lisa spoke about child transport safety and emphasised the need to have pram and child restraints to suit

your child's age and size. Constable Latu explained how important it is to keep your letterbox locked and to check/clear your mail regularly to help protect against identity fraud, especially if you live in units with lots of letterboxes out the front. Children were intrigued to meet a police officer, and were curious about how handcuffs worked. It was a very interesting playgroup session!

Constable Latu with Wangal Playgroup children and parents



Exceeding National Quality Standards

The Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), is the governing body for all early childhood facilities across Australia. They regularly conduct assessments to ensure standards against the National Quality Framework (NQF) are being met. We are very proud to say that Johnson, Gorton and Murray Houses were all assessed as Exceeding National Quality Standards, with Johnson House achieving the highest possible rating of Excellent. The seven categories by which all Australian early education and care centres are measured include education programs and practice, children's health and safety, staffing arrangements, relationships with children, collaborative partnerships with families and communities, leadership and service management.



Patricia Tang and Robert Carbonaro

A Gift in Loving Memory and Thanks

The Infants' Home thanks Inner West locals Robert Carbonaro and his sister Patricia Tang, who visited us in late 2015 to provide a kind bequest on behalf of their mother Mrs Carbonaro. Mrs Carbonaro had spent time in an orphanage as a child, and wanted to recognise the critical role organisations such as The Infants' Home play as key providers of education and care for young children and their families and carers. We thank Mrs Carbonaro for her gift to help us continue to fulfil our mission of providing each child every opportunity.

Would you like to leave The Infants' Home a Bequest?

A bequest allows you to leave an enduring gift and ensures your legacy of care and concern lives on through our work with children and families. The Infants' Home relies on the generous support of people who make donations and bequests. A gift in your Will can help us continue our work to give each child every opportunity. **For more information on how you can leave a lasting legacy, please call Anne-Marie Byrne on 02 8719 5002, email abyrne@theinfantshome.org.au or visit <http://www.theinfantshome.org.au/how-you-can-help/leave-a-bequest>**

