

The FREE Newsletter of South Eastern Community Connect



# South Eastern *Families* Connect

Feb 2020



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newsletter by  
emailing  
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**Plan your party  
like a hero**

-

**What we did for  
a school  
destroyed by fires**

*Connection, wellbeing and quality of life.*

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## Contact us

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Find us on Facebook  
and Instagram at  
[secc.sydney](https://www.facebook.com/secc.sydney)

## Welcome!

What a summer it's been.

Our country has faced one of its worst natural disasters yet.

And in the face of the fires, our people have rallied together like never before.

While Australia Day holds so many complexities, the day gave us a chance to honour the hard work of so many.

Their tireless efforts offered a reason to both grieve our losses and celebrate our wins.

This issue, we share how SECC took action to help a school destroyed by fires, partnering with a sister neighbourhood centre in the NSW north coast (see page 5 for the story).

It was moving to see so many children in our Vacation Care

programs write cards and donate coins for those in crisis.

It was also lovely to see the community get behind our bushfire fundraiser in January.

Every coin and note donated will go directly to Manning Valley Neighbourhood Services, which will distribute it to Bobin Public School this month.

Thanks for partnering with us...

Alison Leader, Editor.



## Meet the team



The amazing Tania Rakchaev

Say hello to Tania! She's the multi-tasking hero behind our Food Services Team and Toy Library. Tania is your person when it comes to borrowing from the toy library or organising fresh produce boxes for seniors who need a helping hand.

## Four ways you can be the single parent they need

**T**here are now close to a million single-parent families in Australia, making up over 10 per cent of all households.

Single parents take on the role of sole caregiver, lunchbox-packer, band aid-applier and tear-dryer.

They face a special set of challenges, and handling children's negative behaviours is one of them.

*SheKnows* writer Lori Pace has five tips for making discipline run more smoothly (And no, the solution is not to yell louder!).

### 1. Put the kids to bed early

You'll get less attitude and bad behaviour if your kids sleep really well. Ensure they sleep a full nine to 10 hours, depending on their ages. This also gives you a much-needed break before bedtime.



### 2. Ask for help when you need it

Do you have neighbours or friends you can call when you're totally 'done'? We all need a back-up for when we reach our tipping point.

### 3. Forgive yourself (again)

Single parents often feel guilty about snapping or reacting without patience. But we need to learn to forgive ourselves. We all make mistakes, and when we're the only ones in the house to handle every detail, it's bound to happen.

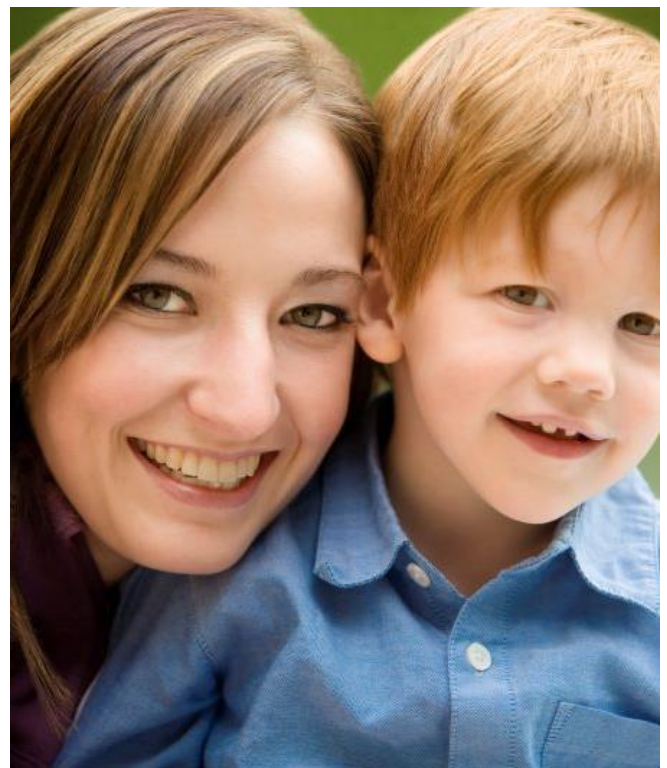
### 4. Trust your instincts

Everyone has an opinion they're keen to share. But when it's about you and your kids— and your life — you have to trust your inner parent and do what's right for you.

As we learn to deal with our children and their boundary pushing, we realise the best discipline comes

from a confident person who understands that correcting behaviours is truly for the good of the child.

Sure, we get confused, second-guess ourselves, and feel frustrated we're alone dealing with some of their growing pains. But if we know we're giving them structure because they need it — not to make our day better — then it doesn't matter if we don't have a partner. It only matters that our kids have *us*.



# Parents *only*

## Have you browsed our toy library yet?

Our online toy library allows you to look at over 500 toys in 19 categories in the comfort of your home and then email what you want to hire for the next day (pick-up at Mascot). Toy Libraries allow you to test new toys without buying them, and therefore save you money.

For more info head to: [bit.ly/toylibrarymascot](http://bit.ly/toylibrarymascot)



## Get moving with \$5 Park Fitness

We run Park Fitness classes every Monday (4pm) and Thursday (5.15pm) in Eastlakes Reserve, behind Eastlakes Shopping Centre. Our personal trainer shows you how to use the park equipment and tailors the program to your fitness levels. \$5 per person Call 8338 8506 to put your name down.

Eastlakes Reserve, Evans Ave



## Join our sewing classes for parents

Learn to make or repair clothes, hem uniforms and sew basic projects.

- **Beginner Classes:** Tuesdays 9am to 12pm during term time.

Where? 1007 Botany Rd, Mascot

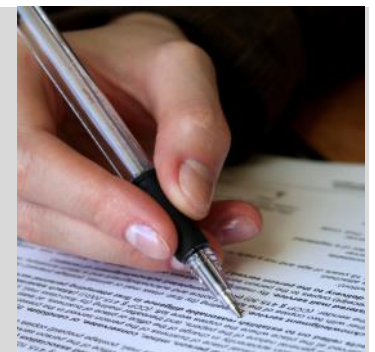
Cost? \$100 a term



## Need help with your paper-work?

Are you having trouble filling out official forms and applications? We can help you understand the process, guide you through, and help you submit your official documents. Call 8338 8506 to book.

Monday to Thursday by appointment.



## Get out your green thumb in Mascot

If you enjoy gardening, or want to learn more about it, join us each Wednesday from 2-4pm at The SECC Community Hub garden. It's a great (free) way to have fun, and little ones are welcome. Please bring a hat, gardening gloves and any seeds you might like to plant.

Where? 1007 Botany Rd, Mascot



# Making a difference

## SMOOSH kids rally to help a school destroyed by fires

### **Angry. Sad. Lost.**

These are just some of the feelings Aussies have been experiencing with the devastating bushfires.

It's easy to feel helpless, but we decided to start by helping a fellow neighbourhood centre in NSW's Manning Valley.

Fires wiped out homes and much of the region's beloved 136-year-old primary school in Bobin.

Many staff and students had homes lost or damaged.

So we asked our SMOOSH Vacation Care kids to design artworks and collect cash to send to the school (pictures below).

We also ran two pre-loved toy sales at The SECC Community Hub in Mascot in late January, raising several hundreds of dollars in funds for the region.

It can be hard to find practical ways to help Aussies affected by the fires, especially when they live so far from us.

But in our little corner of the woods, we're doing what we can.

***If you'd like to help Bobin Public School rebuild, call Alison on (02) 8338 8506 or email [commsmanager@secc.sydney](mailto:commsmanager@secc.sydney) for bank transfer details.***



For more on our after-school programs, call Anthony on 0415 816 866.

## How to plan their birthday party without losing your mind

Keen to throw a party for your little one but daunted by the prospect?

**Catherine Schulte** shares her guide for planning the perfect celebration.

**T**he new year brings a fresh round of children's birthdays.

My own birthday always creeps up on me and surprises me at the last minute.

But with children's birthdays, we don't have the luxury of throwing last-minute parties.

So with this in mind, I've decided to share my personal guide for planning your kid's special celebration.

It will help you track the planning at each stage of the process.

And the result?

A party that doesn't send you bonkers!

Enjoy—and I hope it helps you.

### > What to do three months' out

**1. Set the date, and don't change it.** I decided on my daughter's 2nd birthday party date back in December even though it isn't till March.

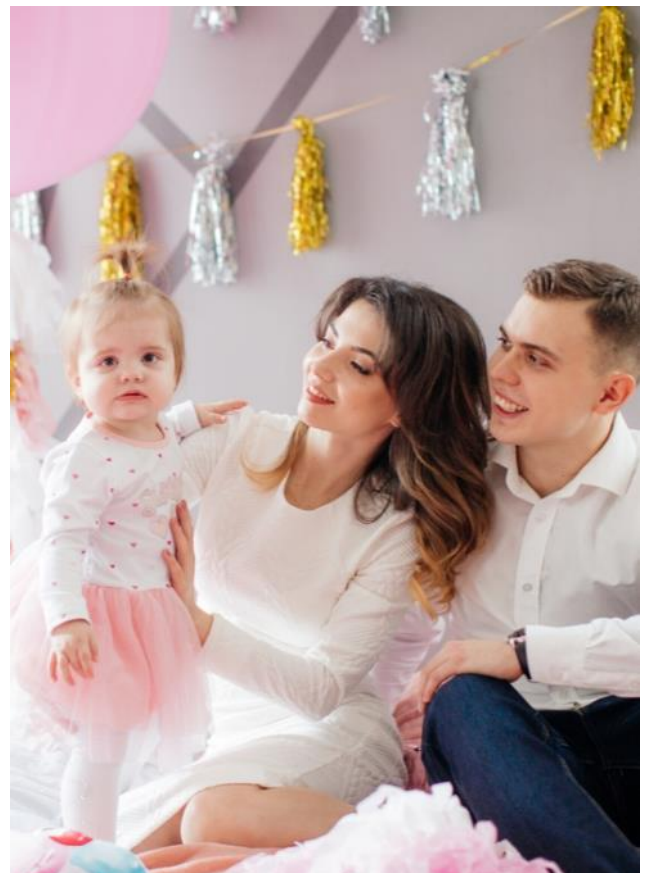
This has given me time to let family and friends know to save the date. It also alleviates disappointment. You don't want a stack of declined invitations because you've left it too late.

Also, by setting the date early, you can set a budget for the party - and stick to it.

If you know roughly how many are coming, you can spread the costs out over a couple of months. This

has made a big difference to us while we've been a one-income family.

**2. Budget.** You need to plan how much you want to actually spend. Poor planning equals mounting expenses, wasted resources, and sometimes, panic-buying. This can be difficult to overcome down the track.



**3. Write the official guest list.** This is important. You've already let friends and family know, but make sure you record who you've told and who's said yes or no.

## > What to do 2.5 months' out

**Book a venue.** When you know your rough number, you can book a venue. Some places have long waiting lists, so you may need longer than this. Some council venues also need bonds paid well in advance, so factor this in.

Keep in mind that you can't book most parks, so plan for someone to arrive there early to secure your spot.

## > What to do two months' out

**Invitations** should already be ready by now, and sent six weeks' in advance. The invite formalises the occasion and gives them an RSVP date. As nice as some invitations can be, don't overspend on them. There are some terrific websites that can make invitations to your budget and taste. And remember to include a place for listing allergies on the RSVP form.

If you know your **party theme** and it isn't available in retail shops, you may have to order it online or make it yourself. Leave at least one or two months to allow yourself time to make or order items.

**Cake ordering.** Order it early, especially if the birthday falls around peak wedding season. Know what you want, and your budget, before you make the order.

## > What to do one month out

**1. Menu planning.** Ensure your menu is kid- and allergy friendly. Knowing allergies will make catering much easier. Stick to the basics for the kids, and have some adult food too. Know your suppliers and their pricing, and compare to save.

## 2. Keep a track of your RSVPs

**3. Prep the outfit.** You might have an outfit in mind for your little one to wear on their big day. Start shopping, sewing or ordering at this point to have it ready in time.

## 4. Remember the loot (or lolly) bags.

If you're ordering online, nab them one month out.

## > What to do three weeks' out

1. Keep track of RSVPs and any allergies
2. Make sure the outfit is in progress
3. Write up the menu
4. Confirm the cake order



**Plan ahead and avoid a stressful birthday party.**



# Life smarts

## > What to do two weeks' out

**1. Shopping.** Buy and store non-perishables to break up your expenses. This also reduces potential waste from panic-buying. If you need extra, you can always buy more of what you need without paying top dollar.

### **2. Organise a photographer.**

Choose someone to take photos - and videos. And plan for a camera to use. If you want a professional, book them well in advance.

**3. Order food** such as fresh food platters or salads with at least a week's notice. Be prepared to pay a deposit or the full amount.

**4. Venue deposits.** Bonds are usually due about one or two weeks' before the event. Make sure the venue is secured and check on any outstanding fees.

### **5. Confirm the birthday cake**

## > What to do one week out

**1. Chase up anyone** who hasn't RSVPd with a phone call. They may have forgotten or didn't receive an invitation.

### **2. Confirm the photographer**



## > What to do in the last few days

1. Cake prep (if not ordered)
2. Final decoration check
3. Final guest tally with any allergies
4. Venue check
5. Outfit check

## > What to do the day before

1. **Panic!** (just kidding)
2. Is the cake ready to go and stored appropriately?
3. Buy and store any remaining fresh food
4. Pack the decorations
5. Print out the final guest list
6. Pack back up clothing for your child. Accidents happen.
7. Pick up the keys for the venue if needed
8. Pack up non-perishables
9. Have a plan ready for set-up, cake and play.

## > What to do on the big day

1. Pack perishables
2. Arrive at the venue earlier than the guests to set up.
3. Set up at least an hour prior if you can. Some venues are quite strict on the timing, so you want everything ready to put out.
4. Have a table or area for gifts. You need to decide whether you're going to open them there or take them home first. I like to do thank-you cards, so I take gifts home and write down who gave us which gift so I can reflect that in my card. Plan extra storage in your car to get the gifts home.
5. **Enjoy** the rest of the day. Job well done!



# Five minutes with Alison...

## Cabbage Patches, K-mart and Colour Runs...

**Want to know us better? We're kicking off 2020 by telling you what makes us tick. To start with, we're spending five minutes grilling SECC's Newsletter Editor and Communications Manager Alison Leader.**

### **1. What's your role at South Eastern Community Connect (SECC)?**

I handle outgoing communications and implement our marketing strategy. I've been in the role since September 2018, and I love it.

### **2. What do you enjoy about your job?**

I love the people. I've never worked with such a calm, caring and skilled team. I also love the creative elements of my job. Copywriting is my passion, and I love telling the story of SECC across a range of mediums.

I also enjoy promoting all the incredible programs we run. Drumming for Wellbeing is awesome if you haven't tried it already.

### **3. What was your first-ever job?**

My first official part-time job was in Customer Service at the Sydney Aquarium. I was the first staff member in history to break the intercom system on my first day.

### **4. Which store would you max out your credit card in if money was no object?**

K-mart of course!

### **5. What was your favourite toy as a kid?**

I longed for my first Cabbage Patch doll for a whole year. 'Adopting' her in Christmas 1988 was the best moment ever.

### **6. Do you have any phobias?**

I'm claustrophobic. I don't enjoy MRIs, closed tube water slides, or cramped underground car parks.

### **7. What are three things still left on your bucket list?**

To visit San Francisco with my family; to graduate from my second Bachelor's degree; and to do The Colour Run with friends. I hope it comes to Sydney again soon because I'm in!

Alison Leader, Communications Manager  
*Photo by Bec Maw Portraits.*



***Watch this space for more Five Minutes With... interviews in 2020.***

# Classes and workshops

## Playgroup fun ahead

*We'll offer a range of supportive, expertly run playgroups at 10am weekdays in 2020. Join us!*

### **Mondays**

SECC Community Hub, 1007 Botany Rd, Mascot

### **Tuesdays**

Eastlakes Public School, 7 Florence Ave,  
Eastlakes

### **Wednesdays**

Hall 1, Kensington Park Community Centre,  
Kingsford

### **Thursdays**

The Tote Building, Green Square,  
100 Joynton Avenue, Sydney

*Playgroups run from 10am to 12 noon during term time, from week 2 of each school term.*

Call 0421 741 866 or email  
[familysupport@secc.sydney](mailto:familysupport@secc.sydney) for more info.



## ***Need a bit of extra help?***

We offer Family Case Management assistance to families who need a little extra help. Call 7903 0607 to find out how we can support you.

## **What else is on offer?**

- CPR & First Aid for Babies and Children: 13/2, 19/3, and 7/5.
- Cost: \$20
- Regular parenting workshops such as Triple P, PlayPower and Dads & Bubs Bonding: [bit.ly/SECCprograms](https://bit.ly/SECCprograms)



# Classes and workshops

## What's on in Mascot?

We have a great line-up of programs at The SECC Community Hub, starting this month.

**Sewing Lessons for Parents** kicks off on Tuesday 4th February from 9am to 12 noon.

Our **Community Gardening Project** is on Wednesdays from 2pm to 4pm.

We also have a **Community Kitchen** on Thursdays from 10am to 12 noon (as well as a **Youth Cooking Program** from 5pm that day).

We offer a **Tutoring Program for Secondary Students** on Wednesdays from 5.30pm to 7pm. And if your teen is interested in developing their **Poetry and Writing** passion, we're running hands-on workshops on Thursdays from 5.30pm to 7pm. Or they might try **Yoga-inspired Stretching** on Mondays at 4.30pm.

**Visit [bit.ly/SECCprograms](http://bit.ly/SECCprograms) for all our programs, or call 0421 741 866.**



## Parenting skills sorted

Our workshops empower you to be the parent you really want to be.

Sometimes implementing small changes can make a big difference.

And we have a range of courses to help you face daily parenting dilemmas.

Our **1-2-3 Magic** course starts on 10th February; our **Dads & Bubs Bonding and Play Power for Dads** courses kick off on 22nd February; and our **Early Communication Workshop** runs on 27th April.

**Call (02) 7903 0607 for more info, or head to [bit.ly/SECCprograms](http://bit.ly/SECCprograms)**

**SECC Community Hub, 1007 Botany Rd, Mascot**



# SMOOSH News

## Sayonara Summer...

*Summer is almost over, and we've had a ball. Two of our SMOOSH services ran dynamic Vacation Care programs for a whole host of kids. Here's a snapshot of some of the fun we had.*



## Making the holidays count

What a summer it was. We ran a dynamic Vacation Care program at schools in Eastlakes and Bankstown, and the kids loved it.

Activities included:

- A Christmas disco party and BBQ
- Go-Karting with Kiddie Kartz
- A visit from the Fire Brigade
- Movies at Hoyts EQ
- A puppet-making workshop
- Wizzy World at Frenchs Forest

# SMOOSH News

- Wannabees Play Centre
- Archie Brothers at Alexandria
- SkyZone
- Jumping Castles
- Go Banana at St Marys... and much more!

If you're keen to book your child in for our next school holiday program, call Anthony on 0415 816 866 or email him at [childrenservices@secc.sydney](mailto:childrenservices@secc.sydney)

- Please note within our fee review, all excursions and incursions additional costs are included in CCS. Families can claim this amount on their Centrelink rebate.



## Setting up camp in Campbelltown East

South Eastern Community Connect is expanding its education services even further and taking on a sixth school.

Campbelltown East Public School is the location for our new SMOOSH service in Sydney's south-west.

We're excited to see what this new service will mean for the school and the community nearby. We pride ourselves on high-quality before- and after-school care, as well as excellent vacation care programs for all school-aged kids in the local area.

**To find out more, contact Anthony on (02) 8338 8506 or 0415 816 866.**

# SMOOSH News



## WE CAN HELP

- Problems paying a fine?
- Dealing with mounting debt?
- Need help with a neighbourhood issue?

Why not seek legal advice from Kingsford Legal Centre (KLC) at our Eastlakes office?

You can chat with a solicitor from KLC every Wednesday between 10am and 12 noon.

Where? South Eastern Community Connect - Shop 84, Eastlakes Shopping Centre

Make an appointment on 02 9385 9566

*By appointment only*

[www.klc.unsw.edu.au](http://www.klc.unsw.edu.au)

[www.secc.sydney](http://www.secc.sydney)



## Want to be seen on these pages?

*South Eastern Community Connect* distributes its Families and Seniors Newsletters to 3000+ people in south-east Sydney each quarter. Why not advertise your business right here and reach locals quickly and effectively?

We're now selling prime advertising space at a special rate in our May, August and November editions. **To find out more, call Alison on (02) 8338 8506 or email [commsmanager@secc.sydney](mailto:commsmanager@secc.sydney)**



South Eastern  
Community  
Connect

Have you got your bus licence?

## WE'RE HIRING DRIVERS

Work with South Eastern Community  
Connect to keep locals moving.

Volunteer and paid casual positions available.

[www.secc.sydney](http://www.secc.sydney)

**Call Kate  
Skinner now:  
8338 8506**

## February to April, 2020

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>Toy Library</b> Hire &amp; return 9.30am to 4pm The SECC Community Hub</p> <p><b>Mascot Supported Playgroup,</b> 1007 Botany Road, Mascot 10am to 11.30am</p>	<p><b>Eastlakes Supported Playgroup</b> Eastlakes Public School 10am to 12pm</p> <p><b>Nature View Walks</b> 9.30am to 10.30am Starting at The SECC Community Hub</p>	<p><b>Toy Library</b> Hire &amp; return 9.30am - 4pm The SECC Community Hub</p> <p><b>Kensington Park Supported Playgroup</b> Kensington Park Community Centre 10am - 12pm</p>	<p><b>Green Square Supported Playgroup</b> Green Square Community Centre, 3 Joynton Ave, Green Square (entry via Port- man St) 10am to 12pm</p> <p><b>CPR &amp; First Aid for Babies and Children</b> 13 February, or 19 March, or 7 May</p>	<p><b>Toy Library</b> Hire &amp; return 9.30am - 2.30pm The SECC Community Hub</p> <p><b>Social Art Group</b> 10am to 12pm</p>	<p><b>Dads &amp; Bubs Bonding FOLLOWED BY Play Power for Dads</b> 22, 29 February &amp; 6 March 10am to 12 noon, then 12 noon to 2pm The SECC Community Hub</p>
<p><b>1-2-3 Magic Parenting Course</b> 10, 17 &amp; 24 February The SECC Community Hub</p> <p><b>Park Fitness</b> 4pm, Eastlakes Reserve</p>	<p><b>Meditation</b> 11am to 11.30am The SECC Community Hub</p> <p><b>Sewing Lessons for Parents</b> 9am to 12pm</p> <p><b>JP Service</b> 3.30pm to 4pm by appointment only</p>	<p><b>Community Gardening Project</b> 2pm to 4pm</p> <p><b>Drumming for Wellbeing</b> 6pm to 7pm The SECC Community Hub</p> <p><b>Free Tutoring for Teens</b> 5.30pm to 7pm</p>	<p><b>Park Fitness</b> 5.15pm, Eastlakes Reserve</p> <p><b>Poetry &amp; Writing Workshops</b> (for people age 12-25) 5.30 to 7.30pm</p> <p><b>Community Cooking</b> 10am and 5pm (12 to 25)</p>		

**Programs and classes run during school terms only. To book, go to [bit.ly/SECCprograms](http://bit.ly/SECCprograms) or call (02) 7903 0607**

SECC Head Office: Shop 84 Eastlakes Shopping Centre, Evans Ave, Eastlakes.

SECC Community Hub: 1007 Botany Rd, Mascot.

Tel: 8338 8506

Tel: 7903 0607