



PO Box 615
Carlton South VIC 3053
hestaawards.com.au

 @HESTAECawards

Media release 8 September 2014

Waterloo program for vulnerable pre-schoolers wins national award

A NSW team of educators, who developed a model of service delivery to build secure relationships with vulnerable children, has won the Advancing Pedagogy and Practice Award at the 2014 HESTA Early Childhood Education and Care Awards.

The team — from KU James Cahill Preschool — won the award for its long-term commitment to developing a specialised program for children with challenging behaviours.

The program provides these children with an emotionally secure base, increases parent involvement and has the added benefit of increasing staff retention.

KU James Cahill Preschool Director, Gianna Black, said the team of educators built up a new model of service delivery over 13 years, that's based on building connections with children and viewing their behaviour as a way of communicating their relationship needs.

"We introduced a structure called 'Playspaces' that sets up the right conditions to build secure relationships with children," Ms Black said.

"At key times in the day, staff are physically still so they are easy for the children to find and they are emotionally still or calm so they are available to take in the children's feeling."

The program builds partnerships with parents by showing them what staff do to support their child in building play skills and how this can be further developed at home.

"Over time, this structure has supported educators to make a profound shift in how they think about and respond to the children's behaviour.

"In turn, connection with protective adults builds up the children's sense of safety, reduces aggression and emotional collapse, and fuels their efforts to explore and learn."

HESTA CEO, Anne-Marie Corboy, presented Ms Black with the Advancing Pedagogy and Practice Award during a dinner in Melbourne on Saturday 6 September 2014.

"We are honoured to recognise this team who have made a huge difference to the lives of vulnerable children," Ms Corboy said.

The KU James Cahill Preschool team received \$10,000 to further implement their program, courtesy of long-term HESTA awards supporter, ME Bank.

"The prize money will allow us to make a series of videos demonstrating key aspects of the program in practice, which can be shared with other centres and parents," Ms Black said.

The Excellence in Building Inclusion Award winner — Barkly Mobile Preschool in the Northern Territory — and Outstanding Young Graduate Award winner, Sonya Nedovic from the Royal Children's Hospital Education Institute in Victoria, each received a \$10,000 grant from ME Bank.

ME Bank CEO, Jamie McPhee, said, "We're proud to continue our support of the HESTA Awards program, recognising the tireless contribution of individuals and organisations in health and community services."

HESTA is the super fund for health and community services, with more than 785,000 members and \$28 billion in assets. More people in health and community services choose HESTA for their super.

To learn more about the 2014 winners and finalists visit hestaawards.com.au

MEDIA CONTACT: Luisa Saccotelli 0400 149 901 or Aileen Muldoon 0419 112 503.