

Private Capital



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CANBERRA LIFE AS WE KNOW IT



Letting the light shine in

Community cafe connects and engages people with dementia

SIX-YEAR-OLD Alexa Yeo is helping 76-year-old Manny Vasiliou make some Christmas decorations while across the room, four-year-old Tom Powick is helping 82-year-old Nancy Michaelis do the same.

"You see the very old and the very young coming together. They work very well together," Nancy said.

They are all enjoying some Christmas spirit at the first Community Cafe in Canberra, a place where people who have been diagnosed with dementia engage in meaningful activities and experiences. They meet up regularly with the children from a local childcare centre to take on fun tasks together and then finish off the session with some yoga, mindfulness and meditation.

The first local Community Cafe was founded by registered nurse Nicole Smith, who spent a decade working in aged care. The cafe is hosted at the Burrangiri Aged Care Respite Centre in Rivett. The children visit from the nearby Noah's Ark centre. A second cafe for early onset dementia or



Manny Vasiliou and Alexa Yeo (above) and (below) Tom Powick and Nancy Michaelis. Pictures: Karleen Minney

recently diagnosed people is also held at Beyond Q bookstore in Weston.

Ms Smith is passionate about helping to foster caring communities, ensuring people with dementia are not left socially isolated. The cafe is a safe place for people with dementia - and their carers and their family - to relax and be themselves. "We don't talk about dementia unless someone wants to," Ms Smith said.

Local businesses sponsor each cafe gathering so it can be free for the participants. "Everyone I approach says, 'Yes'. I'm blown away by the generosity," she said.

Ms Smith is hoping for funding to spread the model throughout Canberra. "It's a chance to meet others, enjoy social activities and have a great day out," she said.

Burrangiri day centre manager Ashley Carrington said she had cried with happiness to see the effect the Community Cafe on participants.

"They talk more, they're a lot happier, they're more engaged," she said.

The children have also grown to love their outings and even write letters to their older friends between visits to let them know how much they miss them.

Ms Smith intends to publish research next year on the impact of the Community Cafe on dementia patients as part of her Masters studies in gerontology (the study of old age).

More details at communitycafe.com.au

TODAY IN HISTORY

- 1859** The first Queensland Government ministry is appointed.
- 1913** Leonardo Da Vinci's painting *Mona Lisa* is recovered in Florence, two years after its theft from the Louvre in Paris.
- 1930** The "world's first milk bar" is opened in Sydney by Clarence and Norman Burt.
- 1991** Boris Yeltsin wins landslide approval in Russian legislature for his new Commonwealth of Independent States.
- 2000** The US Supreme Court reverses the Florida Supreme Court's order to begin manual recounts of presidential votes in certain counties; Al Gore concedes defeat to George W. Bush.

BIRTHDAYS

Gustave Flaubert, French author (1821–1880); **Edvard Munch**, Norwegian artist (1863–1944); **Frank Sinatra**, US singer-actor (1915–1998); **John Osborne**, English playwright (1929–1994); **Dionne Warwick**, US singer (1940–); **Bill Nighy**, English actor-comedian (1949–); **Brenton Broadstock**, Australian composer (1952–); **Monica Attard**, Australian journalist (1958–); **Jennifer Connelly**, US actor (1970–); **Regina Hall**, US actor (1970–); **Mayim Bialik**, US actor (1975–); **Craig Moore**, Australian soccer player (1975–); **Dan Hawkins**, UK musician (1976–); **Daniel Merrett**, Australian Rules footballer (1984–).

TRIVIA

1. Which of the Brontë sisters wrote the novel *Agnes Grey*?
2. Who directed the 1958 film *Vertigo*, starring James Stewart and Kim Novak?
3. Which landlocked West African country was previously known as the Republic of Upper Volta?
4. True or false: hurricanes only start over water?
5. In what national park is Thredbo, a popular skiing area?
6. Kasseri is a type of what food?
7. Ophidiophobia is the abnormal fear of what creatures?
8. For which 2003 film was Naomi Watts nominated for an Academy Award for Best Actress?
9. What colour ball is worth the most points in a game of snooker?
10. On what part of the body would you wear a capuchon?

ANSWERS: 1. Anne 2. Alfred Hitchcock 3. Burkina Faso 4. True 5. Kosciuszko National Park 6. Cheese 7. Snakes 8. 21 Grams 9. Black 10. Head

Unique gifts at Canberra potters' fair

THE Canberra Potters Christmas Fair is now on until December 21.

It's at the Watson Arts Centre in Aspinall Street, Tuesday to Sunday, from 10am to 4pm.

The fair is a chance to find a truly unique handmade gift made by one of

the talented, local artisan potters and ceramicists.

Emerging and established makers have work in the fair. Participants include Ingrid Adler, Robyn Booth, Georgina Bryant, Maryanne Devey, Lea Durie, Sue Hewat, and Lucy Ings.

Thoroughbred Park backs green energy

NEW solar panels have been installed atop the betting ring at Thoroughbred Park.

The Canberra Racing Club reckons the cut in its carbon emissions will be the equiva-

lent to 22.5 cars being taken off the road per year, or 1754 trees being planted.

Tesla electric car charging stations have also been installed. The overhaul

included switching from traditional light bulbs to more sustainable LED lighting, cutting maintenance and billing costs by up to 75 per cent, the club said.