

# Senior Mandarin Storytellers project



## Project overview

The Craig Family Centre in Ashburton identified that many seniors attending the centre were grandparents assisting in the care of preschool children. Some had recently arrived from countries such as Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong.

The seniors came to the centre to drop off their grandchildren for children's activities, and it soon became clear that the seniors did not have much social support for themselves.

The Participation for CALD Seniors Grants Program provided Craig Family Centre a grant of \$5,000 to engage with isolated Mandarin speaking seniors and develop a Senior Mandarin Storytellers Project.

Thirty seniors participated in the project.

## Project description

The project enabled isolated seniors to connect and participate in a children's storytelling and playgroup program.

Mandarin-speaking seniors were able to share their culture, language, skills and knowledge with other families and preschool children.

The funding enabled the centre to hire a Mandarin-speaking facilitator to engage with the grandparents, undertake training and teach them the art of sharing stories with young children.

## Project model

- The Craig Family Centre identified isolated seniors through the families attending programs at the centre as well as through local connections with programs and services. Networks such as the Maternal Child and Health Service, Volunteer Resource Centre, Chinese Mother Goose Program, Chinese Community Social Services, Interfaith Network, Melbourne Christian Chinese Church, and Samarinda Ashburton Chinese Friendship Society helped us to identify Mandarin-speaking seniors who may be socially isolated.
- A Mandarin-speaking facilitator was hired to deliver training to the seniors, covering key elements of the early years learning framework and learning principles, tips for sharing stories with preschool children and early child development play.
- Once the seniors were trained, they were able to lead storytelling sessions at the Craig Family Centre.
- Storytelling Sessions were scheduled on a weekly basis for two hours and operated during school term hours.

## Budget

Total project cost	\$5,090
--------------------	---------

## Project challenges

None reported.

## Project outcomes

- Isolates seniors were identified, connected and engaged in regular activities.
- The project provided an opportunity for seniors to meet other seniors and converse in their primary language.
- The project connected seniors with community education and parenting approaches.
- The project created an opportunity for seniors to share their knowledge with families and young children attending the storytelling playgroup sessions.
- The project helped to foster and strengthen intergenerational and community connections.
- The project provides sustainability beyond the funded program period.
- The project connected seniors to other services.

## Project sustainability

The Craig Family Centre is able to support and continue the Senior Mandarin Storytellers Project beyond the funded period by using volunteer Mandarin-speaking seniors. The senior storytellers are keen to keep volunteering their time at the centre and share their stories with the young people.

The success of the project and demand for more story telling sessions has enabled the centre to offer a second weekly Seniors Mandarin Storyteller's session and engage more isolated seniors.

The community networks established through the project continue to promote the program within the local community.

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 9096 7730, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email [Seniors Projects](mailto:seniorsprojects@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <seniorsprojects@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

© State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services February, 2019.

Available at <[www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/toolbox](http://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/toolbox)>