

Gardening for
Recreation,
Occupation &
Wellbeing

Cheerio Newsletter





Painting the Cafe Kevin mural was a KHG community effort.

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Front page image: Jeanette, Peter and Lizzie - members of donor Nan Aron's family.



It was great to see so many members of the KHG community gather for the opening of Cafe Kevin.

CEO Report

**Dr Josh Fergeus,
Chief Executive Officer**

Thank you to participants, families and carers for working with us to transition smoothly into 2024. Please read correspondence from our Client Services team regularly for updates and requests and contact them if you have any questions or concerns.

I'm thrilled to report that we've officially launched Café Kevin at our Doncaster site. The program has been running well under the guidance of Senior Trainer Julie Bates supported ably by Georgia Brown. I am a weekly customer and I am looking forward to having Café Kevin as an option across more days of the week in months to come. Please visit for a coffee or a toastie on a Wednesday or Thursday and say hello to the Café crew.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the enormous contribution made to KHG over more than 10 years by Georgia Tracy (GT) who has moved on this month. Georgia commenced with KHG working on the development of the first therapeutic horticulture conference in Australia, now an annual event of some significance. She has held a number of roles with KHG over the years including working as a Trainer in the Grow Program before serving for several years leading our Marketing and Fundraising area as a member of the KHG Leadership Team. I know I am not the only one to have greatly enjoyed working with Georgia over the past six and a half years. She will be greatly missed but we wish her the best in the next chapter of her professional life.

Client Services

Anita Mitchell
Manager - Client Services

It seems somewhat belated to be wishing everyone a Happy New Year as the year is well and truly in full swing here at KHG. Several staff and participants were so eager to return that the cheerful sounds started almost as soon as the new year had begun.

In the GROW program we have been trialling our new seasonal framework based programming and there have been many lively discussions about composting and food growing. A plethora of summer vegetables has been harvested from various participants' gardens – I do hope that you have been able to taste some of the wonderful produce.

Participants on each day have their own bed and recently there have been many discussions around what vegetables to grow for winter. It has been very rewarding for staff to have the input from so many participants!

Although we haven't welcomed many new participants to the program over summer, it has been wonderful to have some of our Teenagers transition into the post school core program. Roger and Jonas are now quite entrenched in the program, moving seamlessly to a full day on site. Toby has also moved from the Saturday morning group into the core programme. It is a delight to see young folk grow up and continue on their learning journeys post school, here at KHG.

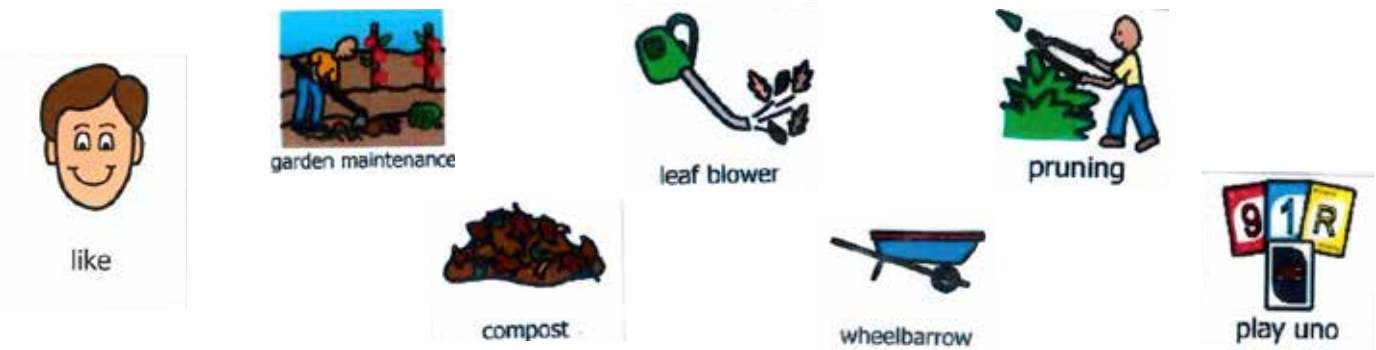


Enjoying home grown tomatoes for lunch.

We haven't had any new staff join us over the period but have been delighted to offer several staff permanent roles at KHG. Concurrently our trainer Dan and his partner Michele have welcomed their own addition in the form of baby Bruce! I'm sure Dan will share more once he has returned to work.

While summer is often a period of great growth in the garden, it is a time to regroup here at KHG and the year has certainly begun that way. We have once again opened up for new referrals and the Client Services team is working their way through a long list of those who have expressed an interest in joining the program. If you have friends of family who are interested please let them know!

2024 is shaping up to be an amazing year and for that, once again, my thanks to our team of extraordinary staff. I am looking forward to seeing where we go this year.



Some of the visuals we used for supporting expressing likes/dislikes and communication boards.

Therapeutic Supports

Brenna McIntyre
Manager - Therapeutic Supports

I'd like share with you an excerpt from a letter of thanks we received regarding our Speech Pathologist, Rachel Fletcher. It is from PhD candidate Megan Dennis, and her supervisor Dr Jo Watson, Speech Pathologist and Senior Lecturer, Disability and Inclusion from Deakin University.

They wanted to pass on their appreciation for Rachel's Communication Support provided during the data collection period of some research they have been undertaking.

Megan has been undertaking the data collection component of her PhD on the benefits of Therapeutic Horticulture for Autistic Adults/ adults with Autism at KHG since 2022.

The doctoral study aligns with professional goals Rachel has at KHG, of Communication Accessibility for all participants, through increasing awareness of the benefits of Supported Communication and providing training and upskilling to staff in these methods to be used within our programs more broadly.

"We wanted to write to you about the great experience we have had working with Rachel Fletcher and to acknowledge her contributions as part of the PhD research process, particularly with the photovoice data collection and individual interviews that have just been completed. As you know, it has been my hope to make the research as accessible as possible to as many participants as possible. Through the Advisory Group meetings, it was suggested by staff to get in touch with Rachel for any insights she might have to support participants with various communication needs.

Rachel has gone above and beyond to support the research by developing visual communication boards specific to interview questions and themes, supporting participants within the interviews and data collection activities, and providing insight into communication styles and meanings – all of which has meant a much more robust and inclusive data collection process with participants with limited verbal communication.



L-R: Potting up Australian Natives; Seed Library ready to welcome our community.

Peppertree Place

As always in summer, Peppertree Place has been buzzing with activity, and plenty of growth! Our gardens have needed lots of watering, despite some days of heavy rain, as this summer's weather extremes also brought sudden hot and windy days.

The weather changes are a good reminder that the most important piece of equipment in the garden is you - the gardener! Being sun-smart, taking breaks, and staying out of the sun where possible is really important. And getting outside early in the day to complete garden tasks, before it gets too hot.

We've had good crops of tomatoes, zucchinis and pumpkins, although Cat facing on the tomatoes has been a factor, again likely due to our changeable weather. Our beautiful glass gem corn is getting quite tall and we look forward to another bountiful crop. Flowers have been busy blooming too, especially the Helichrysum / Paper daisies, and we've seen some huge and impressive Hollyhocks.

Thanks to all the potting and growing work by participants, and a generous donation of several trays of beautiful native plants from Merribek Council in December, our plant nursery has been very well-stocked over summer.

Visitors to the Peppertree Place Nursery and Cafe have particularly enjoyed using our new seed library, with some users generously giving a donation as a result. Participants collected seed on site from plants they have grown and made the seed packages, the team built the library from recycled materials. Sorting and preparing seeds, and decorating the envelopes for the seed library, has been a good activity for hot days when we need to stay indoors.

Come and check out our garden and nursery and swap some seeds too. Rear, 512 Sydney Rd, Coburg. The Nursery is open Monday to Friday 9:30am-2:00pm. The Cafe is open Tuesdays and Thursdays. 9:30am - 1:30pm.

Nursery News

Patrick Wain

Coordinator – Therapeutic Horticulture

Once again, summer didn't initially turn out to be the sunny, warm time of year we were expecting. The unusually wet and cold November, December and January had us spending more time inside, undercover and rugged up than usual. But on the days the sun has been out it's been glorious!

Not only that, the extra rain has given the garden a burst of life and colour and given it a headstart to survive the drier, hotter days in February. If only the weeds didn't benefit so greatly as well.

Our participants have spent a lot of time preparing their veggie beds with summer crops, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchinis and more. Over the past few weeks there's been an abundance of food harvested, including tomatoes which finally started to turn red. We've had a few interesting issues with tomatoes – namely Catfacing and Sunscald. These conditions are both probably the result of our strange and unpredictable weather this summer. Fruits with Catfacing are still edible, but Sunscalded fruits are not.

In the nursery we've benefited over 2023 from the amazing work of our 'Nursery Hands'; participants who have expressed a desire to practice their customer service and nursery management skills by taking on responsibility of working in the nursery for half a day each week. Given the positive outcomes from this, we're expanding it in 2024 and seeking expressions of interest from any participant who would like to



do it. It's a great opportunity to spend a morning in the nursery each week under the direct supervision of trainers and the Therapeutic Horticulture Coordinator to learn skills relating to customer service, stock management, nursery maintenance and more.

We're also excited to say that the GROW Glen Eira program is continuing for another 2 years. This successful program has run for several years in which participants, residents of Glen Eira City aged 15-35 with disabilities or mental health challenges, have been developing their skills in plant care, garden maintenance and customer service. We are actively recruiting for new participants in the program to start soon, so if you know anyone interested please let them know they can find information and apply at kevinheinzegrow.org.au/programs/grow-glen-eira, or by emailing info@kevinheinzegrow.org.au.

Cafe Kevin launch



Above left: Manningham Mayor Cr Carli Lange opening Cafe Kevin; right L- R: Angharad Neal-Williams (mural illustrator), Lisa Jones (Manager, Doncaster East & Templestowe Village Branches, Bendigo Bank), Cr Michelle Kleinert OAM (Manningham), Rob Curtain, Secretary, Kevin Heinze Grow Committee of Management, Mayor Cr Carli Lange, Georgia Tracy (Marketing and Fundraising, Kevin Heinze Grow), Cr Anna Chen (Manningham), Cr Deirdre Diamante (Manningham). Below L-R: Georgia Tracy; Lisa Jones and Georgia Tracy, Nadine Inman (Administration, Kevin Heinze Grow).

On Wednesday 14th February 2024, we celebrated the official launch of our new café at KHG Doncaster with the Mayor of Manningham Carli Lange and special guests in attendance. It was great to see so many members of the the KHG Community gathered for a morning tea to celebrate the special occasion.

Café Kevin, in all its painted glory is now a reality, training participants in café and barista skills, basic food handling and safety and customer service. We are open to the public from 10am – 1.30pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays with more opening days coming later in 2024. We would love the opportunity to serve you coffee or lunch so please visit us soon!

Run Melbourne for KHG



You're invited to join KHG staff, Committee Members, participants and community members in raising money to support our important work.

This year KHG will be a Run Melbourne charity partner. It's a wonderful opportunity for our supporters to be involved in something fun and meaningful. You can support us by registering to participate in the 5, 10 or 21 kilometre events on Sunday 21st July 2024, which can be completed by walking, running or wheelchair.

You don't have to be a committed runner to take part, and any level of fitness is accommodated. There's even plenty of time to train!

We've got some very special Kevin Heinze Grow Run Melbourne 2024 t-shirts now on sale which can be ordered for \$30 for delivery in early July ahead of the event. Passionate supporters who commit to raising \$500 or more can apply to be one of our VIP Superstars and receive a free t-shirt, registration, post-race massage and more!



Why not get together a team of walkers to enjoy the traffic-free streets of Melbourne? Or start training for your personal best run time? Be sure to register now to take advantage of early bird pricing. If you're not up to taking part we'd love it if you supported our walkers and runners by making a donation at runmelbourne24.grassrootz.com/kevin-heinze-grow

Thank you for supporting KHG!



Scan here to register and raise funds for KHG.



Seasonal Recipes

Do you have summer garden surplus? Here are some simple recipes to make the most of your labours in the garden.

Scandinavian Cucumber Salad



Ingredients

1 large cucumber, thinly sliced
 4 tbs white wine vinegar + extra vinegar
 3 tbs water
 1 tsp salt
 1 tsp sugar
 Small handful dill, roughly chopped

Method

Mix the 4 tbs vinegar, water, sugar and salt and pour over the sliced cucumber, stirring gently. Allow to sit for about 3 – 4 minutes – the cucumbers will release a lot of liquid. Then drain off about half to three-quarters of that liquid and add a little extra vinegar, and season to taste. Sprinkle over the dill and pack down to ensure the cucumbers are submerged in the liquid. Gently stir when you're ready to serve. Delicious as a side dish to chicken schnitzel or grilled salmon, or haloumi.



Georgia B's Chilli Sauce

Ingredients

1 cup of chopped chilli – de-seed if you like a milder sauce
 1/2 of a 400g tin of tomatoes
 1/4 cup / 60g sugar
 1/4 cup / 60ml white wine vinegar
 Salt to taste

Method

Add the chilli, sugar, salt and vinegar to a saucepan and stir over a medium to high heat until sugar and salt are dissolved. Increase heat to high and cook for a further 10-15 minutes stirring occasionally until the mixture thickens a little. Remove from heat and blend until you get your desired consistency. Pour hot sauce into hot sterilised jars immediately and seal. Sauce will keep in a cool place for many months. Refrigerate after opening.

Parent Carer Survey

The results from our 2023 Parent/Carer Survey are in. Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey.

Survey results show that 69% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their family member/KHG participant is feeling more confident in their abilities, and that they are improving in their ability to manage negative emotions, 77% agreed or strongly agreed that they were receiving value for money by spending their NDIS

funds with KHG, and 58% that they were improving in their understanding of social cues in different situations.

Potential areas for improvement include the cleanliness and presentation of our buildings and facilities (3.9 out of 5 stars) and information provided to families about participants time at KHG (3.8).

See the full report on our [website](#).

Welcome and Farewell

We are delighted to welcome Meagan Walls to the KHG team as Grow on the Go Trainer. Meagan is working with the GOTG team 2 days a week.

A big thank you and farewell to Luke Frizon who has left KHG to pursue his passions in the music industry.

Georgia Tracy (affectionally known as GT) has been an instrumental in the growth of KHG for more than 10 years. She has been a key contributor to the development of many programs and initiatives. Her passion, dedication and creativity exemplifies the Kevin Heinze Grow philosophy. She will be greatly missed. Thank you GT!

Dates for the Diary

Labour Day Public Holiday

Both sites closed for the Labour Day
Public Holiday Monday 13th March

Easter Public Holidays

Good Friday 29th March
Monday 1st April

Run Melbourne (KHG fundraiser)

Sunday 21st July

KHG Spring Celebration

Saturday 12th October

Follow KHG on Facebook and Instagram for all the latest news and updates from Kevin Heinze Grow.

 @kevinheinzegrow

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