

# Zoom in on...

The changing shape of families, and in particular women's role in society and the economic need for women to engage in paid work, has meant that child care has become one of the most valuable services for Australian families. We interview Leanne Rebgetz, an energetic and positive entrepreneur who has built one of the region's most respected childcare centres.

You only have to meet Leanne to see that childcare is a passion!

Like all working mothers, Leanne has balanced a busy business and home life with a husband and three children. From an early age, Leanne was sure of her vocation. While studying her Bachelor of Education (childcare), Leanne started her own home care business, with a dream of designing, building and operating her own unique childcare business.

Unique Unicorns Childcare Centre on Blackhawk Boulevard in Kirwan and is the daytime home of over 100 Townsville children. Established in 2004, Leanne's vision for the Centre was to create a practical and progressive business, that was also innovative and industry compliant to enhance the positive experiences of children, and their parents. Well, it's clear that she has indeed achieved this goal.

In the initial stages of designing

of the centre, Leanne worked closely with both architects and builders. "We designed a centre with a practical layout that encompassed large rooms and extra-large outdoor play areas" says Leanne as children and staff buzz about their activities. The rooms are spacious internal play areas incorporating large windows for extra visibility between rooms, a feature that any parent would appreciate. "Unique Unicorns was built beyond industry standards, with quality equipment and staff that ensures positive outcomes for each child" Leanne proudly declares. And it is clear that this centre layout has been specifically build to measure with the highest standards to combine with the prime location and large land base on Blackhawk Boulevard.

In essence, it's difficult to describe Leanne's infectious personality and positive influence on the daily operation of the centre. The lovely thank you notes



## Unique Unicorns

and gifts that line her office attest to the many delighted parents that have passed through her centre. Not only that, she is one of those rare individuals in the childcare industry that is committed to the highest standard of care, with her purpose being the overall development and education of the child. As most parents of small children would say, "she deserves a medal!", and everyone agrees that Leanne and the centre are truly 'unique'.

On a day-to-day basis, Leanne's role predominantly involves developing the curriculum and preparing, implementing and supervising age-appropriate activities, maintaining a safe, fun, healthy environment for the children and importantly maintaining daily communication with parents, both verbally and with written reports. "Our staff work in partnership with parents to enhance the early childhood experience of each child at the



centre – we all feel that this provides the foundation for quality childcare,” Leanne states.

With freshly painted walls and refurbished interior, Leanne and her staff are determined that the centre is the best it can be at all times. There is also a constant supply of new play equipment and an ongoing rigorous maintenance program for lawns, gardens and general repairs, reassuring parents and staff that this is a centre where the children and their education are of the utmost importance.

All parents are educated on the centre’s policies, in particular to assisting and supporting any child that requires special care. “We have taken social responsibility to the next level by collecting dog food for the RSPCA, and also donating a van to a local charity that distributes food to the city’s homeless” affirms Leanne, “and the centre makes a monthly financial commitment to support the food van, as it’s the only one operating in the city. I’m really proud to be able

to contribute this way.” This van that Leanne speaks about is operated by a team of volunteers and has expanded into delivering food hampers for needy pensioners. This operation is remote from the centre, however it has now expanded with the support of grants and local businesses to purchase another van.

Owning an established childcare centre has been a dream fulfilled for this vibrant business woman, who plans to focus on further developing health, education and behavioural development of each child, as well as nurturing their family and social relationships away from the home.

As families face the mounting pressures of our modern life with challenges of lower incomes, limited language skills, physical and mental illness, Leanne and her staff at Unique Unicorns Childcare Centre are a critical link in the circle of care.

“If you're doing something you care deeply about and if you believe in it, it's impossible to imagine not trying to make it great.”

Robert Kiyosaki

