

# Vườn lên

## *Facilitating friendship, belonging and achievement for young Vietnamese people*



### **What is Vườn lên?**

Vườn lên is a pilot program being offered by the Vietnamese Families Special Needs Group and Extended Families Australia. It offers support to young autistic people of Vietnamese background helping them to connect with others, develop new skills and build confidence so that they can fully take part in the community.

### **What does Vườn lên offer?**

The program offers structured small group (**maximum of 8 participants**) friendship meet-ups organised by bi-lingual facilitators experienced in supporting community inclusion. The meetings will give young people support and opportunities to improve their social connections, develop important life skills, build upon their interests and strengths, become involved in local activities and overcome challenges to meaningful community and vocational inclusion. Families of young people participating in Vườn lên will learn about the difficulties their children can experience in being included and how to support them in overcoming these difficulties.

### **When will Vườn lên run?**

Group meet-ups will occur weekly for 15 weeks on Tuesdays 4.30-8pm at Brimbank Learning Futures (80 B Harvester Road, Sunshine) commencing Tuesday 21/1/20.

Two bi-lingual parent workshops will also be offered to participants' families in February and April 2020 providing information on understanding and overcoming inclusion barriers. The workshops will be interactive and parents will hear stories of other Vietnamese families living with disability who have successfully worked towards overcoming inclusion barriers. Guidance will also be provided on how to develop ongoing peer support networks.

### **Who can take part in Vườn lên?**

In the initial pilot phase of the program, space is available for a maximum of 8 participants aged 17-25 years who:

- Have been diagnosed with Autism
- Reside in the Western Metro Region of Melbourne and are of Vietnamese background
- May be (or hope to be) involved in a community activity; in studies, volunteering or paid employment but are experiencing difficulties connecting socially and fulfilling their personal goals to participate more fully in the community and/or workplace
- Have been unable to successfully access available inclusion supports in overcoming barriers to participation

### **What are the costs of participating in Vườn lên?**

There are no fees for participants and families who take part in the pilot. A small financial contribution towards some of the activities that participants choose to undertake may be needed - information about this will be discussed with the group in advance.

### **How do I contact Vườn lên to become involved?**

If you are interested in participating in the Vườn lên pilot program (or in future programs that we are hoping to run dependent on receiving ongoing funding) please call us or fill in the attached **Expression of Interest Form** and return it to

- Nga Do (Extended Families Australia – Vietnamese Community Coordinator and VFSNG Parent Group Facilitator [nga@extendedfamilies.org.au](mailto:nga@extendedfamilies.org.au) 0433 103 401) or
- Julia Klieber (Extended Families Australia Project Manager – [julia@extendedfamilies.org.au](mailto:julia@extendedfamilies.org.au) 0481 955 551)

