

Southern Centre multi-sensory room birthday bash

The Southern Centre Multi-Sensory Experience at QEII is celebrating its birthday this Saturday. The Multi-Sensory Experience room, the largest in the Southern Hemisphere, marks its five years of existence with a day of free access to the facilities where the public 'to get to see something they have never seen before'. The Southern Centre Open Day is from 9 am to 3 pm.

The multi-sensory room is a popular venue, with its array of optical, audio, olfactory and tactile experiences that can be tuned to individual liking. The venue was designed to meet needs of people with disabilities, but we have found that both children and adults of all abilities enjoy what we have to offer says Amy Hartnell, Southern Centre Coordinator.

The Southern Centre, which opened on September 4, 2003, is the first of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere and is controlled by a unique computerised system.

It won *the World Leisure Award for Excellence in Innovation* in 2006 for utilising the extremely innovative system which controls over 90 percent of the equipment in the room. "The computerised system allows us to change the centre in a variety of ways and continually keep the room very dynamic. Our easy-to-use switch system empowers people to choose their own environment, make changes and control their leisure time," says Ms Hartnell.

"The MSE room promotes recreation and leisure opportunities, but can be used as a learning or relaxation experience," she says, adding that the room allows people to explore, to have fun and to develop their imagination and creativity.

She paid tribute to her predecessors Trisha Ventom and Sarah Kelly for getting the project off the ground. "It was such a revolutionary new concept that it took many hours to raise the funds to build it and just as many designing the state-of-the-art interactive equipment and getting it manufactured," says Ms Hartnell.

People can tour the sensory room from 9 am to 3 pm on Saturday, taking in experiences such as the bubble tubes, fibre optics, relaxing gel bed, specialised lighting, textures, smells and interactive sound floor and a bungee chair.

Ms Hartnell is looking to the Open Day to raise awareness of this innovative facility and give people the opportunity to experience what we have to offer. No bookings or fee are required for the Open Day sessions.

For further information, please contact :

Amy Hartnell

Southern Centre Co-ordinator

Phone: 941 7119

Email: amy.hartnell@ccc.govt.nz