



**CARING CENTRE:** Jennifer Lezcano, Angela Murgida, Lorraine Vagli, Logan Horn and Tyrone Thompson help make a pinata at the Mamma Lena child care centre.

# Her spirit lives on

THE 20th anniversary of the Sorella Radio Long Day Child Care Centre at Fairfield will be held on May 1 to celebrate and remember Mamma Lena, a woman who devoted herself to helping the community.

The centre was officially opened in April 1984, after 12 years of battling the council, neighbours and a lack of funds.

Board of trustees secretary and public officer Rosalba Gustin said her mother, Mamma Lena, who passed away late last year, wanted to give something back to the community. "When the concept was suggested, the

community didn't have a childcare centre, and I think mum wanted to give something tangible back to help," she said.

Centre director Lorraine Vagli said families have benefited enormously from the centre. "There are innumerable families that have accessed this service over the last 20 years," she said. "It has provided working parents from all different nationalities with a place to take their kids."

Mamma Lena came up with the idea in 1972, originally to help Italian migrants in the Fairfield area.

By the time the centre was actually built the demographics of Fairfield had changed.

"Since the centre opened we have had a beautiful mix of Vietnamese, Chinese, Islanders, Italians and Australians," Ms Gustin said.

"It really is the spirit I think Mamma Lena would have been so proud of because it embodies the spirit of co-operation and working together."

There will be speeches and presentations for children and families on May 1 to celebrate the 20th anniversary, which will be held at the centre at noon.