

TERM 1-2018

NEWSLETTER



FROM FLORENCE, CENTRE LEADER

Kia ora kotou,

A warm welcome to all our tamariki and their whanau, new or returning to Montessori at Otari Preschool. I hope everybody had a wonderful break and has enjoyed some of the nice warm weather. Personally I had a wonderful holiday; my parents arrived in Auckland on the 9th of January and we went to Samoa for 10 days...bliss! They are in Wellington until the end of February and I love having them around, appreciating what it is like to have family support at hand.

Doesn't our garden look stunning? The hard work and wait were really worth it... considering the team started a review of our outside environment in February 2016! The trigger was a lack of consistency between the outside and inside environment and how challenging it was to implement some key Montessori principles outside. On top of that, certain areas or equipment were not safe and secure anymore and needed to be changed to be H&S compliant. The process took some time, we got experts involved; we visited other preschools, we reflected a lot and imagined what we would like to achieve. One of our aims was to develop a holistic environment, that was a living space for playing, learning, socialising, growing, resting, contemplating... We wanted to create different areas for different purposes (like in the classroom), such as an area for gross motor skills, a quiet space; a smaller sand pit, a water play area; a gardening area, a stage for performance or group activities, 2 playhouses for social play. We also wanted more storage that children could access themselves, keeping the environment nice and tidy. We are already very satisfied with what it looks like, while there are still some areas to develop further or enhance (this year again, our fundraising efforts will continue to go towards the garden funds).

First though, we are going to enjoy it and see how the tamariki make it their own space; it is bound to evolve and improve over time. Another important change to note is the way the team is going to operate, for Term 1 at least. As part of our review, we realised we needed to have 2 teachers in the garden: like inside, if one teacher is involved with one child or a group of children, the other teacher can supervise, redirect, help others. Of course the garden is much bigger than the inside class but the open space allows us to have a better view of what is happening and children have more 'areas' to explore or to play at. The team

will operate as follow: Julia and Steph are based in Kauri; Mary and Nina are based in Kowhai; Seedeви and I are based in the garden on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, while Pam replaces me on Thursday and Friday. In order to allow in and out free flow, there is some flexibility with the teachers; for example, if most children want to be on the deck and the garden, one class teacher will also follow them and be in the garden. We could also envisage that if a child wants to do some work in the garden, that would be possible. It is a work in progress and we will review how things go during the term and throughout the year. Finally, the last difference to last year is that the garden will be open all day (weather permitting and except Wednesday). In the past we had to pack everything up and close the garden and the doors for lunch; we are trialling a more flexible approach where children can stay out longer, then have lunch and go out again in the afternoon if they wish. In the afternoons, children help with the tidying up of the deck and classroom; from now on, they will also help put outside furniture away and lock up all the cupboards. Taking care of the whole environment is part of the child's responsibility and 'work', and they love carrying chairs, tables and locking the padlocks with a key!!

On Friday 16th of February, we are having our family picnic and that will be the opportunity to officially celebrate the opening of our garden! We are also expecting the visit of a reporter from the local Independent Herald. For new families, this is our first social event of the year and is the opportunity to meet the teachers and other parents; come from 3.30 with your own food; Kelly Sports coaches are coming again for some action and fun from 4.45 to 5.45. We will say ka kite at 6pm.

We always aim to communicate effectively with our community. Please note that there is one newsletter at the beginning of each term, and from now on, there will only be 2 updates per term, with a focus on the programme, and each class will take turn at writing it. The weekly notices are emailed on a Thursday, and finally we use Storypark as a platform to share any community events, reminders or notices. You will have already received the Term key dates which give you an overview of the term and a preview for next term.

Let's hope for a warm term 1 so we can enjoy our garden as much as possible!

Noho ora mai – stay well

Florence

FROM RICHARD, PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Kia ora and welcome to 2018

It was with great pleasure I walked in to the preschool on the first day of term and saw the completed garden area for the children. Florence and Nicola have put a huge amount of work in. Mention must be made of the fundraising team, as well as the parents and families

that have supported all the fundraising efforts. The kids are loving it and I love hearing of all the adventures my daughter gets up to in the new garden.

Very soon the council will be having our AGM. We are looking for new members and it would be lovely to have your involvement. Once on the council you can have your say directly in where you want to see the school going. You can participate for the sake of the school and your child. All I can say is just DO IT!!!

Richard

From the council

Montessori at Otari Preschool is a parent co-operative that is managed by an elected parent council. As we are soon to be losing some of our council members (as their children make the transition to school) we are looking for several more parents to volunteer. The council meets once a month on a Monday evening and is a great way to meet other parents and become actively involved in the preschool community.

The council is essential to the preschool and we cannot run without it. We'd love to have you onboard, so please speak to Nicola or one of the council members listed below for more information.

Current Council Members and Positions:

President - Richard Wall (father of Florence, Kauri)
Treasurer – Sarah Chainey (mother of Maria, Kauri)
Secretary – Rebecca Reedy (mother of Eleanor, Kauri)
Staff Liaison - Jane Ward-Marshall (mother of Lottie, Kauri)

General Council Members:

General – Tammy Smith (mother of Oliver, Kowhai)
General – Bernhard Resch (father of Juri, Kauri)
General – Fiona Boucher (mother of K-J, Kauri)
General/Website – Lara Charles (mother of Evan, Kowhai)
General/Newsletter – Fiona Miles (mother of Zelly, Kauri)
Enrolments – Martin Vere-Jones (father of Amber, Kauri)
Property – Richard Wall (father of Florence, Kauri)
Playgroup Liaison – Stefanie Dixon (mother of Frank, Kauri)

Introducing our Families

This term, we are introducing Avery's (Kauri) family:

Who are the members of your family: Alan, Megan, Avery, Tristan, Mika (cat).

Why did you choose Montessori @ Otari preschool? We felt the Montessori school would be a perfect environment to nurture Avery's love of nature, develop his independence & encourage his love of learning.

What's your favourite thing to do in Wellington with kids? With this amazing summer weather, we have been having we've been having some wonderful times at the beach, swimming, building sandcastles, exploring rock pools, collecting shells etc. We are also frequent visitors to Zealandia.

Apart from yourself (of course) - who would you like to think is a role model for your child and why? I think that Avery's Nana plays a very important part in his life. He is fortunate to have her living just down the road & she is his primary care giver outside of preschool when we are working. She teaches him all sorts of things including recognising his first words, growing a worm farm together, how steam engines work, how clouds are formed, how to look after our environment & why it's so important etc. We are all very lucky to have her as a role model.

Where is your favourite place to go on holiday with your family or where would your dream family holiday be and why? A few years ago we went to Kauai, Hawaii, for a family holiday. It is nicknamed 'the Garden Isle' as it's one of the less populated islands & it is just a great place to connect with nature. Hopefully we will have the opportunity to return there one day but traveling anywhere is always an exciting & educating opportunity.

What is one of your favourite books, why would you recommend it to others? This is a tricky one. Honestly I've been pretty terrible at reading the past few years! With two young boys I've just been too tired. Our kids classics/favourites are The Hungry Caterpillar & The Little Blue Truck. One of my past favourites is The Bronze Horseman. It's really a romance novel but set during the siege of Leningrad. Although the book & characters are fiction it's incredible to read about the strength & perseverance that some people have during impossibly hard times. It makes me realise how very lucky we are to live in a peaceful country.

Thank you Megan for your contribution.

FROM CAMILLA, PLAYGROUP SUPERVISOR

Happy New Year! Welcome back to Montessori playgroup! I am sure you have all been taking advantage of the wonderful weather to be out and about exploring beautiful Wellington.

We have a number of new families joining us. We warmly welcome you and hope your time with us will be happy.

The beginning of the year is a good time to remind ourselves of the miraculous development of the child from birth. Isn't it incredible how many skills a child will have mastered by the age of three? One of the key factors of the Montessori philosophy is that it challenges us to have a deep sense of trust in the child and their ability to auto-educate. In other words, we do not teach a baby how to sit up, or to roll over, or walk. When they are ready, when they have developed the strength to do it, and the will to do it, they will do it for themselves. There is no need to hurry. Until then, we have to be patient. We have to trust that it will happen.

So in the quest for the young child to become independent, it is our job to provide the support or the scaffolding when they need it. That is why Montessori strongly encouraged us to sit back and observe so that we can really see what is going on. I am always amazed when I take the time to do this. When we take the time to observe, we can see clearly where we are needed, and where we are not needed!

It's also important to remind ourselves that children do not learn in a linear way. They are holistic learners. Mastering one aspect of learning opens up a whole new realm for them. And it is natural for them to plateau in their development, as they get ready to embark on a whole new phase of development.

There is a beautiful Maori proverb that reads:

He kakano ahau i ruia mai i rangiatea.
I am a seed born of greatness.

I really look forward to meeting with you and your child. Let's have a wonderful term together.

Ka kite ano,
Camilla

Montessori Playgroup

The Montessori-at-Otari playgroup is a not-for-profit cooperative run by parents. We offer a friendly and fun playgroup environment for children aged 0-3 years. A Montessori-trained supervisor runs the sessions. We have Ministry of Education certification and meet on Tuesday and Thursday mornings in St Luke's Hall, Wadestown. We have close links with the preschool and our equipment is especially chosen for a 0-3 Montessori environment. Attending playgroup makes the transition to preschool very easy.

To find out more, or to organise a visit, contact Nicola in the preschool office on 475 9688 or email wcmp@xtra.co.nz.

UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Quiz Night: Get your teams together (or we will make one for you). This is a fun night out while also raising funds for our garden project. A lot of awesome prizes to be won. Details to follow soon.

Family photo session: An opportunity to have a family photo taken at the Preschool. Details to follow.

Hats and Tee shirts: the colours are bright and amazing... order one or more, simply ask Nicola.

AlphaBeats: singing and dancing at Preschool, on Wednesdays, from 1-1.45... Thanks to Doro, (supported by Stef and Inge) for organising this opportunity... we are full already with our 8 lucky participants!

NOTICEBOARD

Parent Library

Our preschool has a selection of books, small in size, but big on quality and relevance for the free use of all preschool families (including those on the waitlist). The Parent Library will open every first and third Friday on display in the foyer or by negotiation with Nicola.

Just start a file for your family from the record folder and get the borrowed or returned books signed in or out by Nicola. Please return your book after one month by replacing it in the bookcase and by getting it signed in by Nicola.

If you know of a good book which you can recommend for our library, please do so. We are always interested in good ideas.

Can parents please remember to return the borrowed items!

Morning/afternoon Tea Lists

Please check the lists in the foyer for this term's roster. Every family has to provide food for morning tea once or twice a year. Thank you.

Working Bees

Thanks to all the parents who came to our first working bee in January. The garden looked amazing for the children on their first day back! Our second working bee of the year is on Saturday 10th March (A-D). Working bees normally take place from 9am to 12 noon. This is a fun morning where families have an opportunity to get to know each other, have some morning tea and do a few indoor and outdoor jobs at the Preschool.

We rely on parents to help with the annual working bees to clean and repair the classrooms, equipment and outdoor areas. This helps us keep our costs down and the fees affordable. Families that do not wish to take part, or do not turn up on the day, will be invoiced a \$75 non-participation fee.

Driveway Duty

We have a drop-off system in place to help with the busy morning school run. From **8:40am to 9:05am** two parent monitors are on duty at the bottom of the driveway. They will escort children into the Preschool. This service is parent-run and relies on volunteers. Every parent/caregiver is required to sign up to do three monitor duties a term even if your child does not yet use the system.

Monitors are to be at the Preschool by **8:35am**. Duties include opening the car door, assisting the child to exit the car and escorting the child into the Preschool foyer.

Please do not drop your child off before 8:40am as the door into the corridor does not open until 8:45am. And please do not park your car in the driveway and walk in with your child. It is dangerous. Use the gate monitor system instead!

The two car parks at the bottom of the drive way that are reserved for preschool are for the use of pregnant woman and families with infants only. Please help by keeping these reserved car parks free for their use.