

TERM 2-2017

NEWSLETTER



FROM FLORENCE, CENTRE LEADER

Kia ora koutou and welcome back for Term 2!

We welcome back two returning families who will start in Kauri over the next weeks: Joe whose sister Penny used to attend Kauri, and Lila-Rose whose brothers, Nico and Quinn, attended Kowhai and Kauri respectively. We also welcome Samuel, Rebecca's little brother from Kowhai. Finally we are welcoming 2 new families: Joe and his family from the UK, will start in Kowhai; and Isabella will start in Kauri. Nau mae haere mai ki to kura o Montessori@Otari Preschool!

This year, all the staff attended the annual MANZ conference, at Te Papa, on the 22nd and 23rd of April. Every year, we all attend a Montessori workshop as part of our professional development, but we had not attended the conference as a whole team for a while. So that was quite exciting and a good team building operation; even Camilla, our Playgroup supervisor attended the 0-3 workshops!

The topic of the conference was "sustaining the light in every child" and the speakers delivered some inspiring, thought-provoking keynote addresses, followed by workshops for each age group. I really enjoyed what Peta Gibson (0-3 age-group) had to say about the importance of attachment and forming strong, trusting relationship for and with the young child. For a child to learn, s/he has to feel safe and secure; hence providing a stable predictable environment with consistent adults. If a child can develop a joyful connection with a significant adult in their learning environment, a secure attachment will form. It reminded me why we, teachers, spend so much time and care preparing our environment: our job is to be the guardian of such places and make sure it meets the developmental needs and interests of the tamariki. Everything has its importance, especially as young children are very attentive to details...so should we, as educators, in our behaviour and as role model for the child. Peta called the toddler the 'mindfulness expert' who is very much living in the present and reminds us, the adult, how important it is to do so and be fully present as well. A good lesson for us, often too busy to reach a goal, while young children are more focused on the process and the enjoyment of the activity itself...have you noticed how a young child can concentrate for a long period of time, on a chosen activity and feel satisfied and content when he has finished?

Robin Padar (3-6 age-group) was next and her words were clear: “our environments provide and sustain the essential life skills; our Montessori prepared environments are places where children are practicing to be human beings and be who they are meant to be”. She used the analogy of a seed, which I like using too; your child might be a ‘rose’ or a ‘tulip’ in the making! but nobody knows what type it will be or what colour; our job is to provide the right soil, the right nutrients, the right environment for that particular plant and let it blossom!

The last speaker (6-12 age group), Michael Duffy, talked about child brain development and how the Montessori concrete didactic materials build powerful brains, that are not meant to store information but process it and use it to problem solve...here is some food for thought for you parents! Here is what Maria Montessori wrote about the work of the child: *“Although he cannot share in the work of adults, he has his own difficult and important task to perform, that of producing a man...It is solely from the child that a man is formed. An adult cannot take part in this labour...We can thus constantly repeat: “the child is the father of the man.”* (from The Secret of Childhood)

As you may be aware, upgrading our garden into a beautiful purposeful learning environment that mirrors our Montessori philosophy has been at the heart of our current internal evaluation as a team. Based on our brief and wish list, we are now receiving design ideas and quotes from different organisations before we (staff and council) make a final decision on the overall design. Since last year, all our fundraising efforts have been tagged for the garden funds and this will continue until this massive project is completed. Some fundraising ideas are taking shape but we will rely on everybody’s help and effort to continue raising funds. So, if you can help in any way, let us know; we will keep you posted for the next fundraising project! I discovered recently that our preschool is celebrating its 40th anniversary...YES! 40 years of existence! Wouldn’t it be fantastic to have a giant celebration in a renovated, beautiful new garden this year!!!

Hei kona mai, goodbye for now!

Florence

FROM RICHARD, PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Kia ora and welcome back to term 2

Last term we held the school council annual AGM. We said goodbye to several wonderful councillors, including the outgoing president Richard Chapman. The school is greater for the contributions everyone has made. We said hello to a bunch of fantastic new school councillors (luckily holding on to some established ones of course), helping the school move towards the future. To replace Richard we said hello to me, Richard Wall. I’m looking forward to rolling up my sleeves and getting stuck into this exciting year.

As Florence has mentioned, it will be the 40th anniversary for the preschool. This would be a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the amount of work, time and money parents have put in through the years. The reason we are able to make a start on the new garden is the financial contributions the founding parents made in the early years. I am grateful that we are the benefactors of this commitment. I'm also sure there will be many amazing stories and history to be revealed in time for the anniversary.

Things are progressing very well at the moment for the garden project, however it will require some good ideas and a bit of effort from everyone for fundraising. It is a big project. Any help would be greatly appreciated and expect possible coercion over the next wee while.

I look forward to seeing everyone around the grounds.

Richard

From the council

This term's newsletter will be introducing our council member Gwyn:

Who belongs to your family? In my family we have Dion and myself, Carlo, Ana and William. Carlo and Ana both spent over two years at preschool and are now at Wadestown school and William is in Kauri class. We also have two Burmese cats called Nelson and Lilliput and the kids are very keen to get a dog but I'm holding out as long as possible! My parents are in sunny Motueka and Dion's are in Lower Hutt so we see plenty of both extended families.

What made you join the council? All our kids have absolutely loved the preschool and have really benefitted from the Montessori philosophy – in particular I think respect for self, others and the environment, independence and concentration. All the staff do such an amazing job and we wanted to try to help out where we could. This is my second year on the council – the first as Property Officer and now as Treasurer. I wish I had got involved earlier in our children's journey as it really is a great way to meet other parents and learn more about the preschool.

What do you enjoy about the council? I am really enjoying learning more about the education system, Ministry Funding, how a school/preschool operates and of course meeting other council members. I haven't been involved with an organisation like this before and it really is a case of many hands makes light work! Any help is greatly appreciated and really rewarding.

What is your role? This year I am the Treasurer, which means reviewing and approving expenditure in-line with the budget, completing the monthly reporting and providing input into our strategic plan.

Our very exciting project we have underway is the upgrade of the garden which the entire community will be involved in and it will be such a wonderful space for the children when it is completed.

Thank you Gwyn

Current Council Members and Positions:

President - Richard Wall (father of Florence, Kauri)
Treasurer – Gwyn Baretta (mother of William, Kauri)
Secretary – Rebecca Reedy (mother of Eleanor, Kauri)
Staff Liaison - Jane Ward-Marshall (mother of Lotte, Kauri)

General Council Members:

General – Tammy Smith (mother of Oliver, Kowhai)
General – Bernhard Resch (father of Juri, Kauri)
Co Parent Liaison – Fiona Boucher (mother of K-J, Kauri)
Co Parent Liaison-Sarah Chainey (mother of Maria, Kauri)
General/Website – Lara Charles (mother of Evan, Kowhai)
General – 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)

And many thanks to Ali (mother of Molly, Kowhai) for taking on the fundraising position. If you are interested in helping Ali and our preschool with bigger or smaller projects or ideas please feel free to talk to her.

Introducing our Families

This term, we are introducing Alfie's (Kowhai) family:

Who are the members of your family: Malcolm, Sarah, James (13), William (11) and Alfie (4)

Why did you choose Montessori @ Otari preschool? Alfie's older brothers both went to Montessori and loved it so it was the obvious choice for Alfie. Initially I did a lot of research into preschool education with my eldest child and the Montessori philosophy sat well with us.

What's your favorite thing to do in Wellington with kids? We love 'the big slide park' in Roseneath.

Apart from yourself (of course) - who would you like to think is a role model for your child and why? Alfie is lucky to have a big extended family. His Gran Sally, Uncle Joe and Cousin Tom are pretty special people in his life.

Where is your favorite place to go on holiday with your family or where would your dream family holiday be and why? We like to travel and try new places. This summer we had a magic

holiday up north which featured a trip to Rainbow's end and some seriously stunning Northland beaches!

What is one of your favorite books, why would you recommend it to others? For reading out loud I love anything by Lynley Dodd or Dr Seuss...the words just dance along.

Thank you Sarah

FROM CAMILLA, PLAYGROUP SUPERVISOR

Firstly, a very warm welcome to all our new families who will be joining us at playgroup this term:

Fiammeta with Kim and Davide, and Kirk with Marianne on Tuesdays, and Nina with Sarah, Gloria with Freya, Emma & Catherine with Alice and Linnea with Sofie on Thursdays.

We hope your time with us at playgroup will be very happy.

As Florence mentioned, with the support of the preschool and playgroup, I was able to attend the recent Montessori conference which was held at Te Papa during the holidays, with a record 300 Montessori teachers attending. It is interesting to see how awareness of Montessori philosophy for under threes is developing around New Zealand. Peta Gibson, the inspiring speaker for these sessions reminded us over and over again about the significance of 'toddler time'; that is, remembering that a young child's natural pace is very, very slow, and how we need to allow them the time to be able to think and respond. She encouraged us to wait for seven seconds after making each verbal request.

She challenged us asking, "How many of you have picked a child up from behind without telling them? Wiped their noses without warning them? Have you ever had someone come and grab you from behind when you are engrossed in something? How did it make you feel?" As parents we often feel frustrated when children don't do what we tell them to do, and yet we ourselves hate being told what to do!

And she also reminded us that the will of the child is a wonderful thing. We do not want to break it. We do not want to control them. We want to strengthen their will and we do that by giving them choices. Montessori education is really about empowering children, and that is why it can be such a challenge to be a Montessori parent. We are not only challenged by our children who do not necessarily choose to do what we want, we feel challenged by ourselves.

I look forward to sharing some more treasures with you at playgroup.

On another note, I will be introducing a period of silent time for adults at the end of the session. This is the chance for us to really step back and observe what our children are doing. We think that children make a lot of noise, but during this period of quiet contemplation I am often amazed by the very, very gentle hum in the environment. You can see how even our littlest folk are taking everything in and how they are such avid explorers.

If you are interested in attending a second session at playgroup, let me know and I will tell you when there is a space available.

Please don't hesitate to come and have a chat with me during the session. I am always happy to answer any questions you may have, especially about Montessori!

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.

NOTICEBOARD

Parent Library

Our preschool has a selection 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 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

Working Bees are held once a term and families are allocated to one per year. If you are unable to attend your session, please swap with another parent. 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. This years working bee dates are Sunday 21st of May (E-H), Sunday 13th of August (I-P) and Sunday 29th of October (Q-Z). Please put these in your diary now.

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 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 8.40 am to 9.05 am 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. 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. Every parent/caregiver is required to sign up to do monitor duties for three mornings a term even if your child does not yet use the system.

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 reserved for preschool at the bottom of the drive way are for our families with infants and pregnant women. Please help them by keeping these reserved car parks free.