

TERM 3-2017

NEWSLETTER



FROM FLORENCE, CENTRE LEADER

Kia ora koutou and welcome back for Term 3!

Welcome to new tamariki and their whanau: Eden has just started in Kauri, and will be followed by Ben (whose sisters attended our Preschool – welcome back!), Molly (whose Mum, Sally, is a teacher in the Montessori strand at Otari) and 2 children transitioning from Playgroup, Annamaria and Fletcher. Nau mae haere mai ki to kura o Montessori@Otari Preschool! We look forward to getting to know you and being part of our community.

Next Saturday morning (10th) the teachers will attend a workshop at the Preschool, run by Sharon Holt who has written sing along books in te reo; I am very excited about that opportunity. Sharon is an enthusiastic presenter who has developed songs, stories or simple games for teachers to use and build their skills in te reo. We already have some of her books... next, we will be able to use them with confidence!

Although I have already shared some of my learning with some of you, I am still reflecting on the International Montessori Congress! Thinking about the newsletter, I was wondering how I could summarise my experience. So I went back to my notes and selected some points for you to ponder:

- The 3 goals of education are: 1) develop a person's personality so they know who they really are 2) help young people develop skills to build a community 3) help young people contribute to society and be part of the labour market. Montessori offers a curriculum that supports the development of these 3 goals, from birth to adulthood, by preparing an environment that caters for the needs of the children at each stage of their development.
- Children are not mini adults! The work of the child is to create the adult, but his work is very different to the adult's. Montessori said, "they are both kings, in their own kingdom".
- It is the adult's responsibility to guide the child towards his own self-construction; human beings are the only species that act on their environment consciously and make a choice.

- Freedom and limits are 2 sides of the same coin. Limits provide security and orientation, that help us become responsible. Our role as adults is to: believe in the idea of setting limits (and why it is important); be role models ourselves; believe in giving choices based on the child's experiences and ages; believe in natural consequences (instead of punishment); trust in the child's capacity to control her impulse and develop her will.
- Gratitude awakens the consciousness of the human being, to revere life, to strive to be better human beings. Each stage (according to the Montessori stages of development 0-3, 3-6, 6-9, 9-12) prepares the child for the following one, always consolidating a bit more every time.
- The 0-6 child asks the adult, 'help me DO it by myself'; the 6-12 child asks the adult, 'help me THINK by myself'; the 12-18 adolescent asks the adult, 'help me SOLVE and ACT by myself'.

Many quotes from Montessori were read at the Congress, all seemed relevant for today. I cannot stop thinking how ahead of her time she was. I will conclude with one her quotes that I find very inspiring myself, which advocates for the child's needs (or should we say 'rights') to be respected and protected by the adults:

"Follow the child and you will find the secret of childhood"

Hei kona mai, goodbye for now!

Florence

FROM RICHARD, PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Kia ora and welcome back to term 3.

It is with mixed emotions that we say goodbye to Bronwyn at the end of this term as she will be retiring from teaching. Personally, I am a little sad about that, however I am also very excited for her and her retirement future. She will be very much missed in the classroom by the children and parents alike. Bronwyn has been at Montessori Otari for 16 years and through that time has seen many changes. She has, herself, been Centre Leader and seen other teachers come and go. We will be having a celebration near the end of the term to thank her for everything she has done. The preschool will get to you soon about dates etc.

On that note, we have advertised to fill Bronwyn's position and have had a good response. Interviews will be commencing soon. I am sure it will be difficult decision in the end as the calibre of applicants is very high.

During last term Florence had been working very hard to get plans and quotes from various companies to update the children's garden. It resulted in choosing a company called Namloc to undertake the work. Things such as a new garden do not come cheap so there will be fundraising coming up. Being that it is for the benefit of all our children, it would be wonderful to receive as much help as possible from parents. This includes pitching in, coming up with ideas and offering any special skills that you may have. We are all in this together.

Richard

From the council

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

Who belongs to your family? Isabell & Bernhard + our two boys: Amos, at Otari Montessori, Pōhutukawa year one and Juri, at our Pre-school, Kauri class.

What made you join the council? One of the things I really like about New Zealand schools is how they foster communities of people around them. Having both of our children at Otari, we want to make a contribution to a happy and healthy community life.

What do you enjoy about the council? Getting to know other parents and sharing experiences. Also getting a better picture of what's going on by listening to Florence's reports is great. Over all I like the open and cooperative atmosphere in our discussions.

What is your role? I'm a new council member without a specific role (yet). Currently, I'm learning how things are handled here, preparing to step up.

Thank you Bernhard.

Current Council Members and Positions:

President - Richard Wall (father of Florence, Kauri)
Treasurer – Gwyn Bareta (mother of William, 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)

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 Maria's (Kauri) family:

Who are the members of your family: Mum and Dad (Sarah and Chris), Maria (3 years old) and Anna (1 year old).

Why did you choose Montessori @ Otari preschool? Montessori was recommended to us by some friends. When we learnt more about the values and philosophies of Montessori Aotearoa NZ we realised these were a very close match to our parenting styles. (A love of learning, respect, freedom balanced with responsibility, creativity and individuality, honesty and humility, embracing diversity and peace, celebrating the joy of discovery). As we live in the Northern suburbs, Otari was the natural choice. From our experience at the open days, we appreciated the welcoming and relaxed feel to Otari and knew Maria would be happy here.

What's your favorite thing to do in Wellington with kids? On a fine day, we love to head to Oriental Parade and spend time at the park and/or beach. We normally go for a bit of a walk too. Both our girls love being outside.

Apart from yourself (of course) - who would you like to think is a role model for your child and why? Gran. We are very fortunate to have a very involved Gran in our daughter's lives. As a mother to 4 children and a Gran to eleven grandchildren she is incredible with children. She is a very patient and generous person, who always puts people first. Her calm persona is a fantastic characteristic to model.

Where is your favorite place to go on holiday with your family or where would your dream family holiday be and why? We really enjoy Noosa for the dependable weather, being able to relax and the variety of family friendly activities on offer.

What is one of your favorite books, why would you recommend it to others? Books are a major part of our bedtime routines at home. It's really difficult to limit it to one! At the moment Maria is really enjoying books from the Meg and Mog series. I think she appreciates the simple language and sense of humour. I must also mention 'Tabby McTat' by Julia Donaldson, as Chris always reads this to Maria when he puts her to bed. They both love it!

Thank you Sarah.

FROM CAMILLA, PLAYGROUP SUPERVISOR

Welcome back to the new term. We have a number of new families joining us at playgroup this month. We hope you will have a lovely time with us. When I used to come to playgroup with my son, Joe, I soon realised that even though I was going to playgroup for my little one, it was just as important for me. Raising a human being from scratch is a tough job, and we all need support and encouragement along the way.

So hopefully, Montessori at Otari playgroup is a place where we can all support one another, while we deepen our understanding of the Montessori philosophy and early childhood stages of development.

In terms of housekeeping, please remember to bring a couple of pieces of fruit to each session, for the children to prepare. Citrus fruits and carrots are best for juicing, and apples and bananas are best for chopping. If you are a coffee drinker, please bring a packet of plunger coffee for the term. If you are a tea drinker, you may want to bring a box of your favourite tea.

Please sign up for two duties for the term, which include helping to set up, organise morning tea, or taking home the laundry (and bringing back a piece of cheese with the clean washing).

Today I was watching a short video online, posted by our dear Florence, which was talking about the defining characteristic of successful people. It researched all different sorts of settings, and the conclusion was that the most important factor in being successful in life was developing grit. That is, cultivating the determination not to be defeated and not to give up. It reminded me again of how important it is to let even little children do things for themselves, and resolve things for themselves. Actually our little ones have tremendous grit. If you think about the determination that a young child manifests in trying to master a new skill, such as walking, it is really incredible. They fall over again and again, and they innately know to get up again and again. It is our job to offer encouragement and support where it is needed, but we cannot do it for them.

To develop grit, you need to make lots of mistakes. You need to struggle. The more we do for children, the more we take away the joy of doing things for oneself. Let's remind ourselves at playgroup, to practice 'not' doing things for our children. Slow down. Take your time. Remember that these children are much more capable than we think. I am always amazed when I give a little child the whole tray of bread to carry over to the morning tea table. I am always ready for them to drop the lot. But mostly they don't. They can do it if we allow them to, offering them gentle advice about where to place their hands on the tray.

Here is a wonderful quote from Montessori: "If we were to establish a primary principle, it would be to constantly allow the child's participation in our lives. For he cannot learn to act if he does not join in our actions, just as he cannot learn to speak if he does not hear....To

extend to the child this hospitality, to allow him to participate in our work, can be difficult, but it costs nothing. Our time is a far more precious gift than material objects..."

If you have anything you would like to talk over, please don't hesitate to grab me for a chat. Your questions and suggestions are always welcome.

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 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

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 year the 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 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 8.40 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 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.