

TERM 3-2018

NEWSLETTER



FROM FLORENCE, CENTRE LEADER

Kia ora koutou,

During the first weekend of the holiday, the team went to the MANZ Montessori Conference in Napier. We all attended the workshops from the 3-6 speaker, Michelle Aspinall, an American Montessori teacher from Chicago. She runs an 'All Day, All Year' Montessori programme for children aged 2 and half to 6 and half; the programme runs from 7.30am to 5.30pm, 5 days a week, 245 days a year! Parents obviously opt into that programme, which includes a full breakfast prepared by the children, lunch (either provided by school or by parents) and afternoon snacks also baked by the children. She shared many ideas and tips that make her classroom very successful; she also showed us many videos to illustrate the guiding principles she was talking about during her presentations. We came back buzzing with ideas and feeling really inspired. During our planning meeting, we reflected on what we had learned, and what we would like to implement that would work within our context and culture. Here are the highlights from each teacher.

From Stephanie: "I took away that the classroom should be a home away from home where children are able to play a strong role within the classroom, including setting up and tidying up, checking the shelves, helping others when needed without being asked. Children should be able to learn at their own pace in their own three hour work cycle with the teachers and their peers being ready to support and guide as necessary. Visitors should be made welcome in the class by being greeted by a child(ren) and a teacher so they know they are valued while helping the children to practice basic introductions."

From Mary: "I see this conference like a "big basket" of ideas and a presentation of what works in the Montessori setting with Michelle Aspinall 's School in mind. I am ready to embrace some impressive ideas that I believe will be really purposeful and practical to implement in our classroom environment. I am happy to take these ideas on board to work with my team . We can implement these to the best of what works for us, and also how we can challenge ourselves to improve in our environment. We have set up some activities e.g. Hair grooming, face washing, laundry folding, and other activities for children to be replenished during the session. We will also reinforce the idea of giving lots of opportunities for older children to help or lead the younger ones."

From Nina: "The main messages I took from the conference were not new but are important in our philosophy. The speaker for the 3-6 age group, who spoke at 4 three-hour sessions over Saturday and Sunday focused on children playing an independent, authentic role in

her Montessori programme. She said that the Montessori daily routine should be so consistent that children can predict what will happen and that too many adults and too many “lessons” in a Montessori programme lessen consistency and predictability for the children and are an obstacle to independent learning. Time should be viewed as a gift: children should have the time to observe, to relax, to go to a quiet peaceful space and be inactive if they choose, but they should also have lots of opportunities to do interesting, “real” activities like baking, self-care, care of their environment and gardening.”

From Seedeivi: “I was reminded of the initial advice of Dr Montessori that adults should not do anything for the child that they can do for themselves. Her sage advice was for adults to learn to stay out of the way of the child and not become an obstacle to their learning. It was also good to remember that the classroom environment should promote a "can do" positive attitude which is caring and invites the child to engage in learning by making it a comfortable and safe place. The Montessori classroom should be a space where children learn from doing real life activities, where they have flexibility to explore, with firm boundaries about social and cultural behaviour that is expected of them. The classroom should be their home, an environment created by them, which was the intention of the original " casa di bambini", her very first classroom opened in Rome in 1907.”

Finally, for me, Michelle’s presentations were yet again a reminder of the fundamental guiding principles of a Montessori prepared environment and way of being, whether it is a ‘preschool’ or at home: children need to have freedom with clear, simple yet firm boundaries; young children thrive on structure and order; we pay attention to details, beauty and aesthetics; nature and reality are an integral part of the curriculum; we foster a social environment through our Grace and Courtesy lessons (simple lessons on how to be and behave in a group, based on the developmental needs of each child) and finally we provide rich, stimulating intellectual environment. Our role is to prepare such an environment that will meet all those principles; and it must convey at all times order, harmony, comfort and joy for the child.

Feel free to come and check out the classroom, what’s new on the shelves or ask us about our new routines and why we are doing things the way we do them: there is a reason for everything!

I look forward to another great term with Spring almost around the corner! We will be welcoming Holly Cane in Kauri on Monday 27th of August - until then, I will be in Kauri with Steph in the mornings.

Once again, thanks to all for your ongoing support; if you have any question, please come and talk to us: if it is important to you, it is important to us!

FROM RICHARD, PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Kia ora and welcome back to term 3.

Sadly last term, we said goodbye to Julia, our wonderful teacher from Kauri. She has been a mainstay of the teaching staff for quite some time and she has shaped many children. Julia will be greatly missed by us.

Masterton Montessori Preschool are very lucky to have her and we wish Julia all the best for the future.

On the other side of the coin, we will be saying a big Montessori hello to new teacher Holly Cane, who is taking over from Julia. We feel she will be a very good fit for the class and the school as a whole.

This term our pupil numbers are down slightly which can affect our funding from the Ministry of Education. I would encourage any of you who know family or friends interested in the Montessori way to contact us for a chat. It is always wonderful getting new children in the classes and this will also ensure the long term viability for our school.

The fundraising team are doing an absolutely stellar job for the school. Last term we had our quiz night at One Fat Bird. As usual it was a fun and friendly night. If you haven't been to a quiz night yet keep your eye out for the next one. It is a fantastic opportunity for people to have a good time and get to know other parents in the school. There are more fun fundraising events coming up so watch this space for details...

Finally, I will take this opportunity to mention that I will be resigning as President. I have absolutely loved my time chairing the council and will miss it dearly. The school is extremely lucky having such a competent and lovely governing body. I should point out that if it wasn't for the council the school would not be able to exist and it is only with the kindness of people giving up their time that the council can do what it does. I very much encourage you to talk to us about what we do or even better, to actually join the council. It is a small commitment for very grand results.

Richard

Current Council Members and Positions:

President - Richard Wall (becoming vacant)
Treasurer – Sarah Chainey (mother of Maria, Kauri)
Secretary – Mimi Tran (mother of Cara, Kowhai)
Staff Liaison – Fiona Miles (mother of Zelly, Kauri)

General Council Members:

Enrolments – Stefanie Dixon (mother of Frank, Kauri)
Property – Richard Wall (father of Florence, Kauri)
General – Tammy Smith (mother of Oliver, Kowhai)
General/Website – Lara Charles (mother of Evan, Kowhai)
General – Michelle Ingram (mother of Hamish, Kauri)
Playgroup Liaison – Megan Molina (mother of Avery, Kauri)
General/Newsletter – Jane Robertson (mother of Charlotte, Kauri)

FROM CAMILLA, PLAYGROUP SUPERVISOR

Welcome to the new term.

We warmly welcome our new families to playgroup. Please do not hesitate to sing out if you need any help or advice. A few of our children are heading off to preschool soon which is just so exciting to see. It is such a big milestone in a child's life, (and a parents!) and alongside it, at around the age of 3, the child themselves begins to transform. Parents often worry that their child is not ready to be away from them for part of each day, and then suddenly realise, of my goodness I think they are ready! Having worked at the preschool for many years myself, I am happy to answer all your questions about playgroup and Montessori at Otari preschool, so feel free to ask away!

During the break I had the opportunity to attend the National Montessori Conference together with teachers from Preschool, and Otari School. It is always so inspiring to take a step back, and look at the development of the young child with wonder. It is such an amazing thing to watch a child develop day by day, and at the same time, I don't think there is any job more challenging or valuable than being a parent.

Here are a few thoughts from the conference:

"Our care of the child should be governed not by the desire to make him/her learn things, but by the endeavour always to keep within him/her that light which is called intelligence".
Maria Montessori

Children are driven by the desire to move forward and to explore what is in front of them. Each child has the opportunity to go from crawling, to climbing mountains. We must observe. When we see what children are driven too, then we can respond.

Maria Montessori knew that the best way to help a child was to watch them, to see what grabs their attention, what stops them in their tracks.

So first we need to observe. Then we can prepare. Then we can find a way to harness their interest and make it accessible. It is through meaningful activity that they start to realise their place, their power.

Once children are engaged with an activity, our challenge is to get out of the way. Each time we interfere doing something that they can do for themselves, it stops them from exploring for themselves and realising for themselves. Each time we offer them unnecessary words of praise, we break their concentration. So our challenge is to observe, prepare, and remove obstacles.

Young children are so resilient. They have such an inner urge to seek out and learn about the world. Repetition is essential.

As adults we often think we know better, but a child listens to their inner voice. So we must be mindful, and strive to keep in the present with the child. If we start multi-tasking, we start taking over, and before we know it we are putting on the shoes of a child who can do it for themselves.

The most important thing is for the child to learn to take care of themselves. So if that means they spend all day putting a shoe on and off, then that is the best thing they can be doing. There is no puzzle or toy more meaningful.

We are there to take care of the environment but to let the child be free. And we observe. When we are on the periphery, we are witness to the repetition, the concentration, the struggle, the persistence of the young child.

"Freedom is not true freedom unless you have the freedom to make mistakes." Mahatma Gandhi

Just a reminder, we have a small parent committee at playgroup, made up of Sarah (Lillian's mum, Sarah (Nina's mum) Karla (Finn's mum) and Paula (Maurice's mum) and we meet once a term. In addition Michelle (William's mum) and Sarah (Nina's mum) do the duty rosters. So if you would like to get involved, just let me know and we will happily find you a job!

Let's have a wonderful term together!

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

Abacus & Square Pear: Artwork by the children will become diaries, notebooks, mousepads, calendars, totes and cushions for you to purchase. These are great gifts! Details to follow soon.

Entertainment Books: available at the Preschool... see Nicola.

AlphaBeats: singing and dancing at Preschool with Carrie, on Wednesdays, from 1-1.45. Starting 1st August until 19th September, \$65. See Nicola if you would like to enrol.

Movie Night: Thursday 1st November (out it in your diary now!). OPENING NIGHT of Bohemian Rhapsody. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year. Details to follow soon.

NOTICEBOARD

Morning/afternoon Tea Lists

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

Working Bees

Thanks to all the parents who came to our working bee in May. The garden and classrooms looked amazing for the children. Our fourth working bee of the year is on Sunday 12th August, surnames L-R but all very welcome. 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 the door into the corridor is opened at 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 young infants only. Please help by keeping these reserved car parks free for their use.

