

TERM 3- 2016

NEWSLETTER



FROM FLORENCE, CENTRE LEADER

Kia Ora Koutou,

Welcome to Term 3! Over the next few weeks, we will welcome new tamariki and their whanau: Paige, Jonty (whose sister Eliza used to attend the Preschool) and Alyssa, in Kauri; Evan (whose sister Zoe is now in Pohutukawa) and Divon, in Kowhai. Nau mai, haere mai! I hope your time at Otari preschool will be filled with joy and discovery!

Talking about joyful learning, during the first week end of the holiday, Seedeви and I went to Hamilton to attend the annual MANZ conference. The theme this year was about exploration, as a joyful experience. I attended the workshops by Sarah Werner Andrews, a wonderful speaker, full of wisdom, of thought provoking questions and with an indefatigable passion for the child. She stated that exploration is the key to the 21st century learning. She reminded us that our role, as “gentle leaders”, is to release the human potential in every child. It immediately made me think about our own vision: “honouring the human spirit to create a better world”. It is an idealistic vision but why dream little? For the Term 3 edition of our newsletter, I’d like to share some of the wisdom she passed on to us, which, I hope, you might find useful as parents!

First thing Sarah said was: if we want children to enjoy their preschool (and school) experience, it is important that we cultivate a positive approach to learning; what young children feel about school in the early years, leaves a long lasting impression in them and defines how they see school later on in life ... now, that’s a big responsibility, isn’t it! There are several factors to create a positive environment, but two important ones are a relationship based on trust and respect and allowing children to explore their environment. Lifelong learners like exploring, being creative and problem solving! ... But Sarah challenged us too: children are naturally curious and interested in so many things ... are we, as adults, as curious? As creative? As lateral thinkers as young children?

When a child is engaged, is he working or is he playing? Well, he is doing both! A focused child is constructing himself; therefore the terminology is not important. What is important is to provide opportunities where it is ‘playful work’ with uninterrupted time to play (or work!). Our environment is tailored and prepared to meet the needs of every child; the Montessori ‘method’ and philosophy is simply a set of universal principles that guide the development of man from conception to maturity: it is really a help to life. When a child is

free to choose an activity that meets a profound need, he is playfully and purposefully 'working' and he does not need an adult ... observe your child next time she is playing alone, at home!

Sarah went on to demonstrate how academic learning has to happen at the same time as social learning, within a safe, predictable environment; providing rich learning materials (what you would find on the shelves at Preschool) and social collaboration (what children do together, how they interact with each other and build a community) leads to education. She reminded us that children learn by doing, of course, but also by observing and watching others, adults and children alike! But actually, research shows that children learn a lot more from each other, than from teachers! Mixed-age group is one way to facilitate peer-learning and tutoring. It makes us, the teachers, a bit redundant ... that's why our role is only to be a guide, a facilitator, a gentle leader.

One important point of her discussion was to follow the interests of the children; we aim to do that in our environment and there are the classic topics that young children are inevitably drawn to: dinosaurs, volcanoes, sharks, princesses, animals ... Sometimes it becomes an obsession, right? Well, that is not a problem according to Sarah! Follow the interest, feed it and channel it into something bigger if you can! She gave the common example of children being fascinated by Spiderman ... at which point, I felt a bit uncomfortable, thinking "But Spiderman is not real and it's an adult product, not created by the child herself, is it?" (By the way, it could have equally been any other Superhero or Frozen!) But Sarah challenged the audience's views: "Who are we to judge the interest of a young child?" Instead of stifling it, why not elevate it? How extraordinary for a young child to imagine that a human can actually spin a spider web! What about finding out more about spiders, how they make their web, how strong is their web, etc. ... now, that would be truly following the child and respect her interest, wouldn't it?

This is only a snapshot of her workshops but attending them all was worth every minute! (despite the uncomfortable chair and no natural light, all day Saturday and Sunday) Just one last thing I recommend: a TED talk she showed us, in the context of happy learning and joyful exploration: "The Happiness Advantage" by Shawn Achor: https://www.ted.com/talks/shawn_achor_the_happy_secret_to_better_work?language=en

Ka kite ano,

Florence

FROM NICOLA, OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Civil Defence

We will be doing our annual restock of civil defence supplies later this term. More information will follow.

Driveway Duty

Please check that you have signed up to do this for term 3. Please remember that every parent/caregiver with a child is required to sign up to do monitor duties for three mornings a term even if your child does not yet use the system.

Fundraising

This term, we continue to offer Entertainment Books. This can be ordered online (check your emails for details) or pop into the Office. \$12 from every book sold goes directly to the Preschool.

Later in the term we will also be doing a Recipe Book fundraiser and also be offering Abacus cards, calendars and diaries (look out for this is your child's pocket).

We would like to have a Movie Night fundraiser this term. Please let me know if you are able to help organise this.

In 2016, the fundraising money will be used to cover costs that are not funded by the Ministry of Education, with a particular focus on our garden.

Immunisation Record

The Preschool is required to keep an up to date immunisation record. If your child has recently had their 4 year old immunisations, please provide a copy to the Office.

FROM RICHARD, PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Well. We had the Education Review Office through at the end of Term 2 and things went swimmingly. We have yet to receive their final report but the initial findings that they shared with us were great. You should all be pleased to know that you have made an excellent choice of preschool. I'm sure you already knew that, but it is always nice to have such things reconfirmed. All this is thanks to the excellent work that Florence and the teachers do. Not just the day to day, but all the behind the scenes stuff that helps to gird the knowledge loins of our children. I, on behalf of you, shall relay that thanks to Florence and her Super Teachers.

And thanks to Nicola also who, despite not being on the teaching staff, is none the less well qualified to be a member of this other-worldly team. Without her the wheels would fall off and we would be sliding uncontrollably on our giant wooden belly towards Otari-Wilton's Bush. And that is a reserve that ought to be protected from such unwieldy visitors.

Enjoy Term 3.

Richard Chapman, President

Current Council Members and Positions:

President - Richard Chapman
Treasurer – Rebecca Archer
Secretary - Sandra Henzschel
Staff Liaison - Jane Ward-Marshall
General Council Members:
General – Rebecca Reedy
General/Website – Lara Charles
General/Newsletter - Dorothee Vere-Jones
Parent Liaison – Kanae Wood & Lara Aldred
Enrolments – Martin Vere-Jones
Fundraising - vacant
Property – Gwyn Bareta
Playgroup Liaison - vacant

Introducing our Families

This term, we are introducing Eleanor’s family:

Who are the members of your family? Sam, Rebecca (Bec), Eleanor (Ellie) and Zoe (the cat) + Grandma (Julie), Granddad (Mike), Nan (Myra) in Wellington; Granddad Tony, Sandra, Uncle Tim & Great Grandma May in Christchurch, Auntie Sarah in Auckland and Auntie Jess, Don & Bela (cousin) in Sydney.

Why did you choose Montessori @ Otari preschool? We were drawn to the freedom within an organised, respectful & peaceful environment with thoughtful teachers and equally inquisitive peers. Coming along five days for four hours a day suits us perfectly right now and we love that we can enjoy a beautiful bush walk to/from school on occasion.

What's your favorite thing to do in Wellington with kids? We live in Kaori and often love pottering close to home - Karori Park (& cafe), the pool, library, Makara and more. We also love a trip to the waterfront or out to Lyall Bay for a stroll, play and a bit of people watching :)

Apart from yourself (of course) - who would you like to think is a role model for your child and why? Everyone who is part of Ellie's life plays their own important role and we all model in our own unique ways. We're grateful for the supportive teaching and admin staff at Otari and for our extended family members and lovely friends

Where is your favorite place to go on holiday with your family or where would your dream family holiday be and why? We enjoy heading up the Coast to either Paraparaumu or Waikanae where Nan and Grandma & Granddad live. Ellie loves spending time with them as well as exploring their homes, the beach, river, and all the playgrounds and swimming options. She also loves looking out for horses and sheep to chat to. We enjoy weekend trips to Auckland and Christchurch to see family and friends as well. And we're looking forward to visiting Ellie's cousin, Bela, in Sydney one day. When she's older we'd love to take her to Europe. She's already quite set on the double decker buses in London and the Eiffel Tower in Paris from looking at photos of our time there.

What is one of your favourite books, why would you recommend it to others? We tend to read a pretty wide selection of books. At the moment we enjoy a few poems from A. A. Milne's 'Now We Are Six' like Sneezles and 'When We Were Very Young' like Disobedience and Vespers. We've also been reading Dr Kitty Cat is ready to rescue (Posy the Puppy) from the library, and a fun book called The Marvellous Fluffy Squishy Itty Bitty by Beatrice Alemagna. Grandma Julie bought us that one as well as 'The Wonder Garden' by Kristjana S Williams and Jenny Broom, which is a beautifully illustrated book for you to wander through five habitats and discover 80 amazing animals. Ellie has also been taking a mini thesaurus to the supermarket for 'recipes', which more often than not results in discussions with staff and strangers...

FROM CAMILLA, PLAYGROUP SUPERVISOR

Welcome back to the new term! And a very special welcome to the new families that are joining us.

A few of our oldest children left at the end of the term and are off to preschool! That's a big milestone in the life of the young child, as it is often their first conscious transition into a new environment. However, teachers from the preschool often comment on how readily children from playgroup settle in, and how capable they are. The biggest challenge is often saying goodbye to mum, or dad or whoever has been taking care of them. So it's a good idea to be planting the idea in your child's head before they get to preschool that preschool is just for children, not for big people.

During the holidays I had the opportunity to travel to Hamilton to attend the annual Montessori conference, which also had a component about under threes. It was very inspiring, and I hope to share some of the things I learned from it. The biggest reminder was to trust. Trust in your child. Trust in your baby. They know what they need to do to grow and move forward. If a child is always throwing things, they are not being naughty. Recognise that they have a need to throw and then find a way to provide that

opportunity for them. Give them a bucket and a selection of balls to throw into it. If we can change our view of the child, we are no longer irritated by their actions, and instead can enjoy the challenge of finding new opportunities for them.

We urgently need to re-establish a working committee for playgroup, so that we can keep track of how things are going, keep things running smoothly, and make improvements. At the moment Bianca is still doing the job of playgroup enrolments even though her child has moved on to the preschool and h is pregnant. Being on the playgroup committee does not need to be an arduous task. We meet once a term for planning, reviewing and discussing, along with wine and nibbles. We also plan a fund raising activity to secure the playgroup's finances. Judy and Tammy have been in the role of chair and vice chair but they both have children turning three this year so need to be urgently replaced. So at the moment we are looking for:

Chair

Vice chair

Treasurer

Enrolments officer - Vicky Pan

Health and Safety officer

Equipment officer

Rosters - Isadora, Fiona

So please, don't hesitate to up your hand up for a wee job!

We are also keen to have a playgroup social evening this term. Let me know if you have any ideas for a casual get together.

On another note, for you coffee drinkers out there - we have run out, so if you are a coffee drinker, please bring in a bag of your favourite coffee to share.

Other things to remember:

Please bring two pieces of fruit for each session: banana, apple, orange, mandarin.

Bring a carrot if your child likes juicing.

If you are on laundry duty please remember that the laundry comes back with a chunk of cheese to be used in the following session.

I will be away for a week in August, so Rucelin will be stepping in for me on Thursday 24th and Tues 29th.

If you have anything you would like to discuss with me or ask about regarding Montessori playgroup, Montessori education and your child, please feel free to do so anytime.

Let's have a really 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.

Term 3 2016 – Key Dates for your calendar

Date	Event
Monday 25 th July (first day of term)	Council meeting 7.30pm at the Preschool
Monday 1 st August	Fire drill – all classes
Tuesday 9 th August	Enrolment/Welcome evening 7.30pm at the Preschool. For parents on the waiting list and new to the Preschool.
Sunday 14 th August	Working Bee (surnames I – P) 9am – 12 noon
Monday 15 th August	Council meeting 7.30pm at the Preschool
Monday 15 th August-Friday 19 th August	Earthquake drills all week
Friday 2 nd September	Father's day celebration 9am-10am

Friday 9 th September	Family fish and chips evening 5.00pm – 6.30pm with entertainment tbc, Northland Memorial Community Centre, 5 Woburn Road, Northland
Monday 12 th September	Council meeting 7.30pm at the Preschool
Tuesday 13 th September	Parent educational session around 9.00am in the Otari School Staffroom. An opportunity to discuss education, parenting and Montessori with Florence. Topic: Introduction to the Virtues Project. Younger siblings welcome. Tea and coffee provided.
Friday 23 rd September	Last day of Term
Monday 26 th , Tuesday 27 th , Thursday 29 th , Friday 30 th September	Holiday programme – children will be enrolled and can come on any or all of the days, for their normal school hours. Further details to follow.
Monday 10 th October	Term 4 starts
Fundraisers for term 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entertainment books – ongoing • Abacus cards, calendars, diary fundraiser • Recipe Book fundraiser • Movie night??
Coming up in Term 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council meeting 17th Oct, 14th Nov, 12th Dec • Labour Day Monday 24th October Preschool closed • Parent survey starts tbc • Working bee (surnames Q-Z) Sunday 30th October • Open Day 5th November 10am - 12noon • Last day of Term 4 Friday 16th December