

TERM 4-2018

NEWSLETTER

FROM FLORENCE, CENTRE LEADER



Kia ora koutou,

And welcome to our last newsletter of the year... I can't believe we are in Term 4 already...

Last term, Steph and I attended a presentation by a facilitator from the Enviroschools programme. This programme supports schools to plan, design and implement sustainability actions that are important to them and their communities. Schools are invited to apply to be part of the programme but have to commit to develop their project and being part of a learning group, helped by a facilitator. At our last staff meeting, the whole team weighed the pros and cons of joining or not. We made our own internal audit of the sustainable 'green' practices that we have in place and other projects we would like to grow in the short term. We decided not to join for now as we realised that we were already doing a lot and would like to consolidate our actions.

Here are some of our current actions:

- First of all, the Montessori Philosophy focuses on providing a beautiful environment, using natural resources whenever possible; we are slowly replacing plastic items with more natural options, like wood, bamboo, copper, silver, stainless steel...check out our shelves!
- We have dramatically reduced our use of plastic bags, by selling or asking parents to provide a wet bag for wet/soiled clothes; from Term 4 we want to start wrapping wet clothes in newspaper if no wet bag is available in your child's bag.

- We are hoping to get a water tank installed at the next Working Bee (Sunday 28 October) to develop awareness in water consumption and encourage children to practice moderation when using this precious resource.

There is still room for improvement and we want to focus on 2 areas to develop in order to get our tamariki closer to nature and more connected to it.

First, we have decided to improve our gardening programme; lucky for us, Pam and Holly are keen and knowledgeable gardeners who have given us good advice about what to plant and when! We are going to modify the gardening area we already have by cleaning our strawberry patch, developing a herb/sensorial garden (so children can make herbal tea or use the rosemary and/or thyme with roasted vegetables!), also replant flowers (so children can cut and arrange flowers for their classrooms) and start growing some vegetables (hoping we can eat some of our humble harvest in Term 1!) We will offer gardening as a regular activity either in the morning or in the afternoon, in small groups, directed by a teacher. Long term, we are hoping that the children will have good skills to do gardening on their own!

The second exciting project we are keen to put in place is to take children to Otari Bush! We will start those visits on Thursday afternoons, on a trial basis first (possibly starting week 2/T4), depending on weather. But if that is successful, we might make it a weekly feature of our programme, and go in all weather and all year long. We will keep you posted on our experience!

If you are an enthusiastic gardener or feel passionate about a visit to Otari Bush and would like to support and be involved, please talk to one of us. We always welcome whanau engagement.

With the good weather returning so is our hat policy! It is compulsory to wear a hat after Labour weekend so please make sure your child has a named large-brimmed hat that stays at Preschool. We have sunscreen available at Preschool, but we recommend you apply protection before coming to Preschool too.

Last but not least, our big Annual Movie night is coming up! Tickets have been allocated to each family, so check your child's pocket. There are many ways you can help out: buy your tickets, promote the event as much as possible (think Facebook, email, word of mouth), donate items for the raffles and the auction (such as wine, chocolates, oils, vouchers from local businesses, restaurants, hairdresser...) Every effort counts to raise money for our garden fund. Plus, it will be a great fun night, featuring the premiere of the movie Bohemian Rhapsody... I look forward to seeing many of you on Thursday 1st of November!

Let's hope for another great term that will nicely take us into the festive season of Christmas with our annual International Day celebration on the 19th of December!

Ka kite ano – Nga mihi nui

Florence

From Antony, President/Council Chairperson

Kia ora and welcome to the final Term of 2018

Near the end of last term you'll recall that Richard Wall finished up his role as President, but remains on the council to oversee Property matters until the next AGM. It goes without saying that Richard has been a very familiar face to all parents and children and the council is hugely grateful for his stewardship over the last 18 months.

The Dixon family is not new to the council, with Stefanie having held the Enrolments role for some time. I'm looking forward to making a solid contribution - but it will be a fairly short tenure, as I can only be on the council through until the next AGM (March 2019). I urge all parents, especially those enrolling your child recently, to consider being part of the council as I'm sure Florence, Nicola and all the Preschool teachers would love to have council members that are able to contribute for 1-2 years.

As a great example of this, I'm delighted to report from our last council meeting that Briar Simpson was voted on to the Council as our Parent Liaison Officer.

At the same meeting though, we had a resignation from Fundraising superhero Tammy Smith. Tammy and family are moving to Christchurch and we wish them all the best. So, if you know of someone that can help champion fundraising initiatives, please do contact a council member or Nicola and let us know.

Many of you will be aware of the recent UN climate change report warning of just 12 years to keep global warming to a maximum of 1.5C. It's been described by one of the authors as "This is the largest clarion bell from the science community and I hope it mobilises people and dents the mood of complacency." So it was with great interest that I read of the many initiatives that Florence describes in this newsletter of sustainable practices happening at our Preschool. Next time you see Florence, or any one of our amazing teachers, please thank them for the leadership they are showing to encourage our children to be mindful and respectful of the environment.

I also want to take the opportunity to remind you of the upcoming fundraising event, our biggest of the year, to see the premier of Bohemian Rhapsody on November 1st. I'm sure it will be a blast - so please do support it and I look forward to seeing you on the night!

“Money may not buy happiness, but it can damn well give it!”

- Freddie Mercury

Introducing our Families

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

Who are the members of your family? Frank is one of the eldest at Kauri class, Anna (7) was in Kōwhai for 3 years, went to Wadestown School for a while but returned to Otari School in Kākāriki class this year in Year 3. We have their elder brothers Cameron and Liam (20 & 19) who live with us sometimes, finished off by Antony (pāpā), Stefanie (māmā), our kurī Scooter and ngeru Tammy.

Why did you choose Montessori @ Otari preschool? We share the Montessori philosophy of respect for the self, others and the environment and at 3 years old, Anna was a very thoughtful child who liked having freedom, respect and independence, also the opportunity to absorb herself in work for as long as she wanted without interruption. She got all that when she started preschool and stayed until she was close to 6 years old. Frank followed at 3 and due to their 2 year age gap, were lucky enough to have both our tamariki in a shared space where they could work and play with each other for nearly a year. And due to them being in different classrooms, both had 'their space' where they could thrive independently to each other.

What's your favourite thing to do in Wellington with kids? Oriental Bay is always a favourite for climbing, paddling, playing in the sand, and riding scooters and bikes along the waterfront. On rainy days, Te Papa never fails, and closer to home, we regularly visit Otari Bush and love Zealandia for the walks and the café there is amazing!

Where is your favourite place to go on holiday with your family or where would your dream family holiday be and why? Due to being distant from all our family, when we get holiday time we tend to go to Auckland or New Plymouth to spend time with them. The English side of the family we see less often, but our last trip there for Uncle James' wedding was a picture postcard seaside holiday in Whitby, home of James Cook himself. Ice creams, donkey rides, merry-go-rounds on the beach and a sky that didn't turn dark throughout the night, the holiday of dreams.

What is one of your favourite books, why would you recommend it to others? Celia Lashlie's 'He'll Be Okay' was a great read for me while bringing up my teenage stepsons, and important now that I'm bringing up a conscientious young man of my own into the world. While I feel it is essential to arm our daughters with the tools to enter into the world, bringing up young men to do the same is just as important. I was lucky enough to see her documentary at the latest film festival, if you get an opportunity to see it, do!

What is your role? This is my second year on the council; the first as Playgroup Liaison and now as Enrolments Officer. I send out the enrolment documentation to new families/children, deal with some enquiries about the preschool from prospective parents and attend council meetings. I wish I had got involved in our children's journey earlier as it really is a great way to meet other parents, learn more about the preschool and help shape the way the preschool runs.

What do you enjoy about the council? It's great to be directly involved in the education of my children, understand the context they are in and help shape the way things can change and improve. I am also a strong believer in the importance of a diverse community and being part of the council is a fantastic opportunity to create this. I love the open and cooperative discussions in our meetings. Running a preschool as great as ours is a big job for the teachers, and being part of the council really is a case of many hands make light work! Plus, it's fun getting to know parents without children tugging at our ankles for attention and of course there is the wine and the cheese that occasionally turns up too..

FROM CAMILLA, PLAYGROUP SUPERVISOR

We have a number of new families joining us this term so a very warm welcome to you. And we will be saying farewell to quite a number of children who are getting ready to start at Montessori-at-Otari preschool in the near future. This is so exciting and it is lovely to see the positive transition that the playgroup children make.

The ease of this transition is really helped along by visits from Florence and the other teachers to playgroup and also by our visits to the preschool garden. As these are weather dependent, we have decided to do two visits per term, so that we have a higher success rate! The first of these will be on Tuesday October 30, and Thursday November 1 (postponement will be the week after). This means we will aim to pack up a little earlier on these days and head to the preschool at around 11.15.

Playgroup is a place of collaboration between the child and the adult. It's a place where you can plant seeds of good work practice for your child, empowering them to be able to choose their own activity and supporting them to put things away. Please don't feel discouraged if your child takes time to learn this principle. Between 0 and 3, the child is going through a profound period of self-construction, so the important thing is to continue planting the idea in the child, and surely those seeds will come to bloom. Patience is the key!

On a practical note, please remember to sign the name sheet each session as this provides the evidence needed for our funding. Also, if you are a coffee drinker, please bring in a bag of coffee that can be used for this term.

If you would like to get more involved with the running of playgroup, we have a parent committee which aims to meet once a term over coffee to brainstorm ideas for fundraising and other matters. Please do let me know if you are keen. We are looking for a health and safety person who can check through our earthquake kit and help organise its update. Thanks to Vanessa who has taken over the duty roster from Michelle for the Tuesday session.

Let's have a lovely term together!

Camilla