

Norwest CCC News –July 2008

2 Maitland Pl Baulkham Hills NSW 2153* Ph 02 8850 2833* F 02 8850 2844 * E norwestccc@optusnet.com.au

Setting the Standard for High Quality, Affordable Child Care in the Hills District

Director's Update

It is hard to believe, but it is that time of year again when you need to start thinking about re-enrolling for next year, but the time has come! We will email you out a re-enrollment form shortly, to fill in and return to us as soon as possible. Remember, if you are planning on changing days next year, you had better get in quick as places fill up fast and it is 'first in first served'. Forms will also be available near the front office for those who do not have email access.

We are also pleased to announce that we are finalists for the **Hills True Local Business Award for best Children's Service or Education!** Congratulations to all our staff and thank you to those people who have supported us.

Dates for your diary:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 15 th Aug | Norwest Disco |
| 5 th Sept | Father's Day breakfast |
| 8 th Oct | Pink Ribbon Morning Tea |
| 20 th Oct | Children's Week celebrations begin |
| 13 th Nov | Grandparents Morning Tea |
| 20 th Nov | School Reunion for the Class of 2007 |
| 26 th Nov | Meet the teacher afternoon tea for 2009 |
| 8 th Dec | Christmas Party for Ocean Room |
| 9 th Dec | Christmas Party for Rainforest Room |
| 10 th Dec | Christmas Party for Bush Room |
| 24 th Dec | Our last day for 2008 – closing at 4pm |
| 12 th Jan 09 | Centre re-opens for 2009 |



Changing Date

Due to parent suggestion we have decided to change the final date of care for 2008. Instead of closing on the 19th of December as we noted on our events calendar, we will now be closing on the **24th December**. Please note that we will be closing at **4pm** sharp and any parents who are late to pick up their child will have to pay the 'Christmas close late fee'.



On the 18th October there is only one place to be...

Grab all your brainy friends and bring them along to the Norwest Child Care Centre **Trivia Night**. It will be held at 7.30 at Northmead Bowling Club, just down Windsor Road. It promises to be a brilliant night with amazing prizes and heaps of fun to be had. Tickets are \$15 each and a table (of either 8 or 10) get a discount of \$10. There is a great bistro at the club where you can purchase yummy meals and snacks, as well as a bar for drinks. To purchase tickets, just leave your money in an envelope in the fees box, clearly stating your name and how many tickets you wish to purchase. Your tickets will then be given to you before the night.

Meet our new staff.....

Monique has joined us as a new trainee and is full of enthusiasm for her new role.



Monique finished high school in 2005 and started a hairdressing and make up artistry course before deciding that her true calling was in child care. When she's not working, she loves to swim and go to the gym. She is taking up an internal relief position, so if you see

her, please take the time to say hi!

Michelle has joined the Ocean Room as their permanent afternoon assistant. Although she has no formal experience in child care, she does have three lovely children, so she has a great insight into babies and caring for their needs.



Going Green

The environment is a hot topic at the moment and we too have been having a think about how we can go a little 'greener' to do our bit. We have changed a few habits lately:

- We have just organised to change all our cleaning products to neutral biodegradable products! This will take effect by the end of the month.
- We are going to use more recycled paper in the centre for things like the weekly rolls or statements.
- Whenever we go to the shops to buy food, we are going to bring our own Norwest bags in order to avoid using plastic
- We are planting fruit trees and herb garden



Here's where you come in...

We need your help to brainstorm more ideas on how we can create a more environmentally friendly child care centre. We will be offering 5 free Norwest Greenbags for the best suggestions that come our way. If you have any ideas, please email them through or speak to someone in the office. We are also offering to sell our Greenbags for \$1 for anyone who is interested in joining our campaign.

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WANTED - recycled A4 paper - printed on one side. Do you have any old company letter head, or paper that your organisation no longer needs that we can use at the centre? If so, drop it to the office - we can use it for our printing and to recycle for art and craft activities.

What we get up to at our staff meetings...

You may be wondering what 25 women get up to when we have our staff meeting every second month, well, normally we focus on training, but this months staff meeting had a team building emphasis and we all participated in a

Belly Dancing Workshop!



We have also had staff attend training on OH& S, First Aid and programming.

Spotlight on.....

Name: Our cook, Michele

Started at Norwest: July 2004

Working in: Kitchen

Family: Married with 2 children, Chloe and Emily

Favorite thing to do on a weekend: Reading cookbooks and experimenting with new recipes.

Something you didn't know about me: She is going to be a bridesmaid for Kirsty

when she gets married next April!



Food, Glorious Food

It was great to see that a majority of parents rated the food at the centre as 'excellent' in our parent survey. This year, Michele and Lorna have made it a priority to make the children's menu's more exciting and

interesting for the children, even getting inspiration from some of the great celebrity chefs, including Jamie Oliver, Bill Granger and Donna Hay! We have introduced a number of new dishes and flavours and encouraged the kids to eat a variety of ingredients – your children are probably more adventurous than some of you realise. Many of you would not be aware that Michele has over 37 different allergies/food restrictions to cater for in a week, which certainly takes a lot of organization and creativity. We love trying new recipes so if anyone has any suggestions, please do not hesitate to let us know.

One of the real winners of this season has been

Lamb Kofta

Ingredients serves 4

500 g lamb mince
½ sm. Brown onion
1 sm carrot grated
1 garlic glove
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
2 tablespoons chopped parsley

Serve with cous cous

And Mixed vegetables like pumpkin, zucchini and carrot

Method:

Place mince, onion, carrot, garlic, cumin, coriander and parsley in a bowl.

Using your hands mix well till combined.

Divide evenly into 8 portions and roll into sausage shapes.

Heat a non-stick pan on medium heat.

Spray with oil. Cook turning occasionally for 8 minutes till brown.

Putting your Business in the Spotlight

Our Trivia Night in October is a great opportunity to promote your business. If you donate a prize for the night, we will promote your business in our newsletter and on the evenings program. You can also put a banner or poster up at the venue to gain further exposure. If you would like to donate a prize, please feel free to drop us an email or come and speak to one of us in the office.

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To all the Bookworms out there...



If you have any books that you are discarding please contact Sarah Garnett at smclach@bigpond.com or phone 0400 816 402. Sarah runs the Benjamin Andrew

Footpath Library, which supplies homeless people with books. She sets up on the footpath opposite Yurong Parkway behind St Mary's Cathedral, every Tuesday night. There are no rules to this library, the borrowers can have the books as long as they like, take as many as they want, return what they can. Sarah can use up to 150 books on a Tuesday night, she also goes to women's refuges through the week. Most book are accepted gratefully except wine books or anything that advocates suicidal tendencies or addictive behaviours. Please put any books in the designated box in the foyer.

A garden you can eat!



We would like to give a special thank you to the Engall family who helped us organise the new fruit trees and olive trees in the playground and also donated some other lovely new plants.

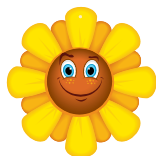
The Engall's own Engall Nursery on Old Northern Road which specialize in fruit trees. Drop in and take a look around if you are looking to spruce up your yard.

Portfolios and parent meetings

We are sure that you would all be very happy with your child's progress in the portfolio. The girls have put in a lot of hard work to make them a very special keepsake for you. If you would like to arrange a time to meet with your child's Group leader, please speak with them at any time or email the centre.

THANK YOU to the following families

Derwin – Books and homecorner stuff
Kalf – Toys
Buxton – baby toys
Spooner Smith – Weather chart and craft
Darch – Paper
Webber – Paper
Mason – Puzzles
Reid – Paper and textas and a snail
Holloway – paper and tapes
Hallinan – Toys
Thomas – recipes
Morris - recipes
Paras – Paper
And any other parent who has donated things to us – we really do appreciate it



Parents...We want YOU!



We have had some fantastic parent participation in the centre lately, so we thought we would encourage all you other parents to come in and get involved. We would like to thank the following parents for coming in and sharing some great experiences with us:

Jen Kumar – read stories

Vivien Mohan-Ram – danced, made playdough and played with the children!

Amanda Vaughan – who cooked some amazing scones

Roberta Dean for bringing in their new puppies to show the children.

Michelle Dockary and Jackie Ebejer also helped us to organise local excursions which the children loved.

If you have an idea for how you can become involved in the centre, please have a chat to your Group Leader.

Parent Surveys

Thank you so much to all those parents who took the time to fill out our on-line survey. Your feedback and suggestions are extremely valuable to us and help us in our efforts to provide the best quality care and education for your children.

It is great to see that over 70% of our parents read the Daybook everyday their child attends. Our new format this year is easier to read and more aesthetically pleasing, making them more inviting to parents. Most parents admitted that they rarely contribute to the program though, as this is a very valuable way of finding out about your child, we want to make it easier for you to do – feel free to email any comments or suggestions that you have.

We were very pleased to receive 'excellent' ratings in the following areas:

Food, environment, activities, art and craft, experiences, early science/investigation skills, fine motor skills, music and movement, day books, portfolios, newsletters, emails, phone calls, support to staff, leadership, approachability and staff training!!

The following staff have recently had an anniversary at the centre:

Amanda has been here 2 years this month, Louise 3 and Jayne has been here 5 years!!

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Listening to your needs

Other comments and suggestions from the parent surveys that we have already actioned are outlined below:

Afternoon Feedback

A couple of parents commented that it was sometimes difficult to discuss issues with the staff in the afternoon as they are usually so busy...so we have hired additional staff to hopefully ease the stress. We created a position in the Ocean Room for Michelle in the afternoons, which will definitely free up everyone's time. We have also employed two new internal relief staff, Monique and Sarah. Having permanent relief staff rather than casuals means that of the staff on duty, all of them can answer your questions and comment on your child's day. We are also making some changes to the Bush Room routine and staff shifts to ensure there are more teachers available for you to talk to.

Who's Who

Thank you to the parent who suggested we get name tags for the staff – the new ones look great and hopefully it will make it easier for parents to learn our names.



Shedding some light...

You will probably all have noticed by now that the lights in our carpark are working again!!! We do apologise for the delay, there were some electrical issues that

took quite a few electricians to sort out in the end, but at least we now have a safe carpark again!

Morning chats

Some parents also commented that it was sometimes difficult to talk to staff in the morning with so many children arriving at a similar time – in response to those concerns we have extended some of the girls shifts so that there are more staff here earlier in the morning.



Ocean Room



The children have been having great fun exploring their environment lately and trying some new things. The Penguins and Dolphins have been really interested in their new fruit trees and we have even

used them to make our own fruit juice. We have also been spending time outside on our every changing obstacle course. The children are becoming very confident on the equipment, so we are trying to gradually make it more challenging for them.

The Rainbow Fish babies have also been challenging themselves with many learning to crawl and walk recently. Some have also been brought on their very first excursion which was very exciting – following up on an interest in animals, we took them down to the pond to feed the ducks. The babies are also enjoying their very own new area outside in the playground.

Rainforest Room

The Rainforest Room children are becoming very independent these days. They love being given the opportunity to make their own beds and help friends with theirs. They are also attempting to put their own shoes and socks on as well as helping to set up simple activities throughout the room.



A very popular recent activity has been dress ups. The children have enjoyed dressing up in front of the mirror and doing role plays – “I'm like Daddy” or “I'm going to work like mummy”. We also had a special dress up party day last week which was lots of fun. Late last month we had pyjama day which the children loved being involved in. Face painting has also been popular since Red Nose Day when we painted our noses red. We have since done some pattern painting on our faces which also tied in with celebrating NAIDOC Week. We did some great nature painting with sticks instead of brushes.

Bush Room

With Rachel away overseas, we have taken the opportunity to explore the Middle East recently and the children will be able to tell Rachel all about the places that she has visited. The Wallabies have learnt many interesting things, surfed the internet for further information and even learnt to write their name in hieroglyphics.

The Joeys have been learning about alternative forms of communication and have become quite confident users of Makaton sign language.

The Kangaroos have had a lot of different interests lately including an interest in soccer which we were able to further develop during sports day and again when we were able to have some local junior soccer players come into the centre to play ball skills with them in the afternoon. They have also been very interested in the environment and different habitats and developed their own snail house. This then developed into an interest in looking at hazards within environments and habitats – they are all very pleased that we are changing to more environmentally friendly cleaning products!!

Transition to School newsletter coming soon!