

November 2010 Newsletter



Notes from the Director

I am sure you would all agree that we are wrapping up a busy year at Norwest. Firstly I'd like to say a big thank you to all the Norwest families, friends and staff who did a great job selling all the chocolates during our chocolate drive. Thanks to everyone's hard work fundraising we were able to spoil ourselves with some fantastic recourses. You may have noticed the display of goodies in the foyer (or perhaps your children got caught up playing with them on their way in or out of the centre). Fundraising enables us to spend money on those great 'extra' things that we all love to use and play with. This year has been a year filled of learning, great activities and loads of parent participation allowing all the children to grow and develop in many ways, learn new skills and form great bonds with the children and teachers that they see each day. We have welcomed many new families, majority of whom will be returning with us in 2011. We wish the Kangaroos who are off to school the best of luck throughout their new educational journey.

As the year comes to an end there are many things we all need to finalise. This newsletter will include many of the things you need to know for wrapping up a great year at Norwest Child Care Centre.

Dates for your diary

- Wednesday 18th November - Meet the teachers afternoon tea
- Tuesday 30th November - Ocean Room End of Year Concert
- Tuesday 7th December - Rainforest Room End of Year Concert
- Tuesday 14th December - Bush Room End of year Concert and Kangaroo's Graduation
- Friday 10th December - All accounts due for settlement
- Thursday 23rd December - Last day for 2010 - Closing at 4pm sharp

What's Cookin'?



Our spring menu is in full force and everyone at the centre is loving it. It will be coming to an end at the end of the month as we introduce our summer menu in December.

The kids in the rooms have been getting involved in cooking their lunches with Michele. A few weeks back Ben, Michele and some of the Joeys made pizza from scratch (base and all) and only yesterday they made Sushi. We also had a bit of a Halloween theme going on in the Kitchen last week with the children getting involved in pumpkin carving and making 'brain' jelly from scratch with Rainforest and Bush Room kids.



Some of our favourites from the spring menu include - Middle Eastern carrot and chickpea soup, chicken Caesar salad, Thai Coconut chicken and rice soup and Tuna and dill mayo wholemeal wraps. We are also wild about the Moroccan Scrolls!

The Kangaroos lunch boxes start on the 8th November and the menu for the kangaroos lunches will be on display shortly.

Michele has also put together a cook book of all her great recipes. We will have a prototype and further details available to you shortly. The cook books will make great gifts for family and friends!

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Lost Property

Our lost property basket has become very full. If you child

has lost something while at Norwest please take a look in the basket. It is probably not a bad idea for all families to take a look through the basket to make sure nothing belongs to them (you may not have realised you have lost something).

Christmas Donations

In the true spirit of Christmas, we would like to collect, on your behalf, donations of second hand clothes, books and toys for children in need. We will have boxes available for your donations in the foyer until December 10th, and it's a great opportunity for your kids to make some room for their new toys, by choosing a few of their toys to donate.

Accounts

Final statements will be sent out on Tuesday 30th November and will show balance owing to the rest of the year. We ask that all accounts are finalised by Friday 10th December 2010 so that we can hand out your child's portfolios, photo cd's (if you are buying one) etc on their last day. If you are finishing up early we ask that your account is finalised prior to your last day for the year.

Direct Debit

Until now, at Norwest you could pay your fees via cash, cheque, direct deposit or eftpos/credit card. Next month we will be trialling the use of Direct Debit (where, on a fortnightly basis we debit your account - rather than the current system where you have to push the payment through to us). Many parents have requested this direct debit option, which allows them to 'set and forget' their child care fees. We issue you with a fortnightly statement showing what you owe and what we will be deducting, and then we have it taken out of your account for you. It's an incredibly flexible system, which, for a small fee, saves hours of hassle paying your child care fees and can be adjusted as we need to. If you'd like to be a part of our trial, please speak with Tasha or Nesha.

Photo CDs

All families will receive a photo CD of their children at the end of the year and the cost of these will be charged to your account. After much parent feedback last year we have decided that everyone will receive a cd unless we have been otherwise informed. If you don't want one of these amazing mementos of your child's year, please email the office to let them know before the 26th November.

Scrap Paper

As the children's writing and literacy skills transpire, and their Creative talents come to light, they go through hundreds of sheets of paper working on these valuable skills. If you have scrap paper hanging around the house or the office (printed on one side) the staff and children would LOVE to use it. Re using paper ensures that we are minimising the impact on our environment

-we recycle it after we use it too!

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End of year raffle

We are in the process of putting together a fantastic basket full of goodies for the whole family including Mum, Dad and the kids. You can purchase tickets for \$2 each or 3 for \$5 and will be available from the office shortly or at the end of year concert.

Christmas Craft

At Norwest we are all about making Christmas craft. If for some reason you don't have Christmas craft or seemed to have missed out, please let us know. As you can imagine ensuring that 150 children all go home with their craft can be quite a task. If you would also like something special made for another family member please let the staff in your child's room know.

Blue books

Don't forget that every time you get your child's immunization updated to bring in a copy for us. We need to know and keep records of your child's immunization status in case of an outbreak of a communicable disease. Any child who is not immunized, or any child we don't have records for, will be excluded in the unlikely event of an outbreak.

End of Year Party Information

On the night of the parties we will be providing drinks and a sausage sizzle as well as iceblocks if it's warm. We'll give you an overview of the nights in a separate email. You can buy tickets by emailing the team - \$2 each, or \$4 on the day.

Is your child going to school?

Please don't forget to fill out an official exit form indicating your child's last day of care. Although many of you may have emailed the team to inform us of your child's last day, it is a regulation that we receive this information with your feedback in writing.

Please pay your accounts as per usual up until your child's last day, then 3 weeks after your last day, and with your fobs returned, we'll make any final adjustments and send you back your bond (along with a final statement) via a cheque. All fees for school leavers returning in January need to be paid in full in December. If you have any questions regarding this please don't hesitate to email us your queries.

Family Donations

A huge thank you to all the families who have made donations to the centre.

Northeys – Sports Drink Bottles

Lindays – Childrens drinking cups

Schweigers and Walters – Scrap paper

Hamiltons – Tickets and blocks

Kumars – Graduation Certificate seal

Meddings and Vincents – DVD's

Walkers – Puzzles

Van Neijenhoffs – paper, toys and books

Valdezates – books

Fazzios – sand pit toys

Craunbridge – Craunhooking paper

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Warmer weather and sun safe clothing

As the weather warms up we need to start being mindful of the clothes we are sending the children to child care in.

Clothing: Keeping your child's skin covered with clothes made from tightly woven fabric such as t-shirt material will protect her from the sun. If you hold the fabric up to the light you can see how much sun will get through it. It is important that children are not over or under dressed, and that clothing suits the temperature. The smaller the child the more easily they can become chilled or overheated.

Hats: A hat is a great way to protect your child from the sun. A full crown hat with a full brim or a neck flap is better than a baseball cap because it provides more shade; a chin strap in day care is a choking hazard so these will need to be removed. Please remember to leave a hat at the centre, as well as pack a spare in your child's bag (if they don't have a hat they can't play outside). Remember to LABEL the hat and any other items of clothing very clearly with your child's name.

Sunscreen: Sunscreen combined with clothing and shade is the most effective way to keep your child safe from sun and reflection. Use a high SPF sunscreen on the face, hands and any other parts of your child's body that aren't covered by clothes Sunscreen is to be applied by parents.

Spots for 2011

We are really filling up and have limited vacancies for 2011. If you are a school leaver and require care for January please let the team know as soon as possible. Your child's position is secure when you receive a confirmation email from the office. If you have friends or family requiring care in 2011 please send them down to the centre for a tour. Anyone who sends down a new family, and they choose to enrol, will be rewarded with a free massage!!!!

Staff training

At Norwest Child Care Centre we constantly strive to maximise our professional development with many of our staff participating in training and workshops.

- **Communicating with Parents of Children with additional needs** -
- **Accredited Food Handling Course**- Fernanda,
- Nesha, Amanda and Becky attended the **Early Childhood Australia Conference** in Adelaide and were a part of tons of workshops, lectures and discussions.
- **Developing communication across the child care day** - Louise, Ashley, Michele, Nesha, Lyn, Lisa, Caitlin, Amanda, Fernanda, Rebecca, Helen, Jess R, Ally, Donna, Judith, Lauren,
- **OH&S Online training** - Frances, Laura R, Taryn, Jess W, Jess R, Lisa, Sarah, Rebecca, Gail, Caitlin, Fernanda, Donna.
- **Leading "Gen Y"** - Ashley, Rachel, Rebecca, Ally, Caitlin
- **Getting started with QJKids** - Ashley, Tasha - **Advanced Quikkids** - Ashley and Nesha
- **Working with CCMS** - Ashley
- **Taking the risk out of child care** - Ashley

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Spotlight on Becky

This month we have decided to shine the light on Rebecca, our Bush Room Leader! Becky lives with Bel (whom she worked with last year in the Rainforest Room, and who is now on Maternity leave), her husband Mike and their family including Keeley (21months), William (9months), Matthew (10years), and Bel's mother. Becky has two dogs; Monty (a Shih-tzu X Maltese) and Max (a German Shepherd X Kelpie) both of whom were adopted from Blacktown pound.

Becky has been working in child care for 7 years; her mother and aunty are also in the industry, so Becky spent many school holidays around long day care settings. In 2008 Becky completed a Masters Degree in Special Education.

Becky loves playing netball, but doesn't actively take part in a competition right now. She has just taken up a membership at the local gym though (with Fernanda) with hopes of being fit, fun and terrific in time for the summer holidays! She likes going bushwalking (with Jess W) and swimming at the beach (with Fernanda). Becky also loves working with children and with student teachers- this is an avenue that Becky is interested in exploring in the future- and is enrolled in Certificate 4 Training and Assessment.

Staff movements

A huge welcome back to Louise and little Miss Charlotte who have returned to the centre after taking a few months maternity leave. Louise is back in the Bush Room 3 days a week with the Joeys and Wallabies who are all very excited to have her around again, while her little girl is making herself at home in the Ocean Room. Louise is doing her best to get around to all the families and say 'hi' as well as introducing herself to many of our new families. If you see her feel free to say hello.



New Staff



Ben joined the team at Norwest in September 2010. Most of you have already met Ben and may know a little bit about him. For those of you who haven't, the rumours are true and he is in fact Ashley's younger brother. Ben is a very passionate rugby league player who holds a certificate in personal training. Ben chose to enter the child care industry having a love for children, and really enjoying watching them learn and develop. Ben is expecting his first child with partner Lisa in February.

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Enoka joined the Norwest team in September 2010 as a part time Early Childhood Teacher. She also holds a Diploma in Children's Services. Enoka mostly works on a Monday and Tuesday in the Bush Room. She also works casually as a primary school teacher in Hornsby. She is married and has two sons. Enoka has a great deal of experience with children, having worked with children in both preschool and school settings. Her repertoire of stories and songs is amazing and the children will tell you 'very entertaining' too! When

Enoka is not at work she loves to travel with her family and does her best to keep fit.



Judith began working at Norwest in October 2010. She has come from the field of Event Management and has decided to try her hand in child care. Always having a passion for children she has changed career paths and has joined us with a lot of enthusiasm and willingness to learn. Judith is very creative and is particularly good at arts. Judith is also really enjoying spending more time in the Ocean Room getting to know all the children and their families.

Room Updates

In the last couple of weeks the children have really enjoyed having some very exciting animal visits.



We had the petting zoo with some very cute animals including a 3 day old baby cow, baby chickens and rabbits, some fluffy chickens, goats and a pony. The children loved petting the animals and cuddling some of the smaller ones.



We had an absolutely awesome time with the Wild Animal Encounters recently! We were able to see and touch a small snake, a crocodile, an alligator, a tawny frogmouth owl, and a Burmese python - and our favourite IJ the capuchin monkey. These are animals we don't get to see every day.



Finally we also had a visit from a dog trainer who brought along his pink and purple poodles. They showed us some great tricks and we got to have photos with them. A big thank you to the Zammits for making this happen.



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Slumber Party

We held our first ever Slumber Party at Norwest on Friday the 29th November. It was a fantastic night and everyone had such a great time. The evening started off with some outdoor play, the under two's just loved being able to run around in the Bush Room yard. We soon moved inside for some table top activities and snacks. We ate fruit kebabs and made our own sandwiches. After this we put a movie on and the kids got cosy in front of the tv. As bed time approached we followed the regular night time routines (bottle, brushing teeth etc.) for each child and then put them to bed. All the Mums and Dads were able to treat themselves on a night out without the kids, while the kids had fun in a very familiar environment. We are already looking forward to our next Slumber Party.

Bush Room

Joey's: Monique will be off on a short 3 week break and in her place Ben will be taking up her position with the Joey's group. He has already been working in the Bush Room for 2 months, and is very familiar with all of the children in the Joey's group. He has started some really wonderful learning interests with these guys, looking more in depth at numeracy concepts.

Wallabies: You will have seen Louise back in the Bush Room over the last two weeks. She has returned for 3 days a week after being on maternity leave with her baby Charlotte, and will be working with the Wallabies and is currently embarking on a massive pirate interest with the children coming up with some ideas about treasure and using stories of pirate activities to decide what is a good or bad type of behaviour to enact at school. There has also been much interest in letters and in the association between letter forms and the sounds that these letters make (phonics). Building this link in a naturally occurring sequence of learning is the best way to ensure that children will fully understand these complex concepts.

Kangaroos: The Kangaroos have recently been delving into the world of commerce! This interest-based project emerged from a child inquiry about the bank system. A parent came in to share some information about coins from different countries and this led to a coin-rubbing learning experience. Fernanda, Amanda and Louise have all since added other coins to this investigation, and the children were able to notice that the coins from Australia have Australian animals on them and the English coins have the queen on them.

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Rainforest Room

In the rainforest room the children have been developing their fine motor skills by threading beads onto string, the children have also begun recognising the shapes of the beads as they thread them onto the strings.

Recently the children enjoyed the Halloween celebrations, they were very interested as they watched Michele carve out a pumpkin and make some jelly in a brain mould. Michelle talked about measurements and we followed it up by showing the children different measurements in a jug as a mathematical experience, this then led to a fantastic science experience using coloured water.

The children in the Rainforest Room have begun practicing their Christmas songs which will include a Brazilian song and a Maori song for the Christmas concert as well as a very special dance to Dr. Knickerbocker! The children have shown some excitement with the arrival of Santa very soon and have begun to tell their teachers of some of the many things they would like Santa to bring them.

Ocean Room

The Ocean Room has had a great couple of months. We have welcomed a lot of new friends into our room, almost doubling our babies group. We sadly said farewell to Kylie, and have welcomed Judith into our room. We have seen Lauren step up into the Dolphins group leader role, and she has excelled at it. With our younger ones we have been focusing on sensory experiences, rough craft and beautiful collages they look amazing. We recently celebrated Halloween, many thanks to the Mcintyres again, for their wonderful Halloween red velvet cake it was amazingly thoughtful. We did some fantastic spooky craft that we will be displaying on the walls. With the end of the year fast approaching, we are very excited for our end of year concert and hope to see you all there.

Information for parents with 'schoolers'

Below are some very useful links to factsheets for parents of children who are off to school. Happy reading!

<http://www.ncac.gov.au/factsheets/transition.pdf>

<http://www.ncac.gov.au/factsheets/play.pdf>

http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/languagesupport/best_start/literacy/english.pdf

http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/languagesupport/best_start/numeracy/english.pdf

