



September Newsletter 2010

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS BY RACHEL



Happy Spring to all! It's lovely to see the days getting warmer, the afternoons getting lighter and the flowers blooming around the place.

Thank you to all those dads who stayed around for our Father's Day breakfast on 3rd September. It was a great turn out and all the children seemed to thoroughly enjoy their dads hanging out with them for a while! We hope everyone enjoyed their special mousepads for **Father's Day** and you had an enjoyable time with family celebrating. Don't forget you are always welcome to pop in to the centre at any time throughout the day as per our **Open Door Policy**.

On the topic of leave, as of Friday 10th September I will be beginning my maternity leave. I look forward to sharing my baby news in the next couple of weeks. **Ashley** has now officially taken over as **Director**. Thank you to all of you for your support over the last 10 months as I have been in the 'leadership seat' at the centre – I'll see you again next May.

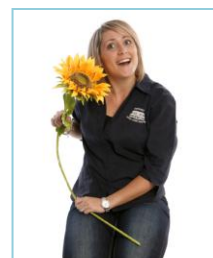
The last few months of the year are sure to fly by, with this half of the year action packed with many events and happenings in and around Norwest. Keep posted!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 8th September – Fireman Visit
- 16th September – Bush room Sports Day
- 3rd October – Daylight savings starts
- 4th October – RSPCA Awareness Week
- 4th October – World Space Week
- 8th October – RSPCA Happy Tails Day
- 10th October – National Nutrition Week
- 15th October – A Smart Farmer **Petting Zoo** and Bush room Sports Day
- 25th October – Pink Ribbon Day
- 26th October – **Wild Animal Encounters**
- 29th October – Bandana Day and Halloween celebrations

A Big **Thank you** to all our wonderful families who have supported our Chocolate Fundraiser! We appreciate each and every one of you who have taken a box (some of you up to 7 boxes!) and sold them to family, friends and colleagues. It's the money we get back from these fundraisers which helps us in providing the extra things like animal farm visits, professional visits and more. Many thanks for **Helen** for all her hard work in organising all the yummy boxes of chocolates!

Congratulations to the **Northey** family, so far leading for the most boxes of chocolate sold! 7 boxes in total so far!



SERVICES TO HELP YOU AROUND THE COMMUNITY

- The Hills Parenting Centre – www.hillsparentingcentre.com

Services involve the multi-disciplinary care of children from birth to five years of age. Treatment is provided for early childhood conditions relating to developmental, behavioural, feeding or sleeping disorders.

- Pregnancy and Parenting Wellbeing Centre- www.pregnancyandparenting.com.au

At the Pregnancy & Parenting Wellbeing Centre you will find a dedicated team of health professionals, offering specialised services to support you and your family.

- Wesley Mission www.wesleymission.org.au/centres/Family/familiesconnect.asp

Our services provide support at every stage in a family's life - financial and legal difficulties, domestic violence, family mediation, foster care, kids' camps, short-term accommodation and more.

- Kidspot – www.kidspot.com.au

A pregnancy and parenting resource to find advice and activities for baby and children
We also have a wealth of resources available for you at the centre through our children's library, staff resources and information folders in our foyer. Please speak with staff should you require any specific information from allergies to sun safety, immunisation to nutrition.

ROAD SAFETY

Young children always need an adult's help to keep them safe because they:

- Are small and difficult for drivers to see in the busy traffic environment.
- Don't always do what we expect them to do.
- Sometimes have a short attention span.
- May not make full use of their side vision.
- Can be easily distracted.
- May not always do the same thing in the same situation.
- Will focus on what is important to them.
- Are not able to cope with sudden changes in the road traffic environment.
- Take in different information from the road traffic environment than adults.
- Have difficulty judging speed and distance.
- Have difficulty in identifying where sounds are coming from.
- Are not able to understand what 'safety' means, and what will keep them 'safe'.



WHAT'S COOKING IN THE KITCHEN?



We have a fabulous new spring menu displayed on our wall with exciting dishes such as Spring Vegetable Quiche, Spiced Lamb-strip Salad with Chickpeas and Herbed Yogurt Dressing, and Moroccan Scrolls served with a Carrot and Chickpea Salad. (we had these today and they are awesome). Once again I have set up a "Taste" folder (www.taste.com.au) with some of the recipes that I've used. Don't forget that these are 'family sized' and that we modify all of our recipes to meet our nutritional requirements (eg removing any nuts).

COOKBOOK

We're developing a cook book for Christmas that you will be able to order, and your children will personalise. We'd love to include some of your favourite kids' meals, so please speak with Michele or email us at norwestccc@optusnet.com.au with your ideas before Friday 24th September!

STAFF MOVEMENTS:

Due to a terrible uni timetable this semester, **Matt** has moved over to Top Ryde where he could manage the commute better. Just one week after that we noticed the huge void in our teaching dynamic, so we have managed to sweet-talk Matt's brother-in-law (Ashley's little brother) **Ben** to join us at Norwest. He will be stepping into the role of Bush Room Sports Coordinator - with a fantastic focus on extending our teaching program through sports, games, gross motor, physical fitness and fun. Ben has a Certificate in IV in Personal Training, and plays professional football (out this season due to injury). He and his partner Lisa are expecting a baby in February, and he will be signing up soon to complete a Cert III in Children's Services.



In the couple of weeks that we had both Matt and Ben at Top Ryde, we managed to feature in an industry article - once again highlighting our leadership in the child care industry; click on the link below to read this great article!

<http://www.careforkids.com.au/childcarenews/2010/september/men-in-child-care.html>

Stepping into the Ocean Room is the lovely **Lauren** who has been working on her Group Leadership skills with Becky. She'll now return to the Ocean room to continue mentoring with Catilin and working with our youngest learners. Lauren has just wrapped up her Cert III in Children's Services, and has already embarked on her Diploma.



We are also delighted to be getting **Louise** back from maternity leave shortly (perhaps all the other 'new staff mums' will be following suit?). She'll start with us one day per week, back with the kids in the Bush Room, and build up from there.

And of course, we are farewelling **Rachel** this week who is off to have baby #2. We wish her the best of luck over the coming weeks - and look forward to welcoming Rachel and new bubby back next May.

You may have also seen **Musa** around the centre. Musa is Ally's partner, and the father of gorgeous baby Amelia. Originally from Uganda, he has recently completed a Psychology Degree, and is now working his way through a Psyc Internship here at Norwest with Nesha. His role at the centre includes Psyc education for our team (relaxation techniques, managing challenging behaviours), working with our children with additional needs and some organisational psyc work such as recruiting. He's also doing some counselling with our staff - and is able to offer some confidential and free counselling to families - please contact Nesha if you would like to arrange a meeting.

With Sarah taking extended leave until Christmas, we've employed **Tasha** as the Administration Manager. She's here Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. We've already had lots of positive feedback and comments from families about Tasha - and she's wasted no time in jumping on our OHS issues. Tasha has had lots of experience in HR and Administration work, running a large construction firm and she has two gorgeous children of her own Zara (8) and Flynn (4).



Many of you would have also seen the 'black van' in the carpark that means that **Tristan** is here. Tristan (Sarah's brother) has got to be the 'handiest' handyman we've ever had - he's able to fix ANYTHING and he does a great job every single time. If you've got a bunch of stuff at home on the 'to do' list, we highly recommend him - you can call him direct on 0414 844 461.

We've also been hit by a series of really awful uni timetables this semester (that's the problem with this whole 'supporting your team to further their professional career by offering a work/ study balance' thing...) and many of our part time staff have had to significantly reduce their hours at the centre. As such we're looking to recruit a new trainee or assistant to our centre. If you know anyone, please ask them to contact Tasha.

And, as always, we are continuing to support new entrants to the industry by mentoring **university and tafe students** on 'prac placements' - where they get to put all of their theory into practice. You'll see some of them around the centre in the coming weeks in our 'red shirts'. They are often a little afraid, as this is often their very first practical experiences of child care so if you see one of them say hi!

We love the cute photos that Danielle took of us – so we've included them in this newsletter. Thanks for your feedback on the lovely photos of your children.



Congratulations to **LYN** on being **AUGUST STAFF MEMBER OF THE MONTH!** What more can we say, she's a genuine asset to our team and the children all love her!



SEPTEMBER STAFF MEMBER OF THE MONTH – Voted by you!

Thanks to all of our families who gave feedback in our 'staff member of the month' competition for September. The winner was **JESSICA ROGERS**, who received wonderful feedback such as a genuine smile, a pleasure to greet, always happy to have a chat and share positive experiences about the babies day! These are up in the foyer to read.

SPOTLIGHT ON DONNA!

Donna has joined the Norwest team in the Rainforest room. All the children have warmed up to Donna's friendly character and as a centre we are loving the contribution Donna adds to our team. Donna has basic Te Reo Maori (Maori Language) and growing knowledge of both Australian and New Zealand Early Childhood Education. Donna has a recognised Diploma of Teaching Early Childhood Education from New Zealand, and is currently studying her Certificate III in Children's Services. Donna's interests are family and friends, herbal remedies, reading, walking, and studying. Donna has children of her own and twin grandchildren!



EXCURSIONS

We got lots of fanastically helpful feedback at the Family Meeting that we held while the kids were Discoing in August. One great point was how much families loved the excursions. The biggest problem we had faced, which is why our excursions were shelved, was staff need to have a Bronze Medallion to travel near water. With many of our favourite local destinations surrounded by water, we have had to be a little creative in the way we explore the community. So to get back on track we are planning a group Bronze Medallion course and we look forward to sharing many wonderful community experiences with the children – from visits to Coles, heading to the Post Office, dining out for lunch or visiting your workplaces. Chat with your child's teacher for more info!

ENVIRONMENT

We've had a couple of glitches with our spunky solar power system - but that hasn't stopped the other environmental initiatives around the centre - most recently we've installed some 'easy off' taps for the kids, to make it easier for them to turn taps on and off. Our brilliant plumber Mark Flemming has done a great job sourcing and installing these new taps for us. The kids in the Bush room have also been going on 'rubbish excursions' no... it's not a 'flop' of an excursion (!) - they've been kitting up and walking around the local streets identifying rubbish, picking it up (where safe) and putting it in the bin or recycling.



WHERE ARE ALL THE STAFF?

We often have families comment that when the children are outside, they can't seem to see any staff! And yet, we know that when we move the children outside our ratios actually drop (ie we need more staff, not less). So we spent some time trying to figure out why families felt that way, and realised that it was because the team are doing exactly what we tell them to do - which is to 'get in' with the kids. Rather than standing back and watching from a distance, our team are down at the children's level participating in the activities, and engaging the children in the planned learning opportunities we provide outdoors. Quite often they've got their socks and shoes off and are in the sandpit, or they're inside the cubbyhouse, or sitting down at the outdoor tables working on literacy skills, or lying on the rugs having a quiet moment reading with the children. We know it sometimes makes them hard to find, so we've issued them all with "Norwest hats" to wear outside to try and make them a bit more identifiable (we have more coming with our new logo!). It might take a few moments to find the team, but they are out there, ensuring that your children are safe all the time!



PARENT NIGHT / SLEEP OVER PARTY - COMING IN OCTOBER

Further to great feedback from our Annual Family Meeting we're going to go ahead with a parent night/sleep over party. We just need to get some final 'clearances' from the council/insurance/community services and then we'll be able to give you a date. The idea is that for a nominal fee, you would bring your children to the centre in their PJs ready for a sleep over. We'll provide them with a light supper and then some 'night time' activities such as stories, movies and cuddles, and then we'll help them drift off to sleep snuggled up with their friends. Meanwhile, mums and dads will be able to join us for a quick social drink at the centre where you can get to know other parents, and then go out to dinner or a movie (and if we're really coordinated get a special deal at a local restaurant) - and be back to pick up their kids by 11pm. Numbers will be limited, so as soon as we can confirm a date, you'll need to book

END OF YEAR CONCERTS

To celebrate all the wonderful achievements throughout the year, Norwest hosts a party for each room late in the November/December. These events are big and due to the enormity of these events, they are run over three weeks, allowing you the opportunity to share in some great experiences with the children including singing, concerts and for the children off to school, a graduation! As we get closer to the dates we will update you with more specific information but for now, mark these dates in your diary. Grandparents, friend and family are warmly invited to join us on the night.

OCEAN ROOM – TUESDAY 30TH NOVEMBER
RAINFOREST ROOM – TUESDAY 7TH DECEMBER
BUSH ROOM – TUESDAY 14TH DECEMBER

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE INFORMATION



A positive approach to behaviour guidance focuses on a child's strength and takes a developmental view of behaviour. Rather than constantly seeking to control children's behaviour or narrowly focusing on an inappropriate behaviour, positive guidance acknowledges that learning to behave is like any other developmental task a child has to learn. Just as a child needs to learn to walk, a child needs to learn how to behave in a socially acceptable manner. We wouldn't punish a toddler for falling over, nor should we punish a child who makes a behavioural mistake. Mistakes are an opportunity to teach a child a more skilful behaviour (Porter,p.33,1999).

Two of the biggest challenges children face are learning acceptable behaviour and being able to control their own behaviours. Behaviour guidance is all the things you do and say to help children learn and demonstrate acceptable behaviour. The aim of positive behaviour guidance, is for children to improve in guiding and controlling their own behaviour and rely less on carers to guide them. This can take a long time and means that the child needs to not only understand what is acceptable but also needs to develop the will power or self control to manage their own behaviour. Behaviour guidance is about supporting children to learn to do the right thing and to want to do it. Behaviour guidance is part of your relationship and daily interactions with all children including babies through to older children. Some ways to encourage positive behaviour guidance include:

- Helping them feel secure and letting them know that you are there to help them
- Letting them know when they have done something you approve of
- Encourage them to use language to express their needs, wants and feelings
- Help them to deal with conflict constructively
- Offer materials, equipment and experiences that engage their interests
- Give them choices and let them make some decisions
- Help them to feel good about themselves and to appreciate, care and respect for others



For more information, please go to the following link
<http://www.ncac.gov.au/factsheets/factsheet6%20.pdf>

DATES FOR HOLIDAY CLOSING

Many of you are beginning to plan your end of year holidays so we thought it would be timely to update everyone with our closing dates and times.

Norwest will close down at **4pm sharp** on **Thursday 23rd December 2010** and will reopen at **7am** on **Monday 10th January 2011**. If you have any questions about the end of year, please speak with Ashley or Nesha.

OCEAN ROOM REPORT

The Ocean Room has been doing some exciting things over the last few weeks. We had a great turn out to the Fathers Day breakfast, and we loved celebrating it with you all! We have continued on our project for seasons and have made a new spring wall, with baby flowers and daffodils from Daffodil Day. We hope you check it out next time you're in. We've got a great interest with the Rainbow Fish all about Farm Animals – reading books, singing songs and decorating individual pictures. We have a lovely series of fine motor skills development activities including drawing with slim pencils, painting with fine brushes and using cotton buds to dab paint onto the paper. We have also LOVED getting back outside more in the past week as the weather has warmed up – we're moving our ball pit outside and spending hours in the warm air and sunshine. Our new friends are settling into the room and beginning to relax into the routine of the day. We've also moved our 'eat sleep' charts for the older children to the sign in sheets – we've found that the information is easier to find for families this way. Don't forget to read the day book each day to find out what your children have been getting up to!



RAINFORREST ROOM REPORT

The children in the Rainforest Room have enjoyed visits from some very important people over the past two weeks. One of our special visits was from the post man (Lisa's dad) who brought everyone a letter and inside was a colouring-in page. The postman explained his very important job to the children. We got to have a look at his motor bike and then the postman explained his helmets' important job of protecting his head whilst he is driving his motor bike. Our other special visitor was from the NSW Fire Brigade. The children listened to the fire fighters as they explained their job. Once the fire fighters had finished telling us about all the wonderful things they do to help people we went outside to have a look at the BIG fire truck. The children especially loved when the fire fighters put on the siren and the red and blue flashing lights. All of the Rainforest Room Children have been enjoying Easel painting and playing in the sandpit for longer periods of time as the weather is warming up!



BUSH ROOM REPORT

We have been going on lots of excursion over the last few weeks; taking the children out into the community to 'clean up Australia', to 'post letters' and to have a relaxing 'babychino'. We have also had a some lovely parents come to read stories in different languages with the Kangaroos group.

Most recently we have had a visit from the local Firemen from Kellyville fire station. They spoke to the children about fire safety and calling 000 and getting down low to escape from smoke. They also let us climb up into the cab of the fire truck to look more closely at all of the gadgets.

The Kangaroos have had a lot of investigations over the last month; for example a closer look at snails, with the children even creating a terrarium in the classroom for the snails to live in while they observe them. This month the children would like to find out some burning questions to do with "Do fish have teeth?" The investigation has already taken hold of the imaginations of a group of the Kangaroos as they search through reference books and the interest for information. Amanda is planning an excursion over the next few weeks to visit the fish shop at Norwest market town to see some real specimens up close.

The Wallabies have been taking advantage of having a computer with which to play and learn about technology, literacy and numeracy. We introduced the Reading Eggs program to our emergent literacy program to reflect on some of the children's home language experiences. All of the children have loved this still novel activity, and are developing a range of social skills to accompany their participation, such as sharing, waiting for their turn, not blurting out the answers when it is someone else's turn and helping a friend if they are in need. The Wallabies have also been continuing to look after their veggie garden out the front of the centre (at the end of the car park) watering and mulching the fragile seedlings regularly. In following up with this interest we have been reading the story "The Tiny Seed" by Eric Carle to help describe the series of events that a plant experiences in its life time. We are currently making a large mural to depict the lifecycle of plants.

The Joeys have been doing a lot of work on letters and have even written letters to their families to post on their excursion to the post office. This stemmed from an initial investigation into the different forms of communication that we engage in. Monique got her Joeys to look at talking, writing, using sign language, telephones, emailing and the old fashioned letter. This month she has the Joeys doing more excursions, and lots of cooking experiences. They have already made some fresh pizzas (from scratch) and are going to visit 'Joeys Pizza Shop' at Norwest Market town.

