

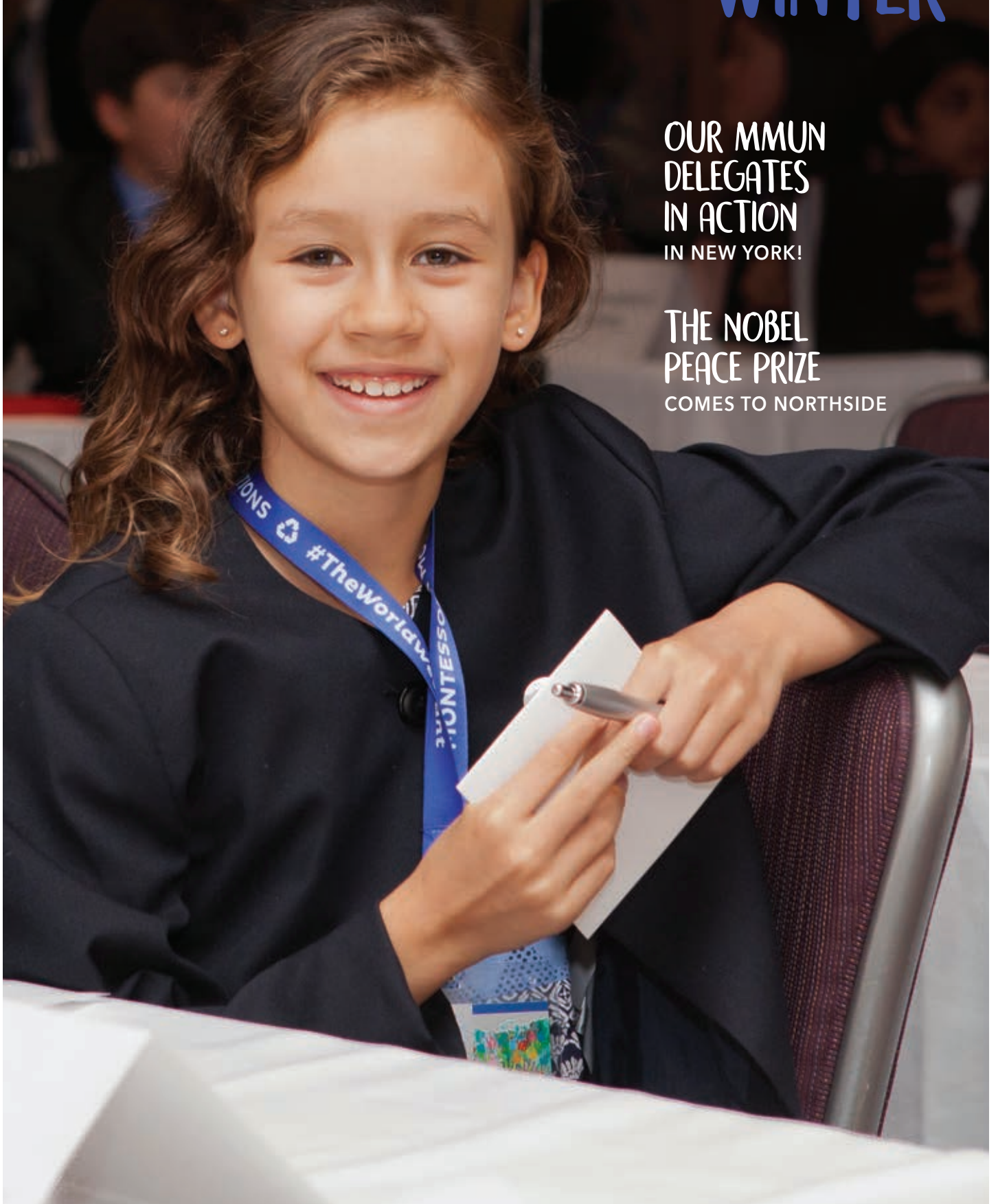
NORTHSIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL & STEPPING STONES LONG DAY CARE

# CHRONICLE

## WINTER

OUR MMUN  
DELEGATES  
IN ACTION  
IN NEW YORK!

THE NOBEL  
PEACE PRIZE  
COMES TO NORTHSIDE



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WINTER 2019 NORTHSIDE CHRONICLE



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NORTHSIDE CHRONICLE  
WINTER 2019

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# FROM THE PRINCIPAL



*As we come to the end of Term 2, it is amazing to think that half the year has passed already. I am finding that time seems to be flying by, and I think this is certainly due to the fact that there are so many wonderful things going on in the life of our school.*

**T**hroughout this term it was wonderful to be able to attend a combined schools ANZAC Day event at the War Memorial in Hyde Park with some of our 9-12 students. We then had the pleasure of sharing in the meaning and remembrance of ANZAC day with all our 6-9 students as they presented their ANZAC day work to the parents and other students.

We were thankful for our Mothers as we shared in our Mothers Day breakfast and celebrated with them. This day was also an opportunity for our students to share with their mums, dads and grandparents what they do in their classrooms and how they learn in the Montessori environment.

The inaugural 'North of the Bridge - Montessori Sports Carnival' was a great celebration of being active, as Northside and five other Montessori Schools came together to participate in this day.

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Barrenjoey, Forestville, Farmhouse, Central Coast and Northside Montessori all participated on this day, with the valuable assistance of parents from all five schools. It was terrific to see our students playing and participating together with 'new friends' as they moved around the many events on the day. We are looking forward to many other events such as this in the future.







## EXTRAORDINARY ORDINARIES

Our 9-12 class presented their 'Extraordinary Ordinaries' evening, which was a celebration of the lives and achievements of many less well-known people. Those who have made a significant contribution to human kind, but are not necessarily 'celebrities'. This was a refreshing acknowledgment of hard work, dedication and achievement in the real sense of the word. This is always a wonderful evening and this year was no different.



## THE AUSTRALIAN REPTILE PARK

Extended Day and our 6-9 class travelled north to visit the Australian Reptile Park. This was a great day learning about the diversity of Australian animals and getting up close to some cute and not so cute creatures. It is a wonderful opportunity for our students to have these experiences and share them with their teachers, parents and class mates.

**OUR 9-12 STUDENTS** also had their annual camp to Canberra which is an opportunity for them to explore our nation's capital and learn more about our system of government. There are many wonderful sights in Canberra and this trip provides our students with an opportunity to see a good number of them. Visiting Parliament House is always a highlight as well as Questacon.

## THERE ARE SO MANY

learning opportunities at Northside both within the school or through other activities. Our students can pursue their interests, whatever they may be. This is a key characteristic of the Montessori method of education which provides for a curriculum that cultivates the development of the whole child.

Recently, I was watching a Ted Talk with Sir Ken Robinson about what is needed in an effective, modern education system. In the talk he identified three key elements of human beings that should be the basis of any good education system.

- The first is that human beings are naturally different and diverse.

This difference should be recognised as it is this diversity that make our culture and lives so interesting. Education too should recognise this difference with a broad curriculum that celebrates the various talents in each child, and provide for diversity rather than conformity.

- The second is that humans have a natural curiosity.

He said that curiosity is the "engine of achievement" and children are naturally curious. The education system should provide for curiosity and foster it - "if you can light the spark in a curious child, they will very often learn without any further assistance".

- The last element is that human life is inherently creative.



**THE DIVERSITY** of human culture is a testimony to our creativity. The education system should therefore mentor, stimulate and provoke this creativity to awaken and develop creativity in the learner.

When I see our children at work in their classroom, I see teachers who acknowledge the individual child and their needs, and foster a love of learning. I see an environment where curiosity is embraced and encouraged, and I see work which is the result of a child who is allowed to take their curiosity and be truly creative in how they learn.



# THE 2019 MONTESSORI MODEL UNITED NATIONS

by Janene Johnson (6-9 Directress)

In April this year, Adam and I headed off to New York for the Montessori Model of United Nations Conference. Eight of our students along with two of our graduates and their parents attended. Over the next four days the students would be acting as delegates to their specific countries and speaking on a variety of topics.

For some families, the experience began prior to New York as they enjoyed other parts of the US. When we eventually all met to have lunch at Hard Rock Cafe, it was with great excitement and anticipation of what was to come. The lunch was the last day for everyone to let their hair down prior to donning their business attire for the opening ceremony.

## IT WAS WITH

great pride that we watched our students and children in the opening ceremony, bearing the flags of the countries they were representing, along with over 2000 other students from around the world.

This moment had been long awaited and the preparation had begun months before.







## IN SEPTEMBER

the previous year, with Margaret Kroeger and me, the students had commenced work on learning all about the UN and preparing their position papers. Our students were acting as delegates for Monaco, Liechtenstein, The Principality of Andorra, Saint Lucia and Iceland. They were writing papers on 'Prohibition on the Dumping of Radioactive Waste', 'Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy', 'Protection of Our Global Climate', 'Women in Development', 'Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East' and 'Biodiversity.' They had to research what the UN had tried to do about the issues, what their allocated country had tried to do, and what they thought should be done. They discussed and reasoned many possible solutions for these complex global issues, acting as the UN delegates would. Their position paper was then submitted to the UN for review and approval.

They discussed and reasoned many possible solutions for these complex global issues, acting as the UN delegates would. Their position paper was then submitted to the UN for review and approval.





## AT THE CONFERENCE,

the students were in Committee Rooms and presented their position in a one minute speech. They then had opportunities to participate in informal consultations and formal consultations. They had to put forward motions and address the Chair and the delegates as if they were in a UN Committee Room. As an observer of this process for the second time, it still continues to astound me that 9-15 year olds were debating such serious topics, with such an incredibly mature attitude. The solutions to these problems were straight forward and from the heart. The process of this debate was one which will stay with them forever.

This work is then written up as a draft resolution and is just how it would be written by the UN. The Chair asks the Committee if they wish to adopt the draft by consensus and if there is no objection, the Committee moves to voting.

As an observer of this process for the second time, it still continues to astound me that 9-15 year olds were debating such serious topics, with such an incredibly mature attitude.

## THE MMUN

Conference culminated in the Closing Ceremony at the UN General Assembly. We were very fortunate to be allowed access as very few outside groups are permitted into this beautiful room. Speakers are selected from each committee to represent their committee and read out the final decisions to the entire General Assembly. One of our students, Jacob Kologlu, was very honoured to be chosen to speak at the General Assembly and this was live streamed around the world.

All of our students made some wonderful friends and have an intense passion to carry on their work into the future. Some of our older students are now surging forward doing projects as part of the Youth Impact Forum. MMUN is a life changing event. The world is looking very bright with these adults of the future demonstrating such respect and love for our Earth and its people.







## COMMENTS FROM ATTENDING PARENTS

The whole experience was amazing. So empowering and shows your child that they have a voice and can make educated and informed decisions about the global issues that face us all.

- NATALIE ARROWSMITH

I find myself quite emotional watching the children come together with a purpose to tackle global issues. Observing them negotiate and collaborate is heartwarming, knowing that our children are on their way to becoming future leaders. Our world will be left in good hands! MMUN has given my child a voice and confidence. He knows that he can make a difference.

- SAFINA KOLOGLU

## MMUN ROME 2020


**NEXT YEAR** we will be participating in the MMUN Conference in Rome. If you would like your child to be part of this life changing event, please contact Margaret Kroeger, Janene Johnson or Adam Scotney. We will be holding an information evening on Wednesday 24 July and hope you will join us.

# THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

## COMES TO NORTHSIDE

*Vasily Arkhipov is a name you should know.  
He saved your life and the life of everyone you know.*

by Vince Scappatura (Board Member)

n 27 October 1962, Vasily Arkhipov was an officer in the Soviet Navy aboard a submarine that was being bombarded by a US warship. It was the height of the Cold War and the US was enforcing a naval blockade against Cuba. The Americans were unaware that the Soviet submarines were carrying nuclear warheads.

As US warships fired depth charges to force the submarines to surface, the captain of one Soviet submarine mistook the explosions for the outbreak of WWII and, in a panic, ordered a nuclear torpedo to be armed and ready to fire. He screamed at his junior officer: "We're going to blast them now! We will die but we will sink them all - we will not disgrace our Navy!"

The deputy officer on board concurred with his captain. On any other submarine, these two officers would command the authority to fire their "special weapon". But on this particular submarine there happened to be a third officer on board, Vasily Arkhipov, who resisted the other two and withheld his consent. His single vote saved the world.

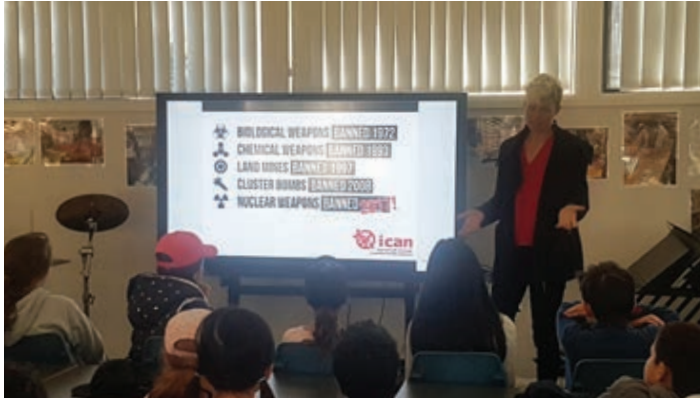
If Arkhipov had relented, or happened to be stationed on a different submarine, an all-out nuclear exchange between the US and the Soviet Union would have been the likely outcome. It was calculated at the time, that a nuclear war on this scale would result in 1 billion instant deaths, a third of the world's population at the time. But it was far worse than that.

### NOT UNTIL

the 1980s was it understood that the climatic impacts of such a large-scale nuclear war would end human civilisation entirely. Nuclear fires would rage for months as cities burned at the intensity of the sun, throwing smoke and dust into the stratosphere and plunging the planet into total darkness - nuclear winter - for a decade or more.

If Arkhipov had relented, or happened to be stationed on a different submarine, an all-out nuclear exchange between the US and the Soviet Union would have been the likely outcome.





## THERE ARE MANY

other stories like Arkhipov's that reveal how close the world came to this cataclysmic event. General Lee Butler, former head of US Strategic Command, reached the conclusion that humanity "escaped the Cold War without a nuclear holocaust by some combination of skill, luck and divine intervention, and I suspect the latter in greatest proportion."

The end of the Cold War saw a decrease in great power tensions and a significant reduction in the number of nuclear weapons. But that number still sits at around 14,000 – enough to destroy human civilisation many times over. Regrettably, experts agree that the danger of nuclear war is again on the rise.

Scientists from the University of Chicago maintain a "Doomsday Clock" to illustrate just how close the world is to global catastrophe. It was founded in 1947 by former physicists of the Manhattan Project which produced the world's first atomic bomb. It has 14 Nobel Laureates in various scientific fields on its board. The clock has advanced in recent years and now sits at two minutes to "midnight" – a metaphor for the end of human civilisation. The last time the clock was this close to midnight was 1953 when the Soviet Union detonated its first hydrogen bomb.

Dismayed by the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament, a small group of people gathered in Melbourne in 2007 and founded the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). Growing into a global movement, ICAN lobbied for an international treaty to ban nuclear weapons, just as the case was with other inhumane weapons such as biological and chemical weapons, land mines and cluster bombs. A decade later, in 2017, the United Nations adopted the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. ICAN won the Nobel Peace Prize that same year, the first Australian-founded organisation to do so.

On 28 May, 9-12 students from Northside Montessori School had the opportunity to meet the Australian director of ICAN, Gem Romuld, and come face to face with the Nobel medal.

## ON 28 MAY,

9-12 students from Northside Montessori School had the opportunity to meet the Australian director of ICAN, Gem Romuld, and come face to face with the Nobel medal. Gem showed the students pictures of the moment when the treaty was adopted by 122 nations, with delegates and supporters erupting into hugs and tears of joy – a very unusual sight in an otherwise solemn chamber. Many students recognised the room where the treaty was adopted at the UN in New York from their own personal experiences as part of the Model Montessori United Nations.



## UNSURPRISINGLY,

the nine nuclear-armed states opposed the treaty and boycotted the negotiations. Sadly, many of their allies, including Australia, joined them in opposition. ICAN is currently campaigning for Australia to adopt the treaty and agree to prohibit the acquisition, development, production, manufacture, possession, transfer, receipt, testing, hosting, use and threat of nuclear weapons;

or assist any other state in these activities.

79% of Australians want the government to adopt the treaty. Leading humanitarian and health organisations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Australian Medical Association, also support the ban. Almost 200 parliamentarians have signed ICAN's parliamentary pledge to work for Australia to adopt the treaty, and cities and towns are echoing this call on behalf of their constituents.

Our 9-12 students were inspired by this campaign and wrote 23 letters to the local council to join this chorus of support and urge the Australian government to sign and ratify the treaty. In more ways than one, these students were continuing the legacy left by Dr Maria Montessori.

The 9-12 students were inspired by this campaign and wrote 23 letters to the local council to join this chorus of support and urge the Australian government to sign & ratify the treaty.

We need the kind of grassroots, collective action spearheaded by ICAN to prevent the unimaginable from occurring. And we will need to continue the work of Dr Montessori to ensure education remains a vehicle for empowering our children to change the world for the better.

## ALTHOUGH BEST

known today as a pioneer educator, Dr Montessori is also renowned for her efforts to promote peace through education. She was a supporter of the work of the League of Nations and its successor the United Nations as a forum where peace could be created. It was on account of her tireless efforts to further peace through education that Dr Montessori was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1949, 1950 and 1951.

Dr Montessori saw the causes of war in the miseducation of children, particularly the failure of traditional schooling to fully develop the moral capacities of children. A new approach was needed to overcome the desire for conquest and domination by nurturing the "instinct for liberty" and the spontaneous development of the child. "Preventing conflicts is the work of politics", Dr Montessori would often say, "establishing peace is the work of education."

In 2017, 55 years after saving the world, and 19 years after his death, Vasily Arkhipov was honoured with the "Future of Life" award for taking exceptional measures to safeguard the collective future of humanity. But we can't rely on another Arkhipov to save us next time.

We need the kind of grassroots, collective action spearheaded by ICAN to prevent the unimaginable from occurring. And we will need to continue the work of Dr Montessori to ensure education remains a vehicle for empowering our children to change the world for the better.



## LEARNING SUPPORT

# READING AT HOME

*Some Hints for Helping Your Child with Reading at Home.*

by Darine Groch (Learning Support Teacher)

### READ TO YOUR CHILD

This exposes your child to more sophisticated language and ideas. Often older children may like to read a story, but the text can be too difficult. Younger children love the repetition and enjoy the predictability.

### PLAY WORD GAMES

Use the time travelling in the car to do this. Games like I Spy, alphabet games where you work through each letter and name an animal, or food, or place – any topic you like. Memory games are helpful. “I went to the shop and bought.....” List one item, then two, then three. Your child must remember the items in order. Fantastic for improving short term memory.

### USE LANGUAGE

There is a large connection between oral and written language. Get them to tell you about things, describe things, retell stories. Tell them about what you’re reading.

### PRACTISE SIGHT WORDS

Children do forget. Sight words (named because they must be known at sight instantly) are important as they are the essential structure which assists with reading other contextual words. The first 100 sight words make up almost half the words read on a page. The first 200 sight words (including the first 100) make up almost two thirds of all words on a page!



### LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD READ ALOUD

Children will tell you they don’t make mistakes when they read to themselves. It’s because they don’t hear the mistakes! After you’ve listened to them read, ask them questions about what they’ve read – another use of language and a good check to understand what they’ve read. Otherwise, what is the point of reading if there is no understanding?

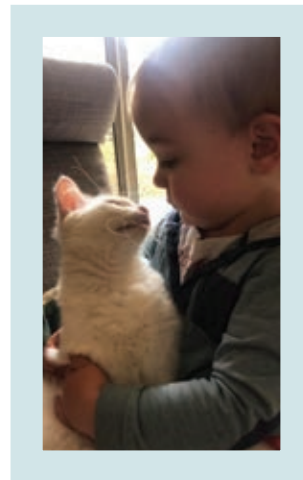
I hope some of these hints will enhance your reading time at home.

# CARE OF PETS

## IN OUR TODDLER PROGRAM

by Sandra Sin (Infant & Toddler Directress)

Care of animals, as part of the practical life curriculum, is an important part of Montessori education. Young children, who naturally have a wonderful disposition towards animals, develop a number of skills along with many positive character traits through caring of pets. Having pets to care for helps children to learn about responsibility, compassion, empathy, relationships, and develop an understanding and respect for other living creatures.



### IN OUR TODDLER ROOM

we have two guinea pigs (Diamond and Topaz) and two goldfish (Grumpy and Goldie). Children have many opportunities to learn how to take care of pets. At the beginning of last term, we planted carrot seeds in one of the planter boxes and this term, children are shown how to pull out the carrots or cut fresh carrot leaves to feed the guinea pigs. Many children, with a sense of pride and accomplishment, giggle with delight as they observe how the guinea pigs love the fresh harvest and munch up the special treat in no time.

Many research studies have proven that pets help lower anxiety and support children cope with their stress.





## TODDLERS ARE SHOWN

how to handle the little creatures gently as they put Diamond and Topaz on their lap, stroke them softly and brush their hair with care. It's amazing how young children can sit calmly for an extended period of time simply enjoying the bonding time and companionship. In fact, many research studies have proven that pets help lower anxiety and support children cope with their stress.

When our toddlers look after Grumpy and Goldie, they are encouraged to pick up the empty plate sitting next to the fish tank and approach the teacher to ask for some fish food. Children learn about responsibility as they begin to understand that the goldfish relies on them and for the quieter children, this can be a great step and an opportunity for them to build up their confidence in initiating social interactions and making a request with words.

To develop a sense of belonging and community, families are invited to bring in photos of pets to display in the room at children's eye level. As children walk in the room, they are so proud to find their own pictures displayed on the wall. This also turns into another great language tool and an occasion for them to get to know each other.

*"Encouraging children to take part in the care of a family pet is a wonderful way of empowering children. Whether the family pet is a fish, dog, cat, guinea pig, chicken, horse, or elephant the lessons that are instilled in a child through caring for animals will remain with them for the rest of their lives. Including live animals in a child's daily life greatly enhances their abilities to learn responsibility, empathy, and compassion for other living things, respect for life, and the natural development of living things. In addition to being a loving companion, pets provide a comfort and solace in times of stress"*  
Cynthia Dyer.

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# STEPPING STONES



## NIDO ROOM

With the opportunity for professional development Rilina and Karla attended a seminar on programming for babies. The session was informative and allowed us to assess and reflect on our practices.

We prepare a monthly curriculum that follows the progression of development in all the Montessori areas and materials...





## ABOUT OUR NIDO PROGRAM

While we prepare a monthly curriculum that follows the progression of development in all the Montessori areas and materials, we also guide, support and prompt learning throughout our day as we follow the child individually through their daily discoveries.

The daily routine creates most of our practical life work, modelling and exposure to language, it provides so many lessons spontaneously through the children's day and through their own progression towards the desire for independence. We aim to support these opportunities for children to build confidence and self-esteem, to build belief and growth in the desire to continue their learning through progressive steps in order to reach their full potential.

By Karla Moggs

Nido Room Leader



## CASETTA

During the past few months in Casetta we have been focusing heavily on our grace and courtesy. Our main focus was to learn how to set our table for dining experiences and where to place our place mat, cup, fork/spoon and bowl. We mastered this pretty quickly and then focused on waiting patiently until it was our turn to self-serve our food.

## SELF SERVING

food was new to some of our Casetta children but with one-on-one assistance and guidance Casetta were quick to master a new practical life skill. We practice serving and developing our fine motor muscle development every day during work cycle, but it was good to see the action in a real life experience. Casetta love serving their own food during dining experiences and have learned to only take the amount needed making sure to leave some for our friends. The food is so yummy though that we always come back for more.

We have recently introduced fruit cutting into Casetta; we sit one-on-one with an educator and learn how to put on our apron and to hold our knife and peeler. Whilst working one on one Casetta get the opportunity to learn how to safely cut a variety of different fruits. Some of our children spend a lot of time with their parents in the kitchen preparing meals and have naturally mastered the skill.

Our next goal for Casetta is learning how to wash our bowls and cutlery. We will begin this process during work cycle and slowly introduce the skill into our dining experiences. This will allow Casetta to be on par with Casa allowing a smooth transition to Casa when the time comes.

Casetta have had a great start to the year and I can't wait to see where the next 6 months take them.

By Amy Webb

Casetta Room Leader



Self-serving food was new to some of our Casetta children but with one-on-one assistance and guidance Casetta were quick to master a new practical life skill.







# LANGUAGE

## IN THE INFANT COMMUNITY

*It has been exciting times in the Infant Community. There has been a recent surge of interest in language. A few of the children have come out of their shell and have started telling the teachers various stories - some are intelligible - about home.*

by Emma Elegado-Kotulic  
(IC Room Leader)

"The child is like a genius who is compelled to do great work; he has to form a language. This is a great thing which he has to construct. Language is an artificial thing; it cannot be found in nature, like a flower. It is a creation of man. It is an intellectual acquisition."

MARIA MONTESSORI

Language in the Infant Community is a focus for children this age as they are in the sensitive period for language. The Sensitive period for language in Montessori terms starts from 7 months in utero and lasts until the age of 6. Various developments happen throughout, of course. It is also manifested in multiple ways like for a young baby, they may stare intently into the mouth of the adult who is speaking to them. They may also learn to be able to differentiate languages at this stage, if growing up in a bilingual family. In IC, this is manifested with the development of spoken language in the sense that the children are learning to pronounce words, express themselves and increase their vocabulary. From about 12 months when they say their first intentional word, it bursts into learning 50 new words to about 2000 words at about the age of 2. At the age of 2, we often hear a language explosion, and this can be very evident. At times children can just be observing and listening then the next day they suddenly have figured it all out and speak in sentences. It is an amazing phenomenon to witness.

At times children can just be observing and listening then the next day they suddenly have figured it all out and speak in sentences. It is an amazing phenomenon to witness.

## BILINGUAL CHILDREN

Children who speak one language at home and another in child care may have some delays. It is normal, and it is expected as the brain development catches up with the languages. Eventually, if the languages remain separate, as in one language spoken by one parent or only at home and English in child care, the child will be able to speak both fluently. So, for parents, if you speak in your language exclusively to your child, please persevere, as your child will be better for it.





## THE EFFECTS OF TV

We live in an age where screen time is everywhere as it is part of the culture. For busy parents, it is often much easier after a tiring day to watch TV with the children as a way to relax. The studies though show that screen time is not beneficial for children. It does delay their development, and I think this is most evident in language development. Some parents are deceived and believe that iPad interactive games teach their children language. In the Montessori environment, we teach young children using all senses - touch, hear, sight, smell, taste if possible. As the children are very young, we are trying to set the foundation for learning. We want the foundation to be as strong as possible and using all the senses to make the connections in the brain stronger will allow the child to learn language in a much more relaxed manner. Children learn language when they get to listen to people, when there are words that are said with meaning and interactive from another human. Talking to children, not just giving directives helps increase their vocabulary. When talking to toddlers do not simply say, "Car" but say, "It's a red Lamborghini!" The more the child is exposed to real and a wide variety of language, the better.

"Screens include TVs, computers, smart phones, tablets, and video consoles. In Australia, the current recommendation is for no more than 2 hours of screen time per day for children, with screen time not recommended for children under two years" (<https://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/fact-sheets/screen-time-and-children>).



## IN THE IC ENVIRONMENT

we enrich children's language development via the language work that we present them. This language work starts from showing real objects such as a real apple, capsicum, cucumber that can be found in the kitchen. Most children have never had the chance to feel a whole apple, as it is always peeled for them to eat. We then move to real objects such as replicas or small versions of real objects. The children get to feel these objects and learn their names. Then we get to language cards that help increase the vocabulary.

Other ways we do this is the photos we have in the room. These provide talking points for the children and teachers to start asking questions about what they see. These photos are placed at children's height for this purpose.

Books, of course, are another way to enrich language and children at this age, with their intense interest in learning language, naturally gravitate to books. In Nido, we offer books that display a single photo and a word that often relates to their everyday life. The natural progression is then to short story books that have great rhyme and humour that the children love. The current book that is well loved by the children in IC is, "We're going on a Bear Hunt!" Most of the children have memorised the words in a lyrical tune. One child recites it diligently and clearly.



## ANOTHER ESSENTIAL WAY

to enrich language that is often forgotten is by creating an environment of openness in the classroom. An adult who is open and listens is a way to create a desire for the child to speak. This is often forgotten in the home, and we often simply direct the child in what to do. However, a good time to encourage this open language is during meal times, where a conversation can be easily started. This in turn models to children how adults behave during a meal. When the children are having a snack and lunch in the room, the teachers are encouraged to sit down and have a meal as well. We can start a conversation - common topics include the meal or what they did at home. It can be fun and is not always understood, but it doesn't stop the children from attempting to talk if they feel they are heard.

It is wonderful to see the children speaking confidently to the teachers and the other children. It benefits their social development even though most children at this age still do parallel play with other children, they are slowly learning how to play cooperatively.

It is wonderful to see the children speaking confidently to the teachers and the other children.

## LANGUAGE MODELLED

also at this age include grace and courtesy - saying please, thank you, excuse me and saying, "Stop!" to other children if they need to. The children are not expected to say all of the above words but are encouraged throughout the day.

The children in IC are all becoming more verbally confident, able to express themselves and reveal their quirky personalities to us freely.

Emma Elegado-Kotulic  
IC Room Leader





# WHAT DO YOU SEE?

## LOOKING BEYOND THE OBVIOUS

*The journey of the Casa children and the Stepping Stones Community looking beyond the obvious as they explore sticks, create a stick sculpture and attempt to participate in the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden Sculpture Walk as junior artists!*

by Britta Page (Casa Room Educator)

It all started in January during one of my evening walks when I found an intriguing stick, which had dropped during the day from a gum tree.

Some of my family members questioned why I picked up the stick, which "anyway" had to go into the green bin.

"Leave the stick here, our green bin is full," I was advised, but I was adamant and declared this stick is as a magnificent and marvellous treasure created by nature, which I wanted to share with the children in Casa.

At the end of January, I presented the stick to the Casa children and wondered aloud, "What do you see?" A few of the children looked puzzled and carefully listened to my reassuring explanation that there are no right or wrong answers. It was beautiful to see how the children focused and looked with wonder at the stick and slowly shared their ideas:

"It's a stick!"

"It's from a tree."

"It broke."

"It looks like a castle."

"I see a shooting triangle!" (Archery Arrow)

"I see a triangle!"

"I see an A!"

"There is a 4."

"L!!! There is an L!"

"It looks like a dinosaur."

"It looks like a duck."

At the end of January, I presented the stick to the Casa children and wondered aloud, "What do you see?"





## Construction & Maintenance of our Sculpture

We invited all our Stepping Stone Families to collect sticks with their children during their weekend and evening walks.

### IT WAS FASCINATING

to observe the children 'looking' behind the obvious and engaging their imagination and knowledge to 'see' beyond the obvious stick. It was all in the perception of each child's mind and eyes. The children carefully listened to each other's ideas and views. As there was no right or wrong answer, even our slightly quieter Casa children shared their ideas with confidence.

The stick was not a useless stick anymore, as this piece of wood had allowed the children to wonder and think beyond the obvious by engaging with this visual provocation and looking beyond the wood, the children's social, language and creative skills were discovered.

### AND THEN IT HAPPENED!

This simple exercise had inspired the children and myself to explore and look beyond the obvious and extended our curiosity to further engage in a safe manner with sticks.

I started to reflect on my own perception when engaging with art and wondered what art was for the children, its value and deeper meaning within our community at Stepping Stone Montessori.

Following the children's interest in sticks I envisioned to create a child and family designed Living Art Sculpture within the Stepping Stones Montessori outdoor environment.

Maria Montessori's words from the Absorbent Mind: "If we try to think back to the dim and distant past... what is it that helps us reconstruct those times, and to picture the lives of those who lived in them? It is their art... It is thanks to the hand, the companion of the mind, that civilization has arisen."



## I PROPOSED

during our team meeting my idea and coincidentally, at the same time, Graham from the Better Homes and Gardens Show introduced his viewers to the Wombarra Sculpture Gardens. During his visit he was acquainted with Gaby Porter who consequently showed Graham how to create a stick sculpture.

Graham concluded that the process was very sensory and therapeutic for him, in particular when thoughtfully selecting sticks and positioning these, in the most effective ways, to create a cone shaped sculpture.

We discussed the feasibility of such an open-ended creative process, which would allow the older Casa children to take ownership by creating the foundation with their educators. As soon as the foundation was established all educators, families and children were invited to add and extend on the sculpture.

Truthfully, we were not looking for perfection, but rather an interest in the individual experiences throughout this creative process and the many opportunities of learning, which could arise from connecting our classroom with the children's home environment.

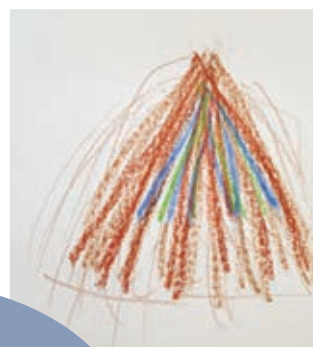
A living creative project of this scale has always some risk of failure, but we concluded that if the structure collapsed it would provide amazing opportunities for the children to reflect and evaluate the construction process and apply their existing pre-math skills and language skills to share their thoughts with us, when taking ownership once more and rebuilding the sculpture.

In the weeks which followed we could observe the children finding sticks and using them creatively during their inventive outdoor sessions either when cooking in the sandpit, digging in the dirt or when inventing games or role-plays. We invited all our Stepping Stone Families to collect sticks with their children during their weekend and evening walks. This allowed families to spend some special time with their children and stimulate their descriptive language and pre-math comprehension when conversing about size, shape, weight and colour of the sticks they found. We invited our families to create family rules about how to handle sticks in safe ways. We were mindful that some children might find it emotionally challenging letting go of their special sticks, and role modelled these situations to the children. We prepared the children to take ownership of their sticks and discussed with the children this open-ended creative

opportunity, when contributing and building something special for our community to enjoy and take pride in.

## IT WAS A

true delight to observe how many families embraced this process, and stopped by the sculpture in the early mornings to add sticks and even tiny twigs to the construction; adding on and building something very special, for our whole community to enjoy and take pride in, each time when arriving and departing from our Long Day Care Centre.



The children's vision  
how the sculpture could  
look with colour.

## DURING THE

past few months some of our preschool community children started to follow their own curiosity and investigated the word NATURE and what it represents.

"Do you know the grass is nature!"

"Don't pick up the bug! It's nature!"

"The bug is working in nature!"

"What does it do?" (What's the job of this creature in nature?)

These were only some of the children's voices and we decided to discuss further what nature looks like, and started to investigate with the children what nature means to them. The children realised that many things in nature can be touched by their careful hands, seen by their observing eyes, listened to by their ears and smelled by their nose. Suddenly a few children suggested to paint our sculpture and we thought to use familiar colours within our Montessori curriculum. Red for our vocabulary extension cards; brown, representing the Australian continent on our puzzles and geography lessons; green, representing nature within our cultural curriculum and blue for our 3D sensorial work.



Our sculpture at present  
blending in with it's surroundings

## WE REALISED

that we would need to deconstruct our sculpture and paint some of the sculpture's core sticks in these colours, to represent some of our learning and link it with our Montessori curriculum.

We are currently preparing for this process; how to safely and responsibly remove sticks, store them in appropriate ways to dry them before painting and reassembling our sculpture with a coloured core and growing a natural unpainted outer layer around it to allow our sculpture to further grow and blend into its surrounds. We decided to use an acrylic paint on top of the bark, which even though waterproof, flexible and to some extent lightproof, might peel off with the bark.

For us educators, this represents continuous learning and skills that can get lost when not practised over time.

Currently, we are preparing an application to exhibit our sculpture as a junior artist entry for the Ku-ring gai Wildflower Gardens Sculpture Walk.

Our aim, if invited to exhibit our sculpture, is to invite all visitors of the Wildflower Sculpture Walk to experience the magic of our Living and Evolving Stick Sculpture and pick up a stick or two during their art appreciation walk to add to our sculpture.

Wish us luck!

The Casa Educators.

Final Words of Wisdom and inspiration from Dr. Montessori, *The Discovery of the Child*: "The human hand, so delicate and so complicated, not only allows the mind to reveal itself but it enables the whole being to enter into special relationships with its environment... man 'takes possession of his environment with his hands.' His hands, under the guidance of his intellect transform this environment and thus enable him to fulfil his mission in the world."



# THE THREE-YEAR CYCLE

## IN BROLGA

*The three-year cycle in a Montessori pre-primary environment is important as the children go through the period of self-construction during their formative years. As a directress, I consider myself lucky to witness this period of time as I guide and observe the children through their learning and development since they continuously teach and inspire me.*

by Margret Ranada Palma (3-6 Directress)

There are twenty-three children in the Brolga Class this semester. This will be my third year as a directress in this class getting to know each and everyone's personality and character. Christian has moved on to Primary last term and I've had him since he was in our Toddler Program. At the end of Term 2, we bid Sion farewell as he moves on to Primary. These are the few children that I've met who have completed their three years in Brolga at Northside.

When the children enter our 3-6 environment at the age of three, the 'little kids' (as the older ones call them) are our 'young explorers'. We have Felix, who has just started this term; he explores all the materials on our shelves, and other children's work on the mats and tables. Anishka is about to complete her first year as a three-year-old and she shows interest in her sounds as she learns to 'write' words using the Large Movable Alphabet. Katelyn, Paro and Isabella have lately turned four and they enjoy working on our Art and Craft activities. Their fine motor skills are enhanced as they meticulously thread beads when they make bracelets, or sew using a needle and thread, or paint with different art media. They appear to enjoy choosing work from the Mathematics area, or when redirected to select an activity, they prefer to work together in a small group.



The 3 year old explorer: smelling the flower she has put in the vase



The 4 year old experimenters working together

## THE CHILDREN

who are in their second year in Brolga (usually our four-year olds) are our 'young experimenters'. They turn into more social beings, experimenting with their relationships with others, having the desire to work in pairs or small groups. After gaining independence in their first year of their choices of work, re-direction from the adults and presentations given to them, now they investigate and test all possible ways of manipulating the materials that they are familiar with. Oscar, being new to the class this term, is four years old. He has settled in well and seeks friends to work with. He is interested in the materials and is also keen when he is invited to new presentations. Sylvia has had an explosion to reading and often wants to help other children who are still learning to blend their sounds together. Eshan is so proud that he can build the Roman Arch. Dakota has been attached to our pet chickens, she finds every opportunity to give them cuddles. Noah is often found in our Cultural area, learning about different animals, mapping out continents or making booklets of our different classification cards. Jessica, Carmen and Emma seek each other out to either work together or sort out how fairness can be ensured when they choose to work in pairs. Younes likes working with Anishka when she's not busy, but when he works independently, he is drawn to the Golden Beads. Arielle loves her art and craft activities and likes her social interactions with her friends in class. Arianna has been accepting more challenging activities. She has been wanting to write a lot of words and simple mathematical operations too.

This will be my third year as a directress in this class, getting to know each and everyone's personality and character.



A photograph of five young children, likely five-year-olds, sitting on a dark carpeted floor in a classroom. They are engaged in a construction project. In the center, there is a wooden tray containing various geometric shapes like triangles, squares, and circles, some of which are blue and others are white. The children are using these shapes and other materials like paper and scissors to create their projects. One child on the right is cutting out a shape from a piece of paper. Another child in the foreground is wearing a bright yellow jacket. In the background, there are wooden shelves filled with various toys and materials. A speech bubble in the top right corner contains text.

The five year old experts: working on a construction project together

## IN THEIR THIRD YEAR

in Brolga, these children are the 'young experts' in our classroom, who know all the rules and remind the younger ones about them. They have gained their autonomy in their learning and seek more challenges once they develop healthy work habits. A characteristic that stands out with most of our five-year-old children is their leadership skills. They step up without being asked to. They help others problem solve in the playground or in the classroom. One afternoon, the Extended Day children were preparing to act out the story of The Gingerbread Man after listening to the audio book. I stepped out to give them some time to plan. Sebastian immediately took over in the planning and asked his friends who's playing which character in the story. The others excitedly participated and joined in by getting into character: Bao, Joshua and Thara. Sion, Julian and Oliver preferred to take a step back and be part of the audience. It was rather surprising which children preferred to sit out from the limelight when earlier on they began with knowing the characters, the plot and how to do things as the play commenced.

## THE IMPORTANCE

of the three-year cycle reflects on the development of the children's psyche, and the guidance in which they have been entrusted, both on the parents and the educators. The education they receive in our prepared environment within the three years is a consolidation of their exploration and discovery, their experimentation and their investigation and lastly, their expertise in their capabilities as conscientious inhabitants of our community.

### W.B. YEATS

once said that "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." The journey does not end in the 3-6 Montessori environment when the children decide to venture off. Their curiosity is merely piqued as they move on to the next chapter in their lives.







# MUSIC APPRECIATION

by Marilyn Williams (Music Teacher)

One of my favourite parts of teaching music is expanding students wider listening and in turn expanding my own. With younger children, this starts by teaching them to appreciate Classical Music by doing actions and percussion to a famous classical piece. The repetition of listening to the same piece over several weeks gives them a sense of understanding of the piece where their mind naturally follows the melody and they have comfort in its predictability. Actions, percussion rhythms or a story are sometimes associated with the music. The love of classical music developed at this early age stays with them through their lives.

The love of classical music developed at this early age stays with them through their lives.



## THE REALISATION

that appreciation can come from so many parts of our lives, home/ family, school and as they get older peers as well. In the older classes we get the children to suggest a song that they might like to share with others. This is from a much larger selection of genres. Sometimes someone might strongly dislike the same music that others love and it leaves an opening to discuss taste in music and what helps us appreciate different styles of music just as we would appreciate different types of food. In Term 3 the 9-12's will be encouraged to select a song for their class to listen to. I am looking forward to hearing what they choose.

Sharing music also allows people to be exposed to sounds they may have not heard. In different parts of the world music is created using different scale patterns. In some countries music is created using microtones (notes that do not fall on a regular piano) that don't belong to our note system, making it uncomfortable for our ears to get accustomed. By exposing children to music of other cultures it broadens their acceptance of unfamiliar sounds.

"Music acts like a magic key, to which the most tightly closed heart opens."

MARIA AUGUSTA VON TRAPP



**AS PARENTS,** don't forget to share your own love of music with your children whether it be Rock, Classical or music from a different culture and like many parents have started doing, when your child mentions a song that they are learning at school and you are unsure of what it's called, just send me an email. I love finding out which songs are memorable enough for the kids to be taking home with them and I can direct you if you would like to find the song online.

### **2019 Music Appreciation for Daycare 3-6:**

Morning - Grieg, William Tell Overture - Rossini, Jazz Pizzicato, Jazz Legato, Syncopated Clock & Horse & Buggy - Leroy Anderson, Cross Dance/Indo Eu - Shenanigans

### **2019 Music Appreciation for Primary:**

"Swinging Bones", "Jam Like That", "Hedwigs Theme", "Smoke on the Water", Jazz Blues Scale, "In the Hall of the Mountain King", "Good Bad and the Ugly" and "Lean on Me".



# WHO IS THE CHILD

## IN 6-12?

*If you are new to Montessori, you might have wondered why we set up classrooms in such specific three-year age groupings. This arrangement reflects the stages of growth, or 'Planes of Development' recognised by Dr. Montessori in her life-long study of children.*

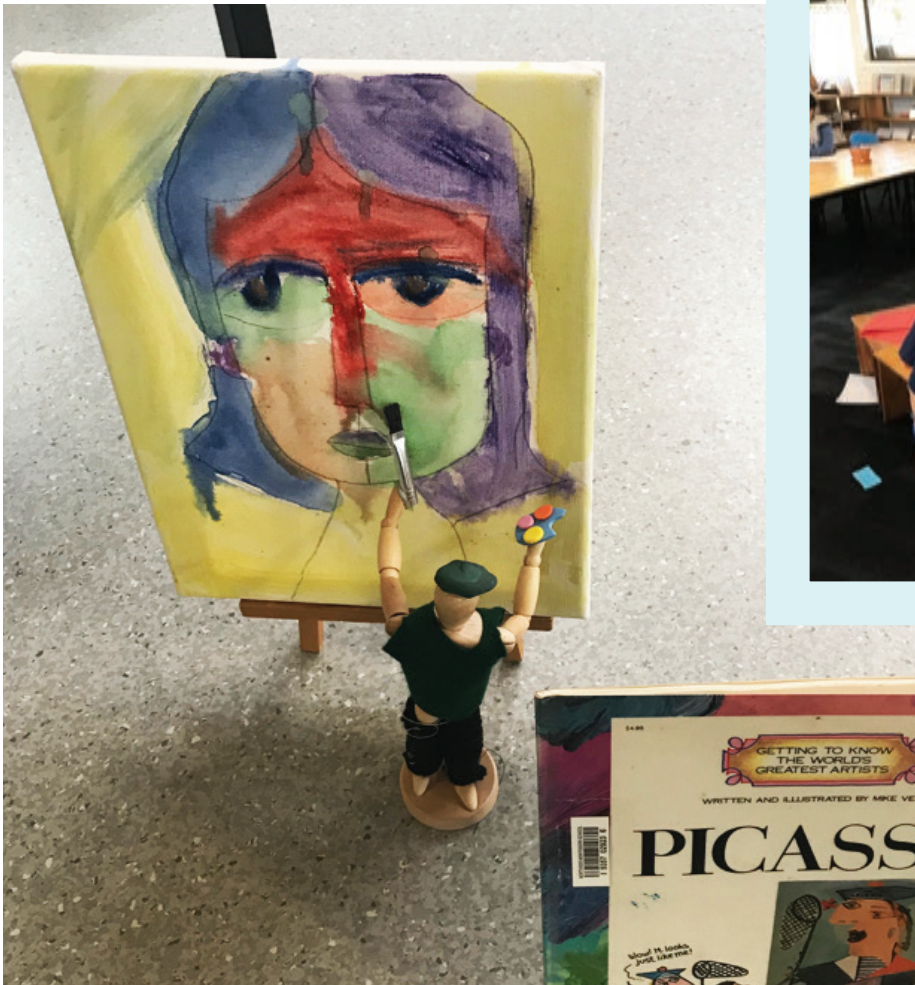
by Margaret Kroeger  
(9-12 Directress)



Students around the age of 6, move into the Second Plane of Development which has its own unique characteristics and needs. Our 6 - 12 environments, our teaching content and the manner in which the adults interact with the students, are all based on Dr Montessori's understanding of this Second Plane.

As children enter 6 - 9 they tend to experience specific physical and social changes. In the First Plane (to around age 6) children explore through their senses. In the Second Plane, children exhibit different psychological characteristics. Children start to develop a reasoning mind that is stimulated by imagination. The Second Plane child has a desire to move outwards beyond the family and into the world. Friendships become very important. The need for external order reduces and Montessori parents around the world often report that their children become tougher, a little messier and less reliant on adults.

Dr. Montessori affectionately called this the 'age of rudeness'. Increasingly group work becomes attractive to 6 - 12 children with the classroom becoming a microcosm for society. The 6 - 12 class gives our children a chance to rehearse relationships and concentrated work that will be a feature of their adult lives. They develop a sensitivity towards morality and justice. With this in mind, the 9 - 12 staff build in opportunities for council where students problem solve and share their needs as a group. Although supervised by the adults the work of the council happens by and through the children. The children organise small mini excursions called 'going outs' to meet their wider interests in the world beyond the classroom.



## PEER TEACHING

and peer mentoring are regular and natural occurrences. We encourage group tasks which allow students to develop and practice skills in being a meaningful part of a team. These skills include making rules, collaborating on distribution of responsibilities, active listening and communication and being accountable to others. Their Mathematical mind strengthens with a greater flexibility of thinking. Their ability to be self-reflective grows. They are prone to 'hero worship' so it is important to help them differentiate between people who are 'popular' as role models versus people who have positively impacted the world. We recently held two events to support students in this development. Thanks to Vince Scappatura, we listened to a wonderful talk by Gem Romuld on nuclear disarmament and the children were able to hold the Nobel Peace Prize Medal awarded to ICAN. We also held our annual night of 'Extraordinary Ordinaries' where the children researched a chosen person who has worked hard to benefit humanity. The night was so entertaining and informative. It was beautiful to observe the maturity and social consciousness of the children. The child that enters 6 – 9 is very different from the young adult that leaves for high school at the end of 9 - 12.

The need for external order reduces and Montessori parents around the world often report that their children become tougher, a little messier and less reliant on adults.



## SO, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The next plane of development, the Third Plane, normally occurs around 12 to 18. We are seeing more and more children enter this plane in Year 5 and 6. It is a tangible and clear transition. Dr. Montessori coined young adults of this age as 'social newborns' (a newborn into adulthood). She stressed the need for adolescents to receive support and understanding.

*'It is difficult for the child of this age to express in adequate terms what changes take place in him, and so it is difficult to understand the child during this age.....The child does not know his mind, and he doesn't know what is agitating his mind.'* (Dr. Montessori, Unpublished lecture given at Kodaikanal in 1942)

To support the adolescent, Dr Montessori recommended purposeful work and opportunities for physical self-expression.

## RECENT RESEARCH

on the adolescent brain is fascinating as it validates and amplifies Montessori's work. A teenager's brain 'is under construction'. Adolescence is a time of significant growth and development – especially within the brain. As a result, adolescence can be a tumultuous time, full of changes, emotions and transformations. There is considerable pruning of unused connections in your child's neuro pathways. This pruning process begins in the back of the brain. The front part of the brain, the prefrontal cortex, is remodelled last. This is the decision-making part of the brain, responsible for your child's ability to plan and think about the consequences of actions, solve problems and control impulses. As the prefrontal cortex is still developing, teenagers might rely on a part of the brain called the amygdala. The amygdala is associated with emotions, impulses, aggression and instinctive behaviour. It's like the brakes are on executive functioning and 'big picture' thinking and it's full steam ahead on emotions. When a toddler becomes overwhelmed and has a tantrum it's seen as a part of development. When a teenager has a similar 'melt down' the same understanding is often lacking. To support the adolescent, Dr Montessori recommended purposeful work and opportunities for physical self-expression. Montessori believed that the adolescent has a sensitivity for social justice and for dignity (as an internal need). They can view their worth through meaningful interactions and contribution to the wider community.

'Success depends on self-confidence, on the awareness of one's own talents and of the many possibilities of their adaptation.

The awareness of one's own usefulness, the feeling that one can help humanity in various ways, fills the heart with a noble confidence.'

(DR. MONTESSORI, FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE, P.101, SHOCKEN BOOKS, 1973)



## IT IS FASCINATING

that over 80 years ago, Dr Montessori had such insight into the development of the individual. Her ideas on education, as applied in Northside Montessori, support the needs and qualities of a child through the different planes of development. Her legacy remains powerful and timeless. We invite parents to visit our Stage 2 classrooms and see this beautiful way to learn, with its sensitivity to the needs of each age group, in action.

We invite parents to visit our Stage 2 classrooms and see this beautiful way to learn, with its sensitivity to the needs of each age group, in action.

# OOSH NEWS

## BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CARE

by Surendrini Giritharan  
(OOSH Coordinator)

**W**e had a smooth start for Term 2. Everyone settled in well after they all had a good Easter break. Not only did they socially interact with their peer group, they also made many new friends. It was great to see the primary and pre-primary children mixing together to play board games, Lego and Duplo.

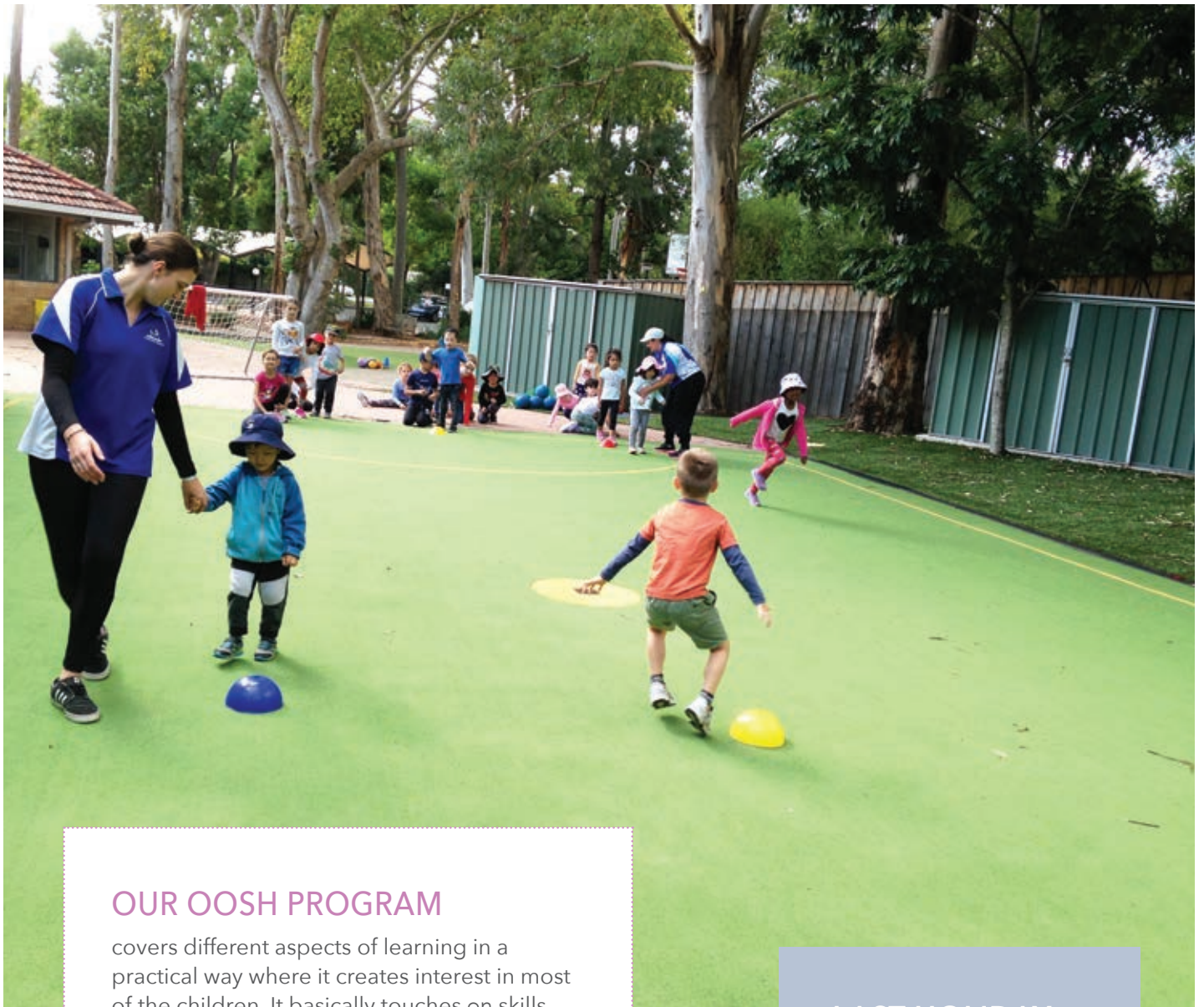
We celebrated Harmony Day with different activities and a group project where all the children got involved. The children also came to understand the significance of the celebration. On Harmony Day lots of children wore their traditional/cultural outfits. You can see some lovely photo highlights from this day.

### OUR MOTHER'S DAY

project was a big hit among all the children. Everyone was willingly taking part. We could see the energy, enthusiasm, commitment and LOTS OF LOVE being spread.







## OUR OOSH PROGRAM

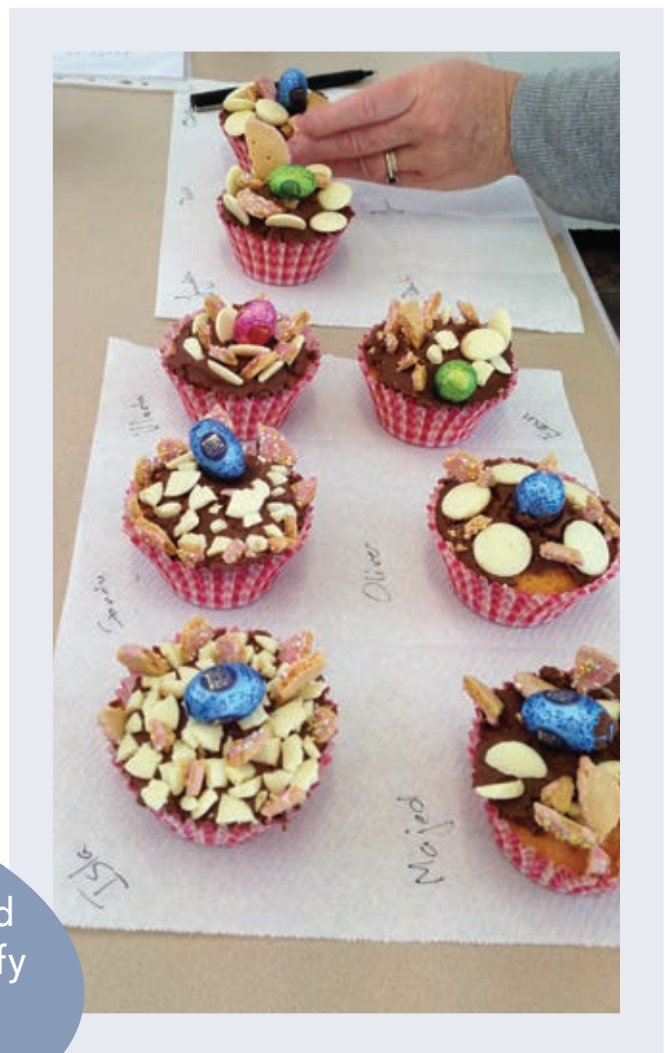
covers different aspects of learning in a practical way where it creates interest in most of the children. It basically touches on skills such as language, fine motor, reading, social/emotional and gross motor skills.

Children spend their inside time interacting with Lego, playdough, threading beads, Hama Beads and knitting which encourages them to build their fine motor skills. Our Thursday cooking program helps children understand how to take measurements, identify ingredients and safely take temperature readings. Most importantly, children are learning to cook, getting them interest in cooking at home. They also take their cook books home at the end of each term.

To create excitement and interest our free play time activities are rotated, but there are some activities which will always be popular. Some children really love to spend time on their own. We try to organise each holiday program in a manner which engages children's interest, learning and most importantly is still fun!

## LAST HOLIDAY PROGRAM

we had "Cool Kids" First Aid. Children learnt many simple life saving skills. We have posted some of the highlights from this program as well. We also have Moving Bodies coming each holiday program, packed with different physical movements, dances and jumps that encourage children to build their gross motor skills. We also have other fun learning incursions during our holiday program.



Our Thursday cooking program helps children understand how to take measurements, identify ingredients and safely take temperature readings.







## CHILDREN LOVE

our holiday garden projects in which they get to grow different things each term, becoming more knowledgeable while watching the plants grow and waiting to harvest the produce from what they have planted. From time to time we receive pictures shared by some of our keen gardeners on the progress of the plants they took home. During our last holiday project we planted garlic and the children displayed a lot of curiosity about how garlic grows and a lot of information was shared during the process. Have a look at the picture of the garlic growth shared by Oliver Vickers. From 1 bulb to this!!! Some of the children are closely watching their garlic grow and looking forward to when they can harvest.

Children also love the science projects and closely watch the chemical reactions and changes happening in the project.

During our last holiday project we planted garlic and the children displayed a lot of curiosity about how garlic grows.

## A GENTLE REMINDER

to all parents and carers whose children attend our holiday program to provide morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, water bottle and a hat/beanie.

Since it is a long day for the children, they need lots of food during the day so please ensure you pack enough food for your little ones.

Finally, I would like to thank all the staff members for their commitment and support for the smooth running of the program during the term.

Have a safe winter break and we look forward to another exciting and busy holiday program this winter!





WHAT'S ON...

# THESE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS



## CHILDREN'S STORYTIME & ILLUSTRATION WORKSHOP

Artist Ann Snell will read her Children's book "The Crocodile who found his smile" and conduct an illustration workshop using pencil, watercolour, crayon and ink. Suitable for children aged 5 - 8 years. **Saturday 13 April 11.00am - 4.00pm.** Caley's Pavillion, Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden. Register at [www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/lifestyle/events/misc-events/youth-week-2019](http://www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/lifestyle/events/misc-events/youth-week-2019)

## DREAMTIME STORYTIME WITH FEATHERDALE WILDLIFE PARK

As part of the Gai-mariagal Festival, Featherdale Wildlife Park will be visiting Gordon Library's Secret Garden with a dreamtime story featuring highly respected Indigenous authors. Meet some amazing native animals from the stories along with Featherdale Wildlife Park Rangers.

**Wednesday 10 July, 10am - 11.30am, Gordon Library.** Register at [kmc.nsw.gov.au](http://kmc.nsw.gov.au)

## ECHIDNA KIDS BUSHWALK

This special bushwalk follows the Mambara Track, Pennant Hills, where children will discover some of the secrets of the local bushland. The short bushwalk will be followed by activities at the Community Nursery. Families are welcome to use the picnic facilities from 9.30am for morning tea. Distance: 800m Location: Mambara Track, Pennant Hills. **Tuesday 09 July 10.00am - 11.30am**

## LOCAL WILD LIFE PHOTOGRAPHER & AUTHOR JAN LATTA AT GORDON LIBRARY

Jan will talk about her exciting adventures and scary experiences during her close encounters with wild animals. A cheetah came up to her in Africa; a lion chased a wildebeest through the mess tent while she was having dinner; a misunderstanding with a male orangutan in Borneo; playing with pandas in China. She describes how each True to Life book was created and will show wonderful animal videos she has created in the wild.

**Friday 19 July, 10.30am - 11.30am.** Ideal for children aged 7+. Bookings via [www.kmc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kmc.nsw.gov.au)

# ZOO SNOOZE

## SOME HIGHLIGHTS

from our 9-12 excursion to Taronga Zoo.

















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