

NORTHSIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

# CHRONICLE

## SUMMER

### HOW TIME FLIES

Growth, change  
& normalisation  
in PPE.

### WE CAN BE HEROES

Role modelling peaceful  
ways to face adversity.

# from the principal

by Barbara Maxfield



As the 2016 year draws to a close it is time to reflect a little on what you as parents were hoping that your child has achieved at Northside Montessori School. At the time of the enrolment interview, parents are asked what they would like their child to achieve as a result of their schooling with us. You too would have been asked this same question and your answers would have been written down during the interview.

Some parents and carers mention that they would like to see that their child is literate and numerate but the overwhelming majority of families talk about the qualities of independence, confidence, the ability to concentrate and the enjoyment of learning. Most also say that they want their child to be the best they can be.

Reaching the educational benchmarks and developmental milestones are vitally important but of equal importance is the development of the mind of the child and their attitude to learning. Indeed, without a healthy attitude to school and to learning a child's progress will be impeded. A Montessori education is not just the delivery of disconnected facts so that a teacher can tick-off a checklist. Finding the wonders of



the universe and seeing the interrelatedness of everything on earth are at the core of the internal development of the child. The scientist, the artist, the academic, the craftsman, the passionate discoverer and the explorer emerges from an understanding of how all things are connected and are interrelated. This is the true nature of learning.

"Let us give the child a vision of the whole universe... for all things are part of the universe, and are connected with each other to form one whole unity." Dr Maria Montessori.

If a child is constantly told what to do, what to say, how to act, what to learn; then they are merely a puppet controlled by someone else, and they are unlikely to develop an understanding of self or an understanding of their own learning style. The Montessori child is encouraged to question and not be afraid. The child is encouraged to explore concepts and discuss issues with their peers and with their teacher. The materials have built-in controls of error so that the child can reflect on their work and find solutions as to why it was incorrect. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. They learn how to work as a group and develop respect for people and their environment that they interact within.

Our Montessori environment allows the child to explore areas that they may not be able to explore in other

traditional school or pre-school settings.

They can choose to do extensive research on areas of interest, do highly complex mathematical problems or read a story for the very first time, after months of work. Whatever is the case, each child's abilities are catered for and valued by everyone in the classroom environment and in the school at large. Their work is viewed by their peers and admired, whether it is the most brilliant piece of work in the world or the work that has required the most effort. Having a healthy self-esteem is so important to a child's future and this is fostered in a Montessori environment.

"It is true that we cannot make a genius. We can only give to each child the chance to fulfil his potential possibilities." Dr Maria Montessori.

A beautiful characteristic found in our children is the desire to share their knowledge and to support each other in the process and discovery of learning. We see that every day and recently this was evident at the 6 - 9 Environmental Expo, the 9 - 12 Art Expo and Debate. Our educational approach is such that one-up-man-ship, attention-seeking behaviour, prestige and competition do not have a place. It is a



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normal part of the mixed-age classroom where peer-learning, mentoring and a love of learning is enjoyed by the children. Our children often assist other students with their work and are always happy to pass on the information they have learnt.

So, think back to the start of your child's schooling with us. Observe your child. What do you see? I think you'll find that they have made extraordinary achievements in their schooling with us!

For those families with children who continue with us in 2017, we look forward to a strengthening of their independence, confidence, their concentration and their enjoyment of learning in the year ahead. For those with children who are graduating, we know they have great strength as learners and that they are equipped with the skills to continue their love of learning for years to come. **NMC**



# ON BOARD

*Who's Who  
in the ~~Zoo~~ Board*  
by Alejandro Sanchez

**H**ave you ever wondered how our school is governed and run? Northside is run by the Northside Montessori Society. The NMS Board governs our school, and delegates the day to day operations to our principal, who ensures the provision of a high quality Montessori education.

The school's Board members are the fiduciaries who steer the school towards a sustainable future by adopting sound, ethical, and legal governance and financial management policies, as well as making sure the school has adequate resources to advance its mission.

Our Board members are volunteers and have generally been elected from the parents of the school for 3-year terms. We continue to gain input on best practice in governance, and so we also now have scope to appoint external directors. One of the most important responsibilities of the school's Board is to appoint a Principal to run the day to day management activities of the school. The Board's main objective is to make strategic decisions, usually in consultation with school management. The Principal, supported by her team, then actions the governance decisions.

## BOARD DUTIES

The Board of directors have three primary legal duties known as the duty of care, duty of loyalty, and duty of obedience. These legal duties require that Board members:

- Act with reasonable care and diligence (Duty of Care). The Board takes care of the school by ensuring prudent use of all assets; and provides oversight for all activities that advance the schools' effectiveness and sustainability.
- Act honestly in the best interests of the school and for its purposes (Duty of Loyalty). The Board must ensure that financial affairs are managed responsibly.
- Ensure that the school complies with applicable laws and acts in accordance with ethical practices; that the school adheres to its stated purposes, and that its activities advance its mission (Duty of Obedience).

## MEET THE TEAM THAT MAKES ALL OF THIS POSSIBLE

The following profiles give you an idea of the people who take on the responsibility of governing our school. Chances are you have already met them so, please, next time you see one of them, make sure you say "Hi"! We are always interested in hearing from anyone who is keen to join this committed, professional and passionate group. Please speak to any of us if you want to know more about what's involved in being on the Board.

Our Board  
members are  
volunteers and  
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for 3-year terms.



### CHANDANDEEP KAUR

#### Independent Non-executive Director

Chandan is an architect (B.Arch, M.Dig.Arch) with over 13 years' experience in architectural design, development and delivery of residential, commercial, retail, hospitality and school projects, involving new design, renovations and extensions to existing buildings. She is currently providing architectural services to two practices designing houses, apartment buildings and educational facilities.

Chandan and Ishan's daughter, Oshin, is five and a half years old, is currently in the 3-6 class with Natasha, Kalpana and Sandra, loves being at school every day and is very much looking forward to the 6-9 class with Sarah Barton from next year. Oshin is a chirpy and happy little girl who loves her friends, teachers and pet Labrador 'Zena'. Oshin and Zena play for hours together. While Oshin gets lots of love and licks, Ishan and Chandan get more play bites from Zena. Many changes were made at home after Zena's arrival to minimise damage to practically everything at home. Things are now settled and enjoyable with Zena almost 8 months old.

Chandan enjoys painting and photography in her spare time. As a family they enjoy bush walking, kayaking, gardening, training and playing with Zena. They also share a passion for model trains that has motivated Ishan, who is a software developer with a master's degree in Computer Systems, to use technology to build devices to control his collection.

Chandan has been a Montessori parent since 2014 and a Board Member since 2015.



## SAMANTHA BAKER

### Chair

Sam and Steve have been involved with Northside for 9 years since enrolling Ella in the Toddler program at Stepping Stones. Ella, 10, is in Margaret's PM class and Georgina, 6, is in Edna's PPE class.

Sam is certain that the education, teaching staff and environment her girls are immersed in at Northside contribute to the beautiful people they are growing into.

Sam works full-time and life is full-on. She squeezes in an episode of House of Cards, The Office, Blackadder or Entourage in the time between getting the kids to after-school and weekend activities, doing a bit of admin (or Board work!) and collapsing after a long day. She would love to spend all day reading in the sun and drinking cups of tea, but hasn't had the opportunity since about 2006.

Sam studied Employment Relations at UNSW, Management at Cranfield University, Strategy Implementation in Brussels, and has over 20 years' experience in Human Resources, gained here and in the UK, working with senior leadership teams in ASX and NYSE-listed companies on strategy design, building workforce capability, organisation re-structure, transfer of business, and greenfields HR.

Sam has been on the Board since 2014 and has been Chair since April this year.



## VINCE SCAPPATURA

### Independent Non-executive Director



Vince is a new member of the board at Northside, joining in March this year. Together with his wife, Leila, he has two sons, Leo and Luca, aged 4 and 2. Leo has been attending the pre-primary program (PPN) since the beginning of the year and absolutely loves it. Luca isn't old enough for pre-primary just yet but he often attempts to sneak into Natasha's classroom during drop-offs in the mornings!

Vince used to have many interests and hobbies including martial arts, reading (for fun), going to the movies and dancing. However, like most parents, he ceased to have a personal or social life after having children. For the past several years Vince has had two professional lives, one as a part-time school teacher and the other as a PhD candidate in International Relations researching the Australian-American alliance (OMG Trump?!) Vince's degree was conferred in October and he is now looking forward to pursuing an academic career.

## SHARON BOWMAN

Deputy Chair

Sharon and her husband David are parents to Isabel, 9 (currently in PM) and Amelia, 7 (in PJ). They have been a Northside family for 9 years, since Isabel started in the Infant Community when she was 6 months old. Sharon joined the board in December 2011, and has also assisted in the planning of various social and fundraising events. She continues to enjoy contributing to the governance and life of the school.

Sharon works as a business consultant, providing advice and assistance on business strategies, systems, business processes, and organisational structures to a range of clients, primarily in the government, utility and education sector. Her particular interests are customer experience and organisational review and realignment. Sharon is a Chartered Accountant with a Masters in Economics (Professional Accounting).

In her 'free time', Sharon likes to cook (thank goodness, because her family likes to eat!), read (a good thriller or biography - Elon Musk is highly recommended), and confesses to probably watching a bit too much TV (recent favourites are Suits, The Blacklist, Rake, Outlander, and she's waiting with a slightly uncomfortable level of excitement for the Gilmore Girls reboot).

The Board's main objective is to make strategic decisions, usually in consultation with school management.



## GRANT LE HELLOCO

### Executive Secretary

Grant and his family have been members of the Northside Montessori community for 7 years, having arrived here from being active at another Montessori School interstate. Over the years, Grant and his wife Jamie are proud to have contributed to many aspects of the school life here at Northside, supporting in many capacities: Board Member (5 years & current), Class Parent, and Committee members at many Social, School and Class events.

He is the proud father to Aiden, a 10 year old boy, who is flourishing in Margaret's 9-12 Class, having commenced in Pre Primary at Northside aged just 3. The family can firmly attest to, and are grateful for, the positive part the school has played in their family and in Aiden's development.

Grant's passions are his family and woodworking. His pastimes include hiding in his 'man-cave', playing guitar and golf, and watching movies and sports on TV.

Grant has over 20 years of experience as a non-executive and managing director on boards in Australia. He holds a Bachelor of Business and has experience in mergers and acquisitions, business integration, greenfield business start-ups, project management, commercial and general management. Most recently he was General Manager and Project Director for a global tier 1 organisation operating in the building services sector.

## KASHIF MAGBOOL

### Independent Non-executive Director



Kashif is the father of two lovely girls Tammirra (aged 5, PPM) and Anishka (aged 1) and husband to Anureet Kamal. Kashif is originally from India but has lived in Sydney for the last 15 years. Kashif enjoys playing cricket, reading books, photography and also loves technology.

Kashif is the IT Infrastructure and Operations Manager at a local independent girls school. He has a background in ICT infrastructure and services across various industrial sectors in Australia and has worked in the education sector for nearly 12 years. Kashif has a master degree in business and technology from UNSW and a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. He has a passion for education and believes education is a fundamental right of every child. He also believes in personalised education and the Montessori principles of teaching and learning.

Kashif has been a Montessori parent since 2013 and Board Member since 2015.





## MALCOLM HEBBLEWHITE

### Independent Non-executive Director

Malcolm (Mal) has served on the NMS Board since April 2014. He is married to Valeria (Val), who is Brazilian and works as an interior design consultant and sales person. They have two daughters; Alessandra, aged 3, and Isabella, aged 10 (in level 4 of Margaret's PM class). Isabella attended a Montessori school in Newcastle for the pre-primary cycle and this provided compelling evidence to Mal of the value of a Montessori education. After having Isabella spend Year 1 in the public school system, they were motivated to move to Sydney to allow their daughters the opportunity to continue their schooling in a Montessori environment.

When he had more time, Mal used to enjoy making art (he has a diploma of fine art) - now he settles for looking at art at local galleries, when time allows. Besides spending time with his girls, he enjoys yoga, running, gardening, and good red wine.

Mal studied Aerospace Engineering at UNSW and worked for several technology-based companies before obtaining an MBA from Northwestern University in Chicago and working in the US and Europe for an international medical device company. He now works as Commercial Director for a Melbourne-based medical technology development company.

He welcomes your thoughts and suggestions on the future of the school and how we can improve it to ensure its longevity and prosperity.

## ALEJANDRO SANCHEZ

Independent Non-executive Director



Alejandro and his wife, Alexandra are the parents of Natalia (7yo in Janene's Class - PJ), Nicolas (5yo in Natasha's Class - PPN) and Sebastian (3yo in Margret's class - PPP). They have been Montessori parents since 2013 when Natalia joined Edna's class (PPE) at the age of 3. Out of their three kids, Sebastian was the only child who had an early start to his Montessori journey by joining the long day care at Stepping Stones when he was 18 months.

Alejandro and Alexandra have recently embarked on a project to spark musical interest in his kids, despite being musically challenged (tone deaf and cannot play instruments! but love music). They are investing significant time helping them to play classical instruments.

In his leisure time, Alejandro likes to spend quality time with his kids often joining them in games and play; he follows a gym routine (that struggles to keep him fit) and loves to find investment opportunities in the stock market.

Alejandro's educational background includes a Master of Commerce in Advanced Finance from UNSW and a Bachelor of Industrial Engineering from Universidad de los Andes, in Colombia. He currently works for a telecommunications company managing business improvement and revenue assurance.

Alejandro joined the Board in 2014.

## LAYLA LOCKIE

Independent  
Non-executive Director

Layla is mum to Dash (aged 5, PPN) and Indigo (aged 3, PPP) and wife to Hayden (PPP class parent). Layla is originally from the UK but has lived in Sydney for 12 years. Layla enjoys cooking and entertaining and is a science fiction nerd.

Layla is the Head of Projects & Change for the Market Operations Division of Australia's largest investment bank. She has a background in project management and delivery, business analysis and strategy and has worked in financial services for 9 years. Prior to this, Layla worked in management consulting and business strategy in the public sector in the UK for 5 years. Layla has a degree in Maths & Physics from University College London. Layla is also a keen supporter of Diversity & Inclusion initiatives, including achieving equal representation of women in Technology, and in promoting a flexible working culture that is welcoming and supportive to people of all backgrounds.

Layla has been a Board member since March 2016.

NMC



# TODDLER PROGRAM

*I like to think of this final term  
as one of transformation.*

by Megan Nguyen  
(Toddler Program Directress)



It is hard to believe that spring has come and gone and the end of the term is just weeks away. I like to think of this final term as one of transformation. We observed our silkworms spin cocoons and emerge as moths. We watched with fascination as our tadpoles grew into frogs. Now, we patiently wait for our hermit crabs that have been in hiding down in sand burrows for months. They are moulting so we are eager to see them reappear and select new shells to fit their new, expanded skins.

### THESE GREAT TRANSFORMATIONS

extend beyond nature's small wonders. The children in the program have continued to grow in independence and confidence. Those that were once hesitant to greet me at the door are now offering me their outstretched hand and a warm smile. There are a number of children who are working as if the adult "did not exist;" something that Maria Montessori said was "the greatest sign of success for a teacher." When we can step back and see the fruits of our labour at work through the child, we know that we have given them a great gift. We observe purpose, resilience, tolerance and dedication. Who would not wish these things for their child? They are all seen here, right in our little Toddler Room or "house" as the children call it. The best thing of all is that these 'gifts' go home each day with the child. They are now embedded in their very being, it is the parents' job to nurture and watch them grow.

**THE PARENTS** do a lot of growing in our space as well. I have been challenging our carers to do less for their child. For many adults it is second nature to pick up after the child by packing their work away, tidying up the eating table or hanging up their artwork to dry. Sometimes it seems easier to just do it ourselves. It certainly is faster! While this may be true, we have to realise that it only serves our intentions and does nothing for the child. Before long, children seem to 'magically' think things will happen for them. This is very evident when you try to teach a child to dress himself; often his head is in the clouds with no interest to learn because it has always just happened for him. "Voila!" my clothes are on (thanks to mum or dad of course). Going through the toileting process with a child of this mentality presents a real challenge as you can imagine!

We all want our children to be self-sufficient and confident which is achieved through self-mastery. Self-mastery is only achieved through opportunity and experience. When you look at it this way, you can see that the adult has the power to either be a guide or a hindrance to the child. By helping our children get back on track instead of taking over the whole process we can help them reach their goals much more quickly.

We have also been putting a strong focus on grace and courtesy over the course of the term. With allergy season upon us many children have had presentations on wiping their noses. One morning I presented this task to our newcomer, Alex and later in the session I watched as he offered the same presentation to another child who needed a tissue. It is delight seeing these moments and a true testament to the benefits of mixed age groups. The children have also been working hard to remember to push in their chairs, say "excuse me" when they need to get by and also put up the Wet Floor sign after they mop up their spills. They are starting to see that their actions affect others and are demonstrating more respect as the days go by. It is through respect of the environment and others that Dr. Montessori believed that world peace could be achieved. It starts now in these early years of life and must be demonstrated by the adult.

"The child who has felt strong love for his surroundings and for all living creatures, who has discovered joy and enthusiasm in work, gives reason to hope that humanity can develop in a new direction." – Maria Montessori. I thank each of our families for their commitment to our program and for stretching yourselves a little further as parents. The parenting journey is one of great growth and transformation. It has been a pleasure sharing it with you and your children.

All the best this holiday season and in the New Year!

-Megan Nguyen, Toddler Program Directress.

# STEPPING STONES

**M**y how time flies! Each year seems to go faster, or is it just because we are getting busier in our lives? It's nice to remind ourselves to take time out for one another, to share in the beauty of all that surrounds us and leading up to this time of the year to spend time with our loved ones.

## GRACE & COURTESY

At Stepping Stones exercises in Grace and courtesy consist of things such as walking, sitting, greeting others, manners (please, thank you, and "May I") how to interrupt a teacher or another child ("Excuse me" and tapping a teacher on the shoulder and waiting to be responded to), passing objects, following directions, how to open and close a door, and control of body through Silence games. Demonstrating such exercises during Circle time require the children to re-enact such exercises. We want the children to develop refinement of social interactions, be polite, and learn respect for others. Grace and Courtesy lessons begin with the first day of attendance and continue throughout the school years so they become a natural part of the environment.

## PRACTICAL LIFE

The Practical Life exercises are organized in to three main areas: care of the person, care of the environment, and grace and courtesy. The dressing frames introduce such skills as buttoning, zipping, snapping, and tying. Other activities such as hand washing, baby doll washing, and manicuring nails are also considered caring for the person. Under the area of caring for the environment, are exercises such as pouring, spooning, sweeping, cloth folding, dish washing, and taking care of animals and plants. We will be reviewing next year what animal we want to look after, so this will be an exciting time for the children and educators. If you have any ideas please feel free to email them to us or tell us!

## CASA ROOM NEWS

In the month of November, we invited children to take a journey to Europe. For geography, we gave the children the basic forms of continent through The Globe of the Continents. We used the puzzle map of Europe, pictures, and books to bring this information to the child.

For Numeracy the children liked to work with Numbers and Counters. Using this material means children are learning the sequence of numbers, pairs, and the concept of odd and even numbers.

We give the children lessons in Grace & Courtesy which includes saying "thank you", "please" and greetings. These lessons assist children to adapt to their environment.

## NIDO ROOM NEWS



This month in the Nido Room the children have developed a strong interest in self-help skills and lessons in Grace and Courtesy. The children have shown a strong sense of independence and

curiosity during routine times such as applying hats and sunscreen, washing hands and meal times focusing on using spoons and cups. With the children's growing interest in self-help skills, various Practical Life activities have been set up for the children allowing them to use these practices, such as pizza making and buttering crackers. These activities have also allowed the children to further develop their hand eye coordination and become independent learners.

With the weather slowly warming up the children in the Nido room have enjoyed exploring the outdoor

environment. They are improving their gross motor skills through practicing walking across the stepping stones, throwing and rolling balls during group ball games and also exploring their senses through water play. It is great to see the children show curiosity and a sense of being within their environment as they confidently engage in various activities.

The children have explored a variety of different craft experiences this month including printing on the large easel, finger painting, and working on our fine motor skills through drawing.



## OUR BACKYARD

We are also looking at extending our herb and veggie garden now we can see the garden again! A big Thanks to the parents of Northside Montessori School for the Working Bee where they helped us to tidy up our backyard, it looks amazing and your hard work and efforts have definitely made a difference to the lives of our little Montessorian children.

## IC ROOM NEWS

This month in the IC room we were learning about the continent of North America. The children have been given the opportunity to discover different countries in North America, which are American and Canadian. The children were really excited about colouring in the country's flags. They've been asking about Canada and America.

For our literacy area we focused on the letter "D". The children were really excited about our language table where they sit and explore objects that start with the letter 'D'. Some of the children brought in books and objects which start with the letter 'D'. The children were happy to share their news with their friends about what they brought in. To extend on the children's literacy they completed activities relating to the letter "D". Duck pictures and dot painting were just some of these activities.

For our Practical Life experiences the children practised grating cheese with a cheese grater.

To extend on the children's numeracy development they completed coloured window displays, made from different shapes. When the sunshine comes through the window it reflects the shape and becomes a shadow on the floor. The children are fascinated by this.

We've been teaching the IC children about Grace and Courtesy, for example, we use our gentle hands with our friends, and our kind words. We've been working on saving water while washing hands and modelling to the children respect, care and appreciation for the natural environment and embedding sustainable practices in our daily routines and practices.

# MINA SAN

# KONNICHIIWA

*Hello from our Japanese  
co-curricular class!*

by Kay Chida (Japanese Teacher)

**M**ina san Konnichiwa. (Hello Everyone). Our Japanese class this year has been going very well. All the children learned not only vocabularies, but also about Japanese culture, cooking, society, events, songs, games and much more.....

They also gained the experience of writing the Japanese alphabets (Hiragana) and some Kanji characters, depending on their level of groups. Students like to write their name in Japanese and many of them have memorised how to do that. There are many ways of learning languages and Japanese should be a fun and interesting language to learn especially at their primary age.

We also cook every term (4 cooking classes in a year) and each term students are able to try different varieties of Japanese food. In term two I introduced "Udon noodles" with Tempura beans (Soup made with chicken and soy sauce flavour) and it was a big hit! Some children had eaten it before but many had never tried it. To try things for the first time - especially different countries' food - is a new experience, needing some courage, for young students. And once they know what it's like, I often see a big smile on their faces, saying "Yummy!". Well.... this is the moment I was waiting for....."Yummy!" in Japanese is "Oishii!". All children pick up the "Oishii" word straight away, saying it together over and over. Then they learn many vocabularies with Japanese grammar using the "Oishii" word. e.g. Noun + Oishii (adjective) - Noun can be anything related to food items. Sushi + Oishii----- Sushi oishii. Ringo (apple) + oishii----- Ringo oishii. And so on.....

## CHILDREN ENJOY

learning Japanese language moving their bodies, trying different foods and in addition, they love Origami work! Origami activities provide a challenge for them to create interesting objects using flat square paper, with a little patience and good focus. They use their fingers and eyes to develop their brains without realising it - and it gives them such pleasure and satisfaction when they create and complete an Origami model.

Japanese class and Origami activities will continue with interesting and fun lessons in 2017 and the future.

Subarashii 2017  
o Omukae kudasai.  
(Wishing everyone a great 2017!)

Arigato gozaimashita.  
Thank you very much.  
Kay Chida

NMC

# HOW TIME FLIES

## GROWTH, CHANGE & NORMALISATION IN PPE

*The last term is when we see the "normalisation" that Dr. Montessori has talked about in many of her books.*

by Edna Salvador (3-6 Directress)

**T**erm 4 is usually the busiest term, at least for us teachers. Despite the hustle and bustle associated with the last three months of the year, it is also safe to say that it is the most calm in the classroom. The last term is when we see the "normalisation" that Dr. Montessori has talked about in many of her books. "Normalisation" isn't something that's done to the child. It's something that spontaneously happens when children are given meaningful work to do - especially individualised work that's freely chosen and uses child-size tools and activities that engage the child's attention. There are 4 characteristics of a normalised child: (1) Love of Work, (2) Concentration, (3) Self-Discipline and (4) Sociability. (Michael Olaf, The Joyful Child).



## GRANDPARENTS DAY

During the first four weeks of the term, we had Grandparents Day where nannas and poppas were invited to our classrooms and had the chance to do some craft and read a book to their grandchildren. We even had grandparents visiting from overseas! It was a successful and well-attended event. The children enjoyed being read a story, planting a succulent and making a bookmark. It was great to see the bond between the children and their grandparents.

## HOW APT

that Spring comes in term 4 too. We see things changing, Jacaranda blossoms blooming, silkworms spinning cocoons, magpies hatching but what about the children? They are changing too! Our Extended Day children are losing their milk teeth, the 4 year olds are turning 5 and excited about being the next lot of Extended Day and there are no more 3 year olds in the class. We have also witnessed the 4 and 5 year olds starting to blend the sounds more easily and choosing books to read and a few are creating stories on the Movable Alphabet.

## THE EXTENDED

day children began having lunch with the primary children every Tuesday. This was an activity whose goal was to establish friendships and camaraderie between the two. Our Extended Day children were also invited to two primary art and science exhibits and had an all day orientation for three days where they met their future teachers. Our children are getting a taste of what to expect when they move to the next level next year!

All the children have also been learning the song they will sing at the end-of-year concert to be held at the Turrumurra High School. This is a yearly event to culminate the year and our last major activity for the year.

We would like to take this opportunity to bid adieu to our 9 Extended Day children who are all moving to our primary classes next year. We are thrilled and excited for all of them and can't wait to see how they all fare as the youngest members

of the group. Sadly, we are saying good-bye to two of our students, Nina Binse and Dalton Beaumont who are moving to other schools.

Lastly, we want to thank our class mums, Emma and Julie, the parents who volunteered to do our class laundry and for all the parents who sent fruits for morning tea and flowers for flower arranging. Merci, gracias, grazie, salamat! Thank you for a fruitful school year.

Wishing our children and their families a joyous Christmas season! Edna and Sirisha.

# WE CAN BE HEROES

*Role modelling peaceful ways to  
face adversity in our world.*

by Marina Ridley (3-6 Directress)

**W**ho doesn't want to be a hero? Or perhaps, who doesn't admire a hero? A real life hero could be defined as someone who does good, faces adversity and makes a change, helps the downtrodden or the weak, gives a voice to someone who has none. We can all think of someone who has done one or more of these things, both famous and perhaps not so famous. If we are thinking of people in the real world, none of them have powers beyond the ordinary sphere of human beings. Many heroes didn't resort to violence and still achieved their means in peaceful ways. As adults, we look up to such people and have the means to find out about real life heroes. We read about them in the news or in books or perhaps watch a documentary about a person's heroic acts. We know the difference between the real hero, who was a person, rather than the fantasy characters of Superman or Spiderman, who do not exist. We see through the smoke and mirrors of modern day computer enhanced movie scenes that defy the world and humans as we know them. As an adult, this is easy. As a pre-schooler however, it is not.

**SHELLEY  
BUTLER** and

Deb Kratz, authors of 'The Field Guide to Parenting', say the following about pre-schoolers' want to be superheroes; "By definition, superheroes are larger than life, courageous, powerful, and seemingly able to overcome any obstacle with great physical prowess while doing great deeds at the same time. Young children, facing the challenges of learning many new skills, may often feel small, helpless, fearful, unable to accomplish what they desire, or troubled—in other words, just the opposite of superheroes. It's no wonder that many pre-schoolers are drawn to superhero play. Through play they can feel brave, fearless, in control of their world, outside of ordinary, and just plain good."

## THESE FEELINGS

and needs are important human needs to address. We need to be helping pre-schoolers develop the abilities to be helpful, courageous and powerful and to do what is good and right in their own worlds. The role models we offer to them to learn this from are important.


Consider the supernatural superhero – Ninja turtles, Batman, Lego characters and the list could go on... Certainly, they all seem to set out to rid the world of something unpleasant. Someone or something making it tough for others or just being plain dangerous and threatening other's well-being. Who wouldn't want to help with this? It all seems great and it is; except for the way in which they go about it. The exception here is that they use violent means as 'the good guy'. There's fighting and kicking, there's guns and all manner of physical means to prevent 'the bad people'. People get hurt in the process of 'helping' but it seems that that's OK because the greater good is at the fore here.

To a pre-schooler, these scenarios are easy to follow. I hurt them, they stop or it goes away. I can help and be powerful, good and solve problems by doing what the supernatural superhero does. Consider typical pre-schooler daily struggles. Perhaps someone is not sharing the equipment that they want- a pretty serious problem. It might be that the pre-schooler sees someone overstepping a boundary like taking more than their share at the snack table. Consider also that a pre-schooler is developing their language skills. Their gross motor skills are probably far more honed at this point. What is more effective for them - words or actions? Much of the time it will be actions. And this is developmentally usual. If they have also not had simple modelling of how to deal with these scenarios with words, and emotions are running high, then they are going to resort to the aggressive, hurtful option. These actions can be compounded when the child is wearing the garb of their admired superhero. In the child's mind, they become that superhero. They forget their limitations and consequences for actions in the heat of emotion. The problem is getting solved in an unhelpful way.

## HOW DO WE ADDRESS THIS

in a Montessori 3-6 environment? We acknowledge that many children are going to be exposed to superheroes in the world outside of school. Sometimes, older siblings, who are at an appropriate age to distinguish between fantasy and fact bring the superhero shows and figurines into a younger person's sphere. It is very difficult as parents to segregate and prevent sharing of these things. However, what we ask is that if your family chooses to invite this into the home, that it is very clear to the 3-6 year old child that it does not extend to school. This includes not wearing the superheroes capes, t-shirt, pants, hats etc. This is due to the child's inability to have a clear sense of self, and be able to exercise already fragile and very new ways of problem solving with words.





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## RATHER THAN 'PREACH'...

In the Montessori environment, rather than 'preach' or 'lecture' about behaviour, we try to model and role play. These are our Grace and Courtesy lessons. These lessons provide the words to use and the ways to move or act in a given situation. An initial script if you will to practise, when the child is not emotionally involved. The idea is that they can call on these practised skills when the moment strikes.

Like all learning, without the correct tools and practice, it becomes more challenging. behaviour is no different. We need to give the lessons many times and be 'friendly with error'. Children are going to and need to make errors of judgement. Grace and Courtesy lessons will not prevent the supernatural hero acts every time, however, experience and Dr Montessori's observations show us that they are far more effective than other ways of helping children adopt new and positive behaviours. So in the interest of helping the children to 'do it themselves' and become the type of hero that is peaceful in our world, we ask that from next year, that children in 3-6 do not wear superhero clothing or bring superhero branded merchandise such as bags and lunch boxes etc. to school. As Dr. Montessori said, then we wait and watch to see the person that will be revealed. We hope that will be true heroes and true peace keepers who operate in the real world.

Marina - 3-6 Directress. [NMC](#)

# MONTESSORI HOME ENVIRONMENT

*When you hear your children telling you “I want to stay for lunch today”, they’re actually hinting at staying back for Montessori Home Environment.*

by Kalpana Lakkaraju



**M**ontessori Home Environment is one of the most popular and busy programs run at Northside Montessori. What actually happens in the MHE? After the children finish their lunch and subsequent afternoon play, they line up at their respective classrooms and enter the carefully prepared environment for relaxation. The environment is set up appropriately for relaxation with dim lights, pillows for comfort and soothing music. Relaxing helps calm their excited minds and bodies. It helps them transition slowly to a peaceful working environment from the state of intense outdoor gross motor activity. Relaxation is followed by book reading and a discussion about grace and courtesy i.e. what is acceptable behaviour and what's not. We sometimes include role play to demonstrate this. Story reading is followed by a free choice of work from the environment or continuation of work from the morning cycle. Mattresses are available for children who want to relax longer or sleep.

## SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

are set up where a group of up to 5 children can work together. These activities are carefully chosen to invoke the innate abilities of the children and emphasise their connection with the environment. For example, children made a still life drawing of poppy flowers in the classroom and coloured them using different media like crayons, water colours and acrylic paints. They practice various brush strokes, study art works and learn about texture. They also get to practice some advanced weaving and sewing techniques. Occasionally we cook and yes you may have heard that they are treated to some ice blocks on very hot days. The ice blocks are made with the juice extracted in the morning work cycle.

## AT 2:30PM

we announce the end of the afternoon cycle. The children then help tidy up the classroom and clear the outdoor area. They collect their things from their lockers and wait at the outdoor tables for further transition.

MHE is relaxed and fun. We are constantly planning and brainstorming to put together our ideas to make it more enjoyable whilst being interactive, informative and educational at the same time. ~Kalpana. **NMC**



# THE NEGATIVES OF POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

by Natasha Williams (3-6 Directress)

Recently some of the 3-6 staff went to hear the American author Alfie Kohn speak at the NSW Art Gallery. His visit was sponsored by the Montessori Australia Foundation and some other Montessori Schools in the Sydney Area. He spoke on the topic "Too much achievement, too little learning" and covered topics such as the effects of standardised testing and content focused education and the effects of praise and rewards and how they can lead to feelings of conditional love and acceptance in children.

Here at Northside Montessori School the Directresses and staff are all trained in Montessori education however, we consider ourselves life long learners and we continue to critically reflect and engage in experiences that can have a positive influence on our practise and further inform our pedagogy. Our presence at this talk and our interest in the work of Alfie Kohn is an example of our commitment to provide a best practise Montessori and Early Childhood setting within each of our 3-6 environments.

The following is an article he has written on how to use praise with children. I hope it provides you with some content for your own family discussions and personal reflection. He has more articles on various topics on his website  
[www.alfiekohn.org](http://www.alfiekohn.org)



# FIVE REASONS TO STOP SAYING "GOOD JOB!"



By Alfie Kohn

*NOTE: An abridged version of this article was published in Parents magazine in May 2000 with the title "Hooked on Praise." For a more detailed look at the issues discussed here – as well as a comprehensive list of citations to relevant research – please see the books Punished by Rewards and Unconditional Parenting.*

**H**ang out at a playground, visit a school, or show up at a child's birthday party, and there's one phrase you can count on hearing repeatedly: "Good job!" Even tiny infants are praised for smacking their hands together ("Good clapping!"). Many of us blurt out these judgments of our children to the point that it has become almost a verbal tic.

Plenty of books and articles advise us against relying on punishment, from spanking to forcible isolation ("time out"). Occasionally someone will even ask us to rethink the practice of bribing children with stickers or food. But you'll have to look awfully hard to find a discouraging word about what is euphemistically called positive reinforcement.

Lest there be any misunderstanding, the point here is not to call into question the importance of supporting and encouraging children, the need to love them and hug them and help them feel good about themselves. Praise, however, is a different story entirely. Here's why.

## 1. MANIPULATING CHILDREN

Suppose you offer a verbal reward to reinforce the behaviour of a two-year-old who eats without spilling, or a five-year-old who cleans up her art supplies. Who benefits from this? Is it possible that telling kids they've done a good job may have less to do with their emotional needs than with our convenience?

Rheta DeVries, a professor of education at the University of Northern Iowa, refers to this as "sugar-coated control." Very much like tangible rewards – or, for that matter, punishments – it's a way of doing something to children to get them to comply with our wishes. It may be effective at producing this result (at least for a while), but it's very different from working with kids – for example, by engaging them in conversation about what makes a classroom (or family) function smoothly, or how other people are affected by what we have done – or failed to do. The latter approach is not only more respectful but more likely to help kids become thoughtful people.

The reason praise can work in the short run is that young children are hungry for our approval. But we have a responsibility not to exploit that dependence for our own convenience. A "Good job!" to reinforce something that makes our lives a little easier can be an example of taking advantage of children's dependence. Kids may also come to feel manipulated by this, even if they can't quite explain why.

## 2. CREATING PRAISE JUNKIES

To be sure, not every use of praise is a calculated tactic to control children's behaviour. Sometimes we compliment kids just because we're genuinely pleased by what they've done. Even then, however, it's worth looking more closely. Rather than bolstering a child's self-esteem, praise may increase kids' dependence on us. The more we say, "I like the way you...." or "Good ...ing," the more kids come to rely on our evaluations, our decisions about what's good and bad, rather than learning to form their own judgments. It leads them to measure their worth in terms of what will lead us to smile and dole out some more approval.

Mary Budd Rowe, a researcher at the University of Florida, discovered that students who were praised lavishly by their teachers were more tentative in their responses, more apt to answer in a questioning tone of voice ("Um, seven?"). They tended to back off from an idea they had proposed as soon as an adult disagreed with them. And they were less likely to persist with difficult tasks or share their ideas with other students.

In short, "Good job!" doesn't reassure children; ultimately, it makes them feel less secure. It may even create a vicious circle such that the more we slather on the praise, the more kids seem to need it, so we praise them some more. Sadly, some of these kids will grow into adults who continue to need someone else to pat them on the head and tell them whether what they did was OK. Surely this is not what we want for our daughters and sons.

I want her  
to share her  
pleasure with me,  
not look to me for  
a verdict.



### 3. STEALING A CHILD'S PLEASURE

Apart from the issue of dependence, a child deserves to take delight in her accomplishments, to feel pride in what she's learned how to do. She also deserves to decide when to feel that way. Every time we say, "Good job!", though, we're telling a child how to feel.

To be sure, there are times when our evaluations are

appropriate and our guidance is necessary – especially with toddlers and pre-schoolers. But a constant stream of value judgments is neither necessary nor useful for children's development. Unfortunately, we may not have realized that "Good job!" is just as much an evaluation as "Bad job!" The most notable feature of a positive judgment isn't that it's positive, but that it's a judgment. And people, including kids, don't like being judged.

I cherish the occasions when my daughter manages to do something for the first time, or does something better than she's ever done it before. But I try to resist the knee-jerk tendency to say, "Good job!" because I don't want to dilute her joy. I want her to share her pleasure with me, not look to me for a verdict. I want her to exclaim, "I did it!" (which she often does) instead of asking me uncertainly, "Was that good?"



## 4. LOSING INTEREST

"Good painting!" may get children to keep painting for as long as we keep watching and praising. But, warns Lilian Katz, one of the country's leading authorities on early childhood education, "once attention is withdrawn, many kids won't touch the activity again." Indeed, an impressive body of scientific research has shown that the more we reward people for doing something, the more they tend to lose interest in whatever they had to do to get the reward. Now the point isn't to draw, to read, to think, to create – the point is to get the goody, whether it's an ice cream, a sticker, or a "Good job!"

In a troubling study conducted by Joan Grusec at the University of Toronto, young children who were frequently praised for displays of generosity tended to be slightly less generous on an everyday basis than other children were. Every time they had heard "Good sharing!" or "I'm so proud of you for helping," they became a little less interested in sharing or helping. Those actions came to be seen not as something valuable in their own right but as something they had to do to get that reaction again from an adult. Generosity became a means to an end.

Does praise motivate kids? Sure. It motivates kids to get praise. Alas, that's often at the expense of commitment to whatever they were doing that prompted the praise.

## 5. REDUCING ACHIEVEMENT

As if it weren't bad enough that "Good job!" can undermine independence, pleasure, and interest, it can also interfere with how good a job children actually do. Researchers keep finding that kids who are praised for doing well at a creative task tend to stumble at the next task – and they don't do as well as children who weren't praised to begin with.

Why does this happen? Partly because the praise creates pressure to "keep up the good work" that gets in the way of doing so. Partly because their interest in what they're doing may have declined. Partly because they become less likely to take risks – a prerequisite for creativity – once they start thinking about how to keep those positive comments coming.

More generally, "Good job!" is a remnant of an approach to psychology that reduces all of human life to behaviours that can be seen and measured. Unfortunately, this ignores the thoughts, feelings, and values that lie behind behaviours. For example, a child may share a snack with a friend as a way of attracting praise, or as a way of making sure the other child has enough to eat. Praise for sharing ignores these different motives. Worse, it actually promotes the less desirable motive by making children more likely to fish for praise in the future.



## ONCE YOU START

to see praise for what it is – and what it does – these constant little evaluative eruptions from adults start to produce the same effect as fingernails being dragged down a blackboard. You begin to root for a child to give his teachers or parents a taste of their own treacle by turning around to them and saying (in the same saccharine tone of voice), “Good praising!”

Still, it’s not an easy habit to break. It can seem strange, at least at first, to stop praising; it can feel as though you’re being chilly or withholding something. But that, it soon becomes clear, suggests that we praise more because we need to say it than because children need to hear it. Whenever that’s true, it’s time to rethink what we’re doing.

What kids do need is unconditional support, love with no strings attached. That’s not just different from praise – it’s the opposite of praise. “Good job!” is conditional. It means we’re offering attention and acknowledgement and approval for jumping through our hoops, for doing things that please us.

This point, you’ll notice, is very different from a criticism that some people offer to the effect that we give kids too much approval, or give it too easily. They recommend that we become more miserly with our praise and demand that kids “earn” it. But the real problem isn’t that children expect to be praised for everything they do these days. It’s that we’re tempted to take shortcuts, to manipulate kids with rewards instead of explaining and helping them to develop needed skills and good values.

So what’s the alternative? That depends on the situation, but whatever we decide to say instead has to be offered in the context of genuine affection and love for who kids are rather than for what they’ve done. When unconditional support is present, “Good job!” isn’t necessary; when it’s absent, “Good job!” won’t help.

If we’re praising positive actions as a way of discouraging misbehaviour, this is unlikely to be effective for long. Even when it works, we can’t really say the child is now “behaving himself”; it would be more accurate to say the praise is behaving him. The alternative is to work with the child, to figure out the reasons he’s acting that way. We may have to reconsider our own requests rather than just looking for a way to get kids to obey. (Instead of using “Good job!” to get a four-year-old to sit quietly through a long class meeting or family dinner, perhaps we should ask whether it’s reasonable to expect a child to do so).

## WE ALSO NEED TO BRING KIDS IN ON THE PROCESS OF MAKING DECISIONS

If a child is doing something that disturbs others, then sitting down with her later and asking, “What do you think we can do to solve this problem?” will likely be more effective than bribes or threats. It also helps a child learn how to solve problems and teaches that her ideas and feelings are important. Of course, this process takes time and talent, care and courage. Tossing off a “Good job!” when the child acts in the way we deem appropriate takes none of those things, which helps to explain why “doing to” strategies are a lot more popular than “working with” strategies.

## AND WHAT CAN WE SAY WHEN KIDS JUST DO SOMETHING IMPRESSIVE?

Consider three possible responses:

### • SAY NOTHING

Some people insist a helpful act must be “reinforced” because, secretly or unconsciously, they believe it was a fluke. If children are basically evil, then they have to be given an artificial reason for being nice (namely, to get a verbal reward). But if that cynicism is unfounded – and a lot of research suggests that it is – then praise may not be necessary.

### • SAY WHAT YOU SAW

A simple, evaluation-free statement (“You put your shoes on by yourself” or even just “You did it”) tells your child that you noticed. It also lets her take pride in what she did. In other cases, a more elaborate description may make sense. If your child draws a picture, you might provide feedback – not judgment – about what you noticed: “This mountain is huge!” “Boy, you sure used a lot of purple today!”

If a child does something caring or generous, you might gently draw his attention to the effect of his action on the other person: “Look at Abigail’s face! She seems pretty happy now that you gave her some of your snack.” This is completely different from praise, where the emphasis is on how you feel about her sharing.

### • TALK LESS, ASK MORE

Even better than descriptions are questions. Why tell him what part of his drawing impressed you when you can ask him what he likes best about it? Asking “What was the hardest part to draw?” or “How did you figure out how to make the feet the right size?” is likely to nourish his interest in drawing. Saying “Good job!”, as we’ve seen, may have exactly the opposite effect.

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### THIS DOESN'T MEAN

that all compliments, all thank-you’s, all expressions of delight are harmful. We need to consider our motives for what we say (a genuine expression of enthusiasm is better than a desire to manipulate the child’s future behavior) as well as the actual effects of doing so. Are our reactions helping the child to feel a sense of control over her life – or to constantly look to us for approval? Are they helping her to become more excited about what she’s doing in its own right – or turning it into something she just wants to get through in order to receive a pat on the head

It’s not a matter of memorizing a new script, but of keeping in mind our long-term goals for our children and watching for the effects of what we say. The bad news is that the use of positive reinforcement really isn’t so positive. The good news is that you don’t have to evaluate in order to encourage.

NMC

# MY OOSH TRANSITION

*Almost two terms ago, I nervously entered the ASC not knowing what to expect. Now looking back, it has been a new and rewarding experience.*

by Sirisha (OOSH Coordinator)

**T**o transition from the hectic workings of a school-day classroom to the relaxed atmosphere of After School Care was a smooth and supportive process. In hindsight I realise that such a wonderful transition could not have been possible without the support and encouragement from the school and of course Sureni. Now that I am more settled I am looking forward to building a friendly, fun and exciting learning environment for the children.

Having been trained and employed in the Montessori environment for more than 10 years, I never envisioned myself as a worker in ASC. When I was given this opportunity, I thought I could bring my Montessori training and try to adapt it to an ASC environment. Of course, in the end, every change is dependent on the children's reactions to it, and therefore their input and opinions are always taken on board as a priority.

My special moment in the ASC came when I noticed a child building with foam blocks. The child was trying to recreate the Roman Arch with foam blocks. After building it he proceeded to pull out one block at a time carefully to watch what happens. For those who are not familiar with this Montessori material, it includes a set of wooden blocks and fixed sides that allows children to build an arch. It teaches them the basics of architecture. They build the arch and then remove the support structure and watch how the arch stands on its own.

To see the child applying and extending his learning from the Montessori material to other materials was very encouraging and uplifting! I look forward to witnessing and encouraging this kind of learning in a relaxed and fun environment.



**TALKING OF FUN...**  
we have celebrated so much here at our ASC-- from Diwali to Halloween in the last term. It was wonderful to see what opportunities could arise when the children were given free reign-- there was no stopping their creativity! Watching the way the children worked together to create such beautiful things, as you can see in the pictures, is quite amazing and rewarding to witness. All the resources needed were available to them and Our Halloween wall saw some very interesting decorations from Vampire teeth to red back spiders and pumpkins. Even some fairies were created and displayed, of course with some protests from the boys. The children took a lot of pride in what they had created, and Sureni and I had lots of fun face painting as well.

## ONE OF MY PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS

was Diwali, the colourful Indian festival of Lights. In celebration, the children decorated the outdoor area with Rangoli, colourful patterns made out of powder, as well as beautiful lamps decorated by the children with paint and glitter.

Of course, the year has not come to an end, as we have been busily planning for the Christmas period, which I'm sure will bring plenty more beautiful artworks from the children.

We have also welcomed Muna in to our team now, who Sureni and I have found to bring a lot of energy and experience to our ASC family. I hope all of you lovely Mums, Dads and all our wonderful children have a great joyous time in the coming year.

"From the child itself he will learn how to perfect himself as an educator" Maria Montessori once said, The Montessori Method. Sirisha - OOSH coordinator.

## WHAT REALLY HAPPENS IN OOSH

**W**e thought it was important that parents knew what was happening in the OOSH where many children spend a lot of time. Each day the OOSH staff create a daily program covering Learning and Wellbeing. The children participate in their learning through arts and crafts and cooking activities. For example, in autumn we will do a number of learning activities including learning about the colours of autumn and what happens during this season.

The OOSH staff devotedly ensures that the children's diet contains two fruits two vegetables, one carbohydrate and one dairy product. There is a strict no sugar or white products policy, so that we practice healthy eating habits and promote the children to do the same.

Food is also prepared strictly with all children's allergies and special dietary requirements accounted for. This includes a no nut policy, for the safety of the kids!

We do observation for each child and a few groups per term. Finally, because we know how much every parent worries about their child's safety, a task sheet is filled out every single day about the safety and practice of the activities being performed.

Merry Christmas and have a safe holiday from the entire OOSH staff!



# ENVIRONMENTAL EXPO

*The highlight in 6-9 this term was undoubtedly the Environmental Expo.*

by Janene Johnson (6-9 Directress)



I can't believe how fast this year has flown by. Here we are at the end of another one racing towards Christmas again.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EXPO

The highlight this term was undoubtedly the Environmental Expo. It was heartwarming to see so many parents on the night and inspirational watching the children present with such confidence and pride. Were all the posters perfect? Were the children able to answer every question that was thrown at them? The answers to these questions are probably, "No. "

What was evident was that this was all their own work. They had sourced the information (a lot of it very complex), muddled through what was important, tried to put it into their own words, had to learn how to work with their partner and how they would manage the work, decide how they would present their work and then finally complete it all by a deadline. There were a lot of drafts, a lot of posters discarded and a lot of prototype models before final products were deemed suitable by the children. There was discussion after discussion about who would do what and how they could achieve their vision. Then there was great excitement setting up on the day and nervous anticipation for the evening ahead.

Finally, huge crowds of adults poured in and started viewing their work and questioning them on it. What did we see? Maybe a few had a bit of stage fright at first, but this was quickly replaced by, "I am loving this. I am so proud of our efforts. I can be confident and speak to these adults because this is my work and I know what I'm talking about. I want to share it." This type of learning is invaluable. It will stay with them forever and no, it wasn't all perfect, but what do you see at many other school events like this? Perfect work that has primarily been done by the parents.

The joy on our children's faces that night and the satisfaction they derived from this can never be achieved through any other means. If they don't compete this all by themselves, it is not theirs.

## THANK YOU

I would just like to end this final newsletter for the year with a few thank yous.

Firstly, thank you to parents Tracy Moore our class parent, Jaime Le Helloco for helping whenever we ask and Asiyeh Ansari for coming in repeatedly to do art with the class.

Secondly, thank you to my wonderful assistants Sharon, Kay and Kim. We couldn't run the class without your support.

## GOODBYE & WELCOME

We would like to farewell our Level 3 children. We wish them all the very best for their time in 9-12. We know you will have a wonderful time with Margaret.

Whilst we are very sad to be saying goodbye to our Level 3's, we are very excited to be welcoming our new Level 1's in 2017. We can't wait for them to join our class.

Have a wonderful and safe break and we look forward to seeing you in 2017.

Janene (6-9 Directress)





# 9-12 NEWS

*This time of year is very busy for many - and this has been also true for the 9 - 12 students. We've been lucky to have a string of really special events this term including our 5 day camp to Dubbo and Bathurst, our pop-up art gallery and Year 6 debate and a series of very interesting child initiated small group excursions.*

by Margaret Kroeger (9-12 Directress)





**CAMP** is an integral part of the 9 - 12 experience. It gives students a taste of life beyond the familiarity of home as they participate in some fantastic activities and experiences that support their learning in class. It gives them a chance to bond as a small community as they grow through the week away. This year we visited Dubbo and Bathurst with an emphasis on rural life and the Colonial history of Australia. We toured a mine, panned for gold, visited a blacksmith, toured a colonial house, listened to bush ballads by a campfire, cooked damper, played bush games, slept in a tent, toured behind the scenes at Dubbo Zoo and had fun with some bush dancing. As this was the first time many children had been away from home before, camp really gave them an opportunity to step outside their comfort zones. It was lovely to see the older children rallying to support those who were new to camping. We are so proud of all the children and the resilience and independence they showed throughout camp. Thank you most sincerely too to our camp helpers - Marie Chahine, Marc Gavagna, Davinia Jones and Nicholas Ridley and to their families. We really appreciated your involvement and support. Thank you also to Jamie for keeping the communication flowing while we were at camp.

## HERE ARE

some comments from our youngest campers, the Year 4 students:

'Dubbo was cold but camping in a tent was so much fun.'

'I liked when we saw the giant cats up close in their night enclosures at the zoo.'

'I got to pan for gold twice and I found a giant gold flake.'

'Helping the blacksmith was fun but it was hard work.'

'I liked spending the week with my friends. I liked being in a bunk.'

'Walking around Dubbo Zoo early in the morning was fun. The howler monkeys were so loud.'

'I liked going into the mine even though it was dark.'

'Every meal we ate had potatoes in it. The food was good.'

'I liked cooking damper on the fire.'

'The talent quest made me laugh.'



## POP-UP ART GALLERY AND YEAR 6 DEBATE

Recently the 9 - 12's released their inner artists by holding an art display where they selected an artist and re-invented an iconic art work. We had the Mona Lisa refreshed as a pirate, Escher's prints as a 3D maze and Monet's Garden as a t-shirt and colourful fish bowl.

The children's enthusiasm throughout this project was contagious. They also enjoyed making beautiful computer generated info-graphs about their chosen artists. Thank you to all those who attended. As a culminating event, the Year 6 held a most entertaining and thought provoking debate on 'We should have more computer labs than

libraries. Books are becoming obsolete.' The speeches were well researched, compiling and funny and a great night was had by all. Well done Year 6! Thank you to Nic Fulton for helping behind the scenes. It was also lovely to see the 6 -9's efforts and research on environmental issues. Their enthusiasm and command of the subject matter was most commendable!

## WE HAVE

some new additions to the 9 - 12 menagerie - a new animal house and some guinea pigs and quails. Thank you to Jamie, Elisha Smith and family and the Pinto family for making this possible. We will enjoy looking after our friends.

As the year winds down we would like to express our gratitude for all the fantastic help and support we've received this year. To our amazing class

parents, to Barbara in the library, to Jamie for her help with costumes, to Nic who helped build the crates for Madagascar, to Shirley for help with the Year 6 screen printing, to those who helped accompany us on excursion and 'going outs' and to everyone who helped make 2016 such a positive experience for the children - we thank you. Finally, thank you to Kim and Kay and to all the Primary staff

for your positivity and enthusiasm.

We wish our Graduates, Claire, Darcy, Elliot, Lisa, Ryan and Siena all the best as they embark on a new academic phase of their lives and we warmly welcome our new class members joining us in 2017. Thank you to all the 9 - 12 students and families for a terrific year.

Wishing you a safe and peaceful break, Margaret, Kay & Kim



2016

ISSUE 4  
OCTOBER

## eARTICLE

Self-Reflective Practice in the  
Light of Montessori Principles:

# REMAINING PROFESSIONALLY THOUGHTFUL

by Pamela Nunn

Well-trained Montessori practitioners undoubtedly carry great experience as day to day they present Montessori materials – benefiting the development of young children.

Understood are the authentic, in-born motivating factors influencing children in the first plane of development. These factors 'drive' children's behaviour and urge children toward discoveries. Educators are well versed in meticulously preparing appropriate environments for 3-6 year olds, both indoor and outdoors.

What amazing knowledge we hold! Like you, I will always be grateful for this insight and privilege. However it is not enough to just hold this specialised knowledge for ourselves. We serve the child. We use our understanding only to serve the natural development of children, and to refrain from hindering their progress.



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### Montessori Australia

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Supporting the  
Montessori Movement in Australia



Right across the world, many students are graduating from Montessori training – either recently – or years ago. New graduates are offered much advice. One such piece of advice is that ‘You are a beginning Montessori educator!’

Much learning comes from self-reflective practice in the years following graduation. This is accurate, sound advice. Reflect, discuss, and refine our daily practice – always!

All of us learn from our experience, just as children also adopt this same method of ‘trial and error’ in their day-to-day work with the materials. The attitude we adopt is ‘friendliness with error’. It is a legitimate way of learning, both for adults and children.

Our training as educators means that we should never forget the principles upon which our practice rests.

How then, do we remain professionally thoughtful?

How do we assess and reflect upon our established physical environments, and also the ‘human environments’ into which children enter?

To be part of current contemporary education, to remain relevant and responsible in our specialised field of Montessori practice and thinking, we must become self-reflective. We must be brave enough to examine both our practice and our attitude.

We pride ourselves upon being facilitators for children’s learning.

How do we prevent ourselves reverting over time, into ‘teachers’?

Graduating Montessori adults can state that their adult role, presenting activities, is only ‘the child’s link’ to the Montessori materials. They can state that young children are sensorial learners, and that real understanding arises from exploration and discovery, via the hands and senses, not from the adult’s lesson.

After all, we are encouraging ‘thinking’ children. We support creativity.

In creativity, lie the emerging artists, environmentalists, dancers, musicians, chefs, worthy politicians and leaders. From the first tiny buds of exploration and discovery will bloom inventors, reformers, and scientists. From trial and error arise character traits, skills and attributes of resilience, perseverance, independence and imagination that will last a lifetime.

Dr Montessori says that we should allow and ‘expect children to spontaneously and willingly investigate their surroundings. It will create new happiness. It gives them dignity and satisfaction’ (Discovery of the Child, p. 168).

In your classrooms do you see joy in exploration and the excitement of discovery?

One way to encourage exploration and discovery is to follow a Montessori principle that is ‘tried and true’. The principle of non-intervention. What does this mean? For the adult it means relinquishing some power and control, allowing greater self-determination for the child, who after all, is just following his natural path of development.

What did Dr Montessori say?

‘It is the fatal intervention of an adult who wants to act for the child, and in so doing, erects the most serious obstacle to the child’s development. The adult becomes a source of tedium and mental inertia for the child’ (Discovery of the Child, p. 168 Kalakshetra Pub.).

For Montessori educators, it means developing an attitude of self-restraint and patience. It means placing trust in the child! It means being less of a ‘teacher’ and more of a facilitator of natural development.

‘Our training as educators means that we should never forget the principles upon which our practice rests.’





Let us ask when and how in our daily practice do we permit ourselves to automatically leap in and quickly help? Help to resolve difficulties? Help with a child's activity? We might think that we are helping, but Dr Montessori called this 'unnecessary intervention', interference in the valuable work of self-construction of the child:

- Sometimes it is wise to allow children to struggle a little and so gain the satisfaction of overcoming a difficulty. Do we rush to help too soon? Do we offer praise unnecessarily?
- Do we desire to praise or show approval of concentration when we see it, but in doing so, do we interrupt it? The budding of concentration is such a precious moment. Protect concentration at all costs, but do it without the concentrating child knowing that you are passively working on their behalf.
- Are we constantly available to children? Perhaps if we were not always so ready to assist, children would find solutions for their own issues. This would offer great satisfaction to children, where as being dependent on others erodes and deprives children of confidence and self-determination.
- Without our ready intervention, children may make self-chosen work choices instead of relying upon adult directed tasks.
- When we are not presenting a lesson, do we prowl around in between mats and tables, keeping an eye on children? It is preferable to sit or stand at the periphery of the room whilst observing. Then children do not feel as if you are watching and judging them. Dr Montessori wrote, 'Children can come to regard adults as powerful rivals, instead of role-models' (Education for Human Development, p. 21).
- Maintaining a policy of adult non-intervention is a strong reminder that we are guides, facilitators and role models, not teachers.

An excellent observer of the human condition, Maria Montessori saw the effect of teachers constantly talking and explaining to children. She wrote, 'to make a child see everything, to make one reflect on everything, is an anxious business, and it unfortunately exhausts a child's energies and cruelly deprives him of everything that could raise his interests' (The Discovery of the Child, p. 168).

Of course, non-intervention does not infer that we would not stop misuse of material, that we would not stop misbehaviour or set limits.

So much of classroom management is to do with the adults' attitude and expectations, don't you agree?

### Attitude

Ask yourself – do I believe and base my actions upon the belief that young children are capable, have a strong will, and can develop without my direct teaching?

### Expectations

Let us ask ourselves, 'Are my expectations of children consistent from day to day?'

Are my expectations developmentally founded, not age or gender biased?

Are the limits in the children's environment transparent and applicable to all – adults and children alike?

### Setting Limits

It is part of our responsibility as adults in the care and education of young children to raise awareness of the consequences of children's own behaviour. This awareness is strengthened hour by hour, day by day.

Along with developing intellect, children living and working in a social group must begin to tread the pathway of acceptable behaviour. All humans must accept that responsibilities and consequences arise from their own actions, and that we each have power over the chosen way to behave.

Children should be learning about:

- consequences,
- respect for others, and
- social responsibility

whilst they are in our care.



In the home, there often exists unconditional love – the child is adored – whatever the child's behaviour! This no longer can be maintained when you enter a larger mixed group of children and adults.

The child must sometime come to the awareness that shouting, running, and wildness disrupts others. Flinging myself about is not acceptable.

Being aware that my behaviour affects others, is perhaps a new lesson for many children.

What is the role of the Montessori adult, in setting limits?

We are trained to create well-prepared physical environments, and often search tirelessly for weeks to find just the right jug or tray! Do we commit the same energy when preparing the social environment for children? Of course that includes YOU!

Your demeanour will set the tone of children's behaviour in the classroom. The good news is you do not have to be mean, angry or emotional to set limits.

You do have to exhibit decisiveness, confidence, show steadfastness and resolve. Children should feel that you, at all times, anticipate certain standards of behaviour from them!

Banish uncertainty and doubt regarding your expectations of children's conduct, their manners and actions! Children are in the Sensitive Period for order. They need consistent boundaries.

Limits and boundaries offer stability and security.

Continue to give Grace and Courtesy lessons. Allow children to practice these simple lessons. They help children in what to say and do to feel at ease in their community.

We have all heard about balancing freedom and self-discipline within your group of children. Self-restraint and self-discipline are goals for children to attain. Every child must walk this path, and no one can do it for him or her. Therefore, accepting or allowing anti-social behaviour is no help to the child who must attain self-control.

Self-restraint requires that the child develops a balance between:

- the impulse to act, and
- the ability to curb or with hold my movement and emotion.

What can we do that is positive and encourages children in socially accepted behaviour?

Set limits! Also give opportunities for developing the child's will.

Speak gently but firmly with a confident tone. Maintain the same firm expectations every day. Expect amenability from children. What does this mean?

It means that you expect children to co-operate, you expect them to be responsive. It means that you work hard on your approach so that children are willing to please.

Be positive. Say, 'Please stop. You may walk.' Say, 'You may speak softly.'

Surround each child with other children who role model self-discipline and socially acceptable behaviour.

## 'Limits and boundaries offer stability and security.'

What limits can we set? These are not a set of 'rules' written up, printed out and placed visibly for children to read! No! These are a set of consistent and unemotional expectations.

Limits:

- are protective boundaries for behaviour
- make it possible for children to live in harmony
- help the child to develop independence
- build self discipline
- define choices and provide a sense of security

What do we do now that possibly does not encourage acceptable behaviour?

- We may not act with enough assuredness and confidence.
- We may be indecisive, ineffective, fragile, or unconvincing.
- We may think that firmness of expectations might upset parents.
- We may believe that firmness might damage trust or love.

Why do we need to address limits in preschool?

Consideration of others, social awareness, self-restraint, self discipline – these are facets of character development. The child's moral and ethical development is a progressive cumulative task. If established in the period of the Absorbent Mind from birth to six, these desirable aspects of behaviour are easily adopted for life!

If not, the child will confront society and community without the skills needed. It is not desirable to have the child leaving the Montessori Children's House as a self-centred, socially unaware person. He may be embarrassed later and will have to learn self-restraint, unselfishness and awareness of others needs through effort and will power. By that time it is a hard lesson to learn accompanied by self-consciousness, and possibly loss of dignity.

The practice of freedom and discipline, experienced in a Montessori school, influences the child's character development and has the potential to effect peacefulness among children.

Many factors are cumulatively integrated.



Montessori principles have been thoughtfully considered, and adopted. They guide, direct, and prescribe our attitude and daily practice. They act as our foundation.

Self-reflection means that we measure our day-to-day actions against our shared Montessori philosophy.

Freedom of Movement is a Montessori principle.

Do we regularly hold a child's hand – or worse, a wrist – as we walk in the class?

It is not necessary.

Do you stride ahead of the child and expect them to follow?

You and the child can walk slowly and companionably side by side. Your personal individual gentle conversation can engage the child as you move. Your accepting attitude and anticipatory body language will engender trust in the child. This approach makes hand holding redundant, and restores the power balance more equitably between child and adult.

Dr Montessori suggested that it is not necessary to touch the child unless invited to do so, in some form or other.

Similarly, when children move/relocate in large or small groups, it is unnecessary to walk in a crocodile line. It is unnecessary to hold the shoulders of the child in front, or to all grip onto a cord or rope. It suggests that only conforming behaviour is desirable. It lacks faith and trust in our grace and courtesy lessons which guide children in the things to 'say and do' to allow participation in the child's own culture.

Have confidence that children can move in a small group collaboratively together!

Freedom of Movement must also include the outdoors.

Indoor/outdoor flow during the child's uninterrupted work cycle is accepted across the globe as desirable.

Be thinking of the many ways that you can refine, rethink and enhance the physical environment for your children.

Very similar Practical Life activities appear in classrooms all over the world. Work diligently to make your Practical Life different, enticing, and particular to your group of children in your country!

## Freedom of Communication

Is there a murmur of conversation in your children's workspace? Is there laughter? Is conversation valued? Is oral language enriched and encouraged?

Shouting across the room is unacceptable – for both child and adult!

## Independence

Dr Montessori's definition of Independence states 'Independence is a mastery of skills, behaviours, and attitudes, that are required for an individual to function, without being a burden to others' (Discovery of the Child p. 58).

She also said that 'every unnecessary help is an obstacle to the child's development.'

When you offer a wonderful presentation, trust yourself that the child now knows what to do! You may not see an exact imitation of your analysed movements, but you can trust that the watching child indeed has absorbed the technique to proceed! Say, 'Now you know what to do, you may work with the Constructive Triangles!'

Your role is not to stay, but to quietly leave the side of the child!

If you stay, your presence is not helpful for her confidence. Your close attendance is a strong dominating presence. After the presentation your role is to fade away a distance and quietly observe! You do not need to rush back to make sure all is correct! Let the child have a chance. Let the auto didactic materials have a chance! Don't think that you are the important 'teacher'!

A great amount of praise interferes with independence. Children do not need an adult to say 'Good Boy! Well done!' when, for example, a jug of water is carried without spilling. You are, in a subtle way, demeaning the child's effort. Let him judge for himself and be pleased.

Checking for a correct answer in, for example, Golden Bead decimal system work, is way too early in the child's development to be worrying over accurate answers. The purpose of this decimal system work by the four year old is to gain understanding of a concept. Correct answers come later in Memorisation of Essential Number Facts, when the child is offered a way of self-checking.

The adult who intervenes to correct a list of written words deflates the mighty effort in hand control, memory, and thoughtfulness of the child.

Checking spelling at the moveable alphabet is unnecessary and takes away from the purpose – creative self-expression through representation of known symbols – direct from the mind of the young author.



Listening to the child pair the pitches of the Bells requires no extra adult auditory discrimination, other than the child's own auditory assessment.

Let him be independent.

A child carrying a large puzzle map by himself needs no comment or help from you.

Independence also means that you trust children to be working outside.

Outdoors, Colour Tablets sparkle in natural light! Leaf shapes can be compared to real life examples. If you have mats with durable backing, Sensorial material can go outside. Decimal System Cards and reading can also be taken out to a peaceful place.

It may be difficult to accept that we adults could unintentionally become obstacles to a child's natural development – especially their independence, concentration and confidence, by doing three simple things:

- praising too much
- by being too ready to help, and
- by checking that a child's work is correct!

But all three are true!

Remember the term Control of Error?

Montessori children trust you – the adult!

Children have a belief, an expectation and trust that if they are asked to do something, it will be achievable over time.

Children hold an acceptance of the 'trial and error' process. They used it to great effect when learning to balance and

walk! Coordination and Refinement came through practice and repetition. Children accept this as the natural process of learning. In Montessori, the Control of Error is never the adult! It is often in-built within the Montessori material – hence the term 'auto-didactic' education.

- Why then would we adults correct an error before the child can assess and practice it for himself?
- Why would we, when the child matches adjectives to a noun, suggest that only one adjective or adverb is the correct answer? The child, through discovery, is extracting an essential truth about the structure and order of his language – that there are indeed many adjectives that apply to one noun.

If children continue to think and expect that 'the answer' or solution comes from the adult, not from within themselves, discouragement and intellectual dependency may be the result.

This is such a disservice to the child, because he has the means to educate himself!

The adult's role is to actively present to an individual, with enthusiasm. And then pass the work into the hands of the independent child.

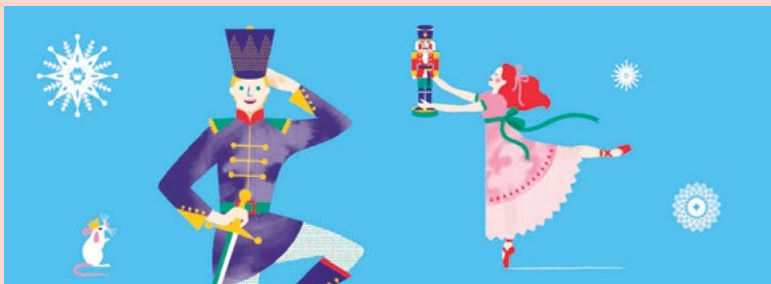
Of course encouragement is acceptable.

Encouragement:

- is personal
- non-judgmental
- does not compare one child to another.

It is healthy to revisit our shared understanding of Montessori foundations.

# WHAT'S ON... THESE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS



3 - 6 January 2017 - Chatswood Concourse  
The Nutcracker - Australian Storytime Ballet

## THE NUTCRACKER STORYTIME BALLET

Targeted at children ages 3 and up, this is a specially abbreviated version of the ballet, with a narrator and interactive elements to keep your children fully engaged. At 45 minutes in length, it is the perfect introduction to ballet for little ones. Tickets \$30-\$45. 3 - 6 January, Chatswood Concourse. [www.australianballet.com.au](http://www.australianballet.com.au)

## SUPER BUGS, CRITTERS CRAFT & KID K'NEX AT TURRAMURRA LIBRARY

This workshop is designed for younger children who enjoy craft and simple building activities. Children will be creating a bug design using Kid K'nex which will then be used to inspire their creative juices to design their very own craft super bug or critter! 11th Jan 10:00-11:30am. Ages 5-7. Turramurra Library. \$5 per booking.

## BUSH KIDS AT KU-RING-GAI WILDFLOWER GARDEN

Get out into the bush this summer with our fantastic nature-based activities for kids! We'll be making beautiful Christmas gifts and decorations from natural materials, meeting a friendly, scaly creature up close, searching for elusive Bush Fairies, and enjoying some splashy water play in the heat. Ages 3-12. Visit [www.kmc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kmc.nsw.gov.au) for program details and dates.



## GOLDEN RIDGE ANIMAL FARM DURAL

Kids will love milking a cow, feeding the hungry goats and cuddling the baby ducks, There's pony rides and a jumping castle too. \$15 per person. Open Monday-Sunday. Bookings essential. [www.goldenridgeanimalfarm.com.au](http://www.goldenridgeanimalfarm.com.au)

## CAROLS IN THE MALL - HORNSBY

Come and celebrate the festive season with Christmas shows, Carols and a Firework Spectacular! You may even meet Santa and Mrs Claus. Thurs 15th December 7-9pm. Florence St Mall, Westfield Hornsby.

## LEARN TO SWIM, HOLIDAY PROGRAM

Want to see your child make real progress with their swimming in just one week? Book them in for an intensive four or five day swimming course with Turramurra Learn To Swim. Ages 3-11. Cost: \$110 (5 days), \$88 (4 days). [www.turramurralearntoswim.com.au](http://www.turramurralearntoswim.com.au)

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