

NORTHSIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

CHRONICLE

spring

graduate panel

Past students talk about
life after Northside.

*lights,
camera,
action!*

This term our 9-12
students performed
in their production of
Aladdin.

contents

SPRING 2017 NORTHSIDE CHRONICLE



10



30

04 MESSAGE FROM
THE PRINCIPAL

06 INFANT & TODDLER
PROGRAMS

10 C'EST LA VIE
The importance of practical
life in our 3-6 classes.

14 LIGHTS, CAMERA,
ACTION! Our 9-12 students
talk about their recent
Production.

16 NAPLAN Looking to
the future.

18 STEPPING STONES



22 OUR ASSESSMENT

From the Australian Children's Education and Quality Care Authority.

24 OOSH

26 GRADUATE PANEL

A past student talks life after Montessori.

28 OUR 6-9 CLASS UPDATE

29 WHAT'S ON

Community events for September & October.

30 PHOTOS

From our recent animal farm outing.

NORTHSIDE CHRONICLE
SPRING 2017

CONTACT US

phone 02 9144 2835

email admin@

northsidemontessori.nsw.edu.au

PRINCIPAL

Dr Georgina Reynhout

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Melissa Lopresti

www.melissalopresti.com.au

COVER PHOTOGRAPHY

Megan Nguyen

© Northside Montessori School
42 Bobbin Head Road
Pymble NSW 2073
northsidemontessori.nsw.edu.au

from the principal

CHILDREN'S ROLE IN SOCIETY

The Montessori curriculum represents a comprehensive framework for achieving Dr Montessori's vision, a vision shared by Montessori educators throughout the world.

by Dr. Georgina Reynhout



In 1947, as the world was recovering from the devastating effects of World War II, Dr Montessori penned a letter to world governments clearly articulating the important role children play in society and to the on-going construction of human history.

"Through the study of children I have scrutinised human nature at its origin both in the East and the West and although it is forty years now since I began my work, childhood still seems to me an inexhaustible source of revelations and—let me say—hope.

Childhood has shown me that all humanity is one. All children talk, no matter what their race or their circumstances or their family, more or less at the same age; they walk, change their teeth, etc. at certain fixed periods of their life. In other aspects also, especially in the physical field, they are just as similar, just as susceptible.

Children are the constructors of [adults] whom they build, taking from the environment language, religion, customs and the peculiarities not only ... of the nation, but even of a special district in which they develop.

...The child is the forgotten citizen, and yet, if statesmen and educationists once came to realise the terrific force that is in childhood for good or for evil, I feel they would give it priority above everything else. All problems of humanity depend on [humans themselves]; if [humans are] disregarded in [their] construction, the problems will never be solved.

...[Humans] must be cultivated from the beginning of life when the great powers of nature are at work. It is then that one can hope to plan for a better international understanding".

"...[Humans] must be cultivated from the beginning of life when the great powers of nature are at work. It is then that one can hope to plan for a better international understanding."

Directresses at Northside Montessori School must be dual qualified. That is, they are endorsed to teach and facilitate learning from both a Montessori and a NSW Educational Standards Authority (NESA) perspective.

The Montessori curriculum represents a comprehensive framework for achieving Dr Montessori's vision, a vision shared by Montessori educators throughout the world. This vision underpins the Montessori National Curriculum prepared for Australian Montessori schools. More specifically, the curriculum has been developed as the Australian Montessori community's contribution not only to the richness and diversity of schooling in Australia but also to the achievement of the Educational Goals for Young Australians (Australian Education Ministers Declaration, 2008) of promoting equity and excellence in Australian schooling, and supporting young Australians to be successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens.

In 2011, the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) recognised the Montessori National Curriculum (MNC) as an alternative national curriculum framework to be included on ACARA's Recognition Register. ACARA undertakes a very rigorous process to determine the extent to which an

alternative national curriculum can deliver comparable educational outcomes for students to those based on the Australian National Curriculum. ACARA was able to confirm that the MNC is fully aligned with the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians. It also allows for broadly comparable educational outcomes in English, Mathematics, Science and History by the end of Year 10.

In order to deliver the Montessori National Curriculum and the Australian National Curriculum, Directresses at Northside Montessori School must be dual qualified. That is, they are endorsed to teach and facilitate learning from

both a Montessori and a NSW Educational Standards Authority (NESA) perspective. On a daily basis they:

- Respect children as self-directed individuals and foster growth toward independence and social responsibility
- Create an atmosphere of calm, order, and joy; a safe and stimulating environment which supports the developmental stages of each child
- Help children progress at their own pace and to gradually discover their own capabilities.

Thus, *"With the support of the prepared adult, the child with his unlimited possibilities can be the transformer of humanity, just as he is its creator. The child brings us great hope and a new vision."* (Dr Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*).



infant & toddler

PROGRAMS

Each member of our little tribe is slowly developing self-discipline which is a strong foundation for creating the peaceful and harmonious environment in our room.

by Megan Nguyen (Infant & Toddler Directress)

As humans, we all long to feel connected, valued and loved. We were not designed to journey through life alone; we all need a tribe. The building of this 'tribe' in our toddler community is so important. For many this is the only opportunity the child has to interact within a community. Our community allows the children to practise grace and courtesies towards each other and to also learn boundaries and limitations within the space. Each member of our little tribe is slowly developing self-discipline which is a strong foundation for creating the peaceful and harmonious environment in our room.



ONE WAY THE CHILDREN

are learning to care for one another is by sharing in the group baking experience each session and joining each other for morning tea. A number of children are always eager to assist in the baking; a favourite (and sometimes messy) experience. However, another child is always ready to swoop in with the table washing tray to tidy up the mess as if it never existed. Then there are the children who have a keen sense of order and drive for repetition that are always willing to set the table for everyone; placing each plate, glass and fork on the place mat with precision. It's very clear who likes which role!



To build up our sense of community, our Toddlers have been working together to beautify our space outside the classroom... bringing in potted colour to plant around our lavender and into donated pots.

THIS TERM

we have begun a family-style meal time where all the children sit down at the same time to share in a meal. I guide the children in a poem of grace: "Thank you to the Earth for the gifts to eat and thank you warm sun for making them ripe and sweet." We then pass around the bowls of food the children have prepared and serve themselves. The most rewarding moment for me this term came from the words of two year-old Daniel, who after sitting at the table for our new style of eating said; "It's like we're a big family!" These are the moments that validate our work as Directresses; when we know that we've got it right.

This term we have begun a family-style meal time where all the children sit down at the same time to share in a meal.



TO BUILD UP OUR SENSE OF COMMUNITY

our Toddlers have also been working together to beautify our space outside the classroom. Children contributed by bringing in potted colour to plant around our lavender and into donated pots. They check on them weekly and water them with care. It's a very tangible way for them to see how one small thing can add to something bigger. All are needed to achieve a masterpiece. They demonstrate this understanding by pointing to their flower and naming their friends who planted the others.

Of course, no conversation about community would be complete in our program without mentioning our furry, feathered and finned tribe members. They play an important role and the children adore caring for them. Tasks include shredding paper for bedding, replenishing food or water and sweeping up messes from the carpet. Cuddles and grooming are also needed for the guinea pigs that are now so calm when the children approach them that I often find them observing the children!

IN NIDO, OUR INFANT-PARENT PROGRAM

we are also becoming a closer knit family as we have come to know each other in our second term together. The children have grown so quickly and the parents have been attending each week with wonderful questions about their children's development. It's such a blessing for me to share this part of the journey with them all.

As I prepare for the last term of the year we will continue to build our community with a foundation of trust, tolerance and peace.

Megan Nguyen
Infant & Toddler Directress



c'est la vie

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICAL LIFE

Practical life is an important foundation in the Montessori environment that aids the children in developing their sense of order, coordination, and concentration which ultimately leads them to gain their independence.

by Margret Ranada Palma (Brolga Directress)

There is constant pressure to focus on academics and technology, as we continue to progress as a society in the 21st century, in being able to keep up, catch up or be ahead so as not to “fall behind”. With this concern for the children’s success to be on track, there are other aspects of their development that need to be further honed to “set them up for life”.

The beauty of working with the children in the classroom is to sit back and enjoy the moments where they discover their own abilities, what they are capable of, and realise the value of their own personhood, which all reflect with their own exploration and their interactions with others.

This term, three new children joined us in Brolga. They have smoothly integrated with the class as their peers have welcomed them with such openness and kindness, just as children do. They remember their grace and courtesy lessons such as: how to invite friends to work with them, how to show them where things go or how things are done, or how to politely decline an invitation to play with another. All things do not go as planned or taught. There will always be a constant reminder to use kind words, either from a child in the classroom or an adult. In the middle of this year, the children learned about lifetimes of living things as we bade farewell to our Angel fish and our pet mouse. They are also learning about new beginnings as they plant seeds in our vegetable garden as we welcome spring.

This is life, is it not? Lifetimes, endings and new beginnings?

“A school
should not be a
preparation for life.
A school should
be life.”

ELBERT HUBBARD



PRACTICAL LIFE

Let's focus on these two words for a moment as Merriam-Webster has defined them.

Practical. Definitions: *actively engaged in some course of action or occupation; capable of being put to use or account.*

Life. Definitions: *a principle or force that is considered to underlie the distinctive quality of animate beings; the sequence of physical and mental experiences that make up the existence of an individual; the form or pattern of something existing in reality.*

Putting these two definitions together, we can come up with our own personal definitions. We can read a couple of books or websites to further enlighten ourselves and become knowledgeable in certain aspects of what Practical Life is in the Montessori environment, yet there is always something that we need to learn from. The key is just as Maria said: "Follow the child." How do we do this? *Observation.*

This term, three new children joined us in Brolga. They have smoothly integrated with the class as their peers have welcomed them with such openness and kindness, just as children do.



A THREE-YEAR-OLD

who works on pouring water or lentils from one vessel to another is learning to master her control of movements, by being precise so as not to spill anything on the tray or the table. She is working on that pincer grip as she holds the handles of the jugs and balances them accordingly. All these actions require concentration. Some may do it with mindfulness, others may do so carelessly. A four-year-old picks up the same pouring tray and does the same activity. He may be more precise on his actions. If he spills something, he will take care of wiping up that spill with a sponge. He will pick up the beans with his fingers and ensure none are left on the tray or the table. If they have spilled on the floor, he will sweep them with a broom and then a dustpan and brush. All these actions require steps where the children are practising their sense of order since they have been given that first presentation at 3 years old.

THE FIVE OR SIX-YEAR-OLD CHILD

picks up the same pouring activity and begins measuring the water or the jug, trying to figure out if the water fills the vessel half-full or fully. That same child, raises her arms slightly higher, one above the other seeing how she can pour the water from a particular height and not spill. She then moves that jug slightly and spills water on the tray. From an observer's point of view, one would like to step in and ask "Why are you doing that?" or "You've missed pouring the water into the mouth of the other jug." BUT you sit down and wait a further second. You observe that this child looks at the water from the jug on the tray and picks up the tray of water and pours it into the empty vessel. She does it again. Who knows the whys of it all or the reason behind her movements? They were deliberate actions undertaken with curiosity. She's experimenting. Everything is an experiment. We do not step in. Sometimes we make mistakes in intervening, but there are times when we have to sit back and watch things unfold. She pours the water as she did, on the tray from a certain level, pours it back into the jug, wipes the tray with a sponge and walks inside the classroom to get a blue washcloth to wipe everything dry. After she tidies up, there's a look of satisfaction in her eyes. I still do not know the reasoning behind it, but it's that look of satisfaction that makes one sit back and relish that opportunity to have observed some kind of transformation of the child from such a simple yet complex task.

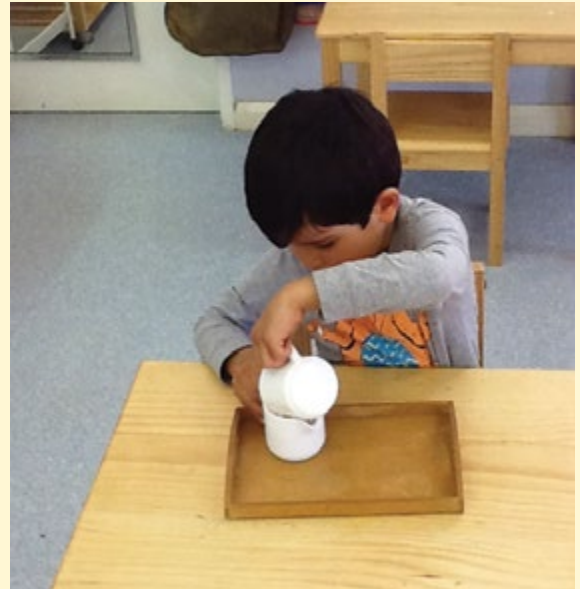


ONE OF THE

things we constantly read about or hear is that we should be preparing children for life. What does that mean? Are these all skills they need for life that have to be taught as they grow older? Does this mean we need to develop 'school readiness'? What skills do they need to be able to be ready for school? This is school. The children are in school right at this moment.

Through our observations as Directresses and educators in the classroom, this is what we see. We witness how the children transition in their daily activities the moment they enter their space in our environment, the activities that they choose and the friends they play with and interact with. This is their life. This is their reality. Elbert Hubbard said: *"A school should not be a preparation for life. A school should be life."*

Margret Ranada-Palma
Brolga Directress





lights, camera, action!

What a spectacular production we have had this year! Our 9-12 students talk about learning lines, dancing, jumping, swinging and granting wishes!

The play was great! I enjoyed being the Genie. I got to give everyone their wishes!

CHIARA DE MARCO
- L6 IN 9-12



ALADDIN WAS

a great experience for me, being the narrator and townspeople in a real play. I also loved watching the 6-9s dancing in their production. Margaret did a fantastic job of getting us to learn our lines in less than a term!! I would never want another teacher to do the choreography of the play! I also loved doing the dancing and helping with the choreography of the dances. My favourite part of the play was when Genie (Chiara) turned Aladdin (Aria) into Prince Ali! It was really fun being in the play. Thank you Margaret, Kay, Kim, Michelle, Niki and Jamie for making the play happen!

Ella Baker - L5 in 9-12

THIS PLAY was a great and amazing experience for me. We had to learn all the lines in one term, as well as make all the props and costumes. To me the play and production were really cool - it was great seeing the kids dancing, jumping, running and swinging all over the place with their unbelievable costumes. I would personally like to thank Margaret, Kay, Kim, Michelle, Jamie and Niki for all their work. Our play was very active and I think our main characters were amazing with line and prop memory! The play was a great experience for Level 4s because it was their first production and they had to pretend to talk a lot which made the play more exciting. It was a great play to watch!

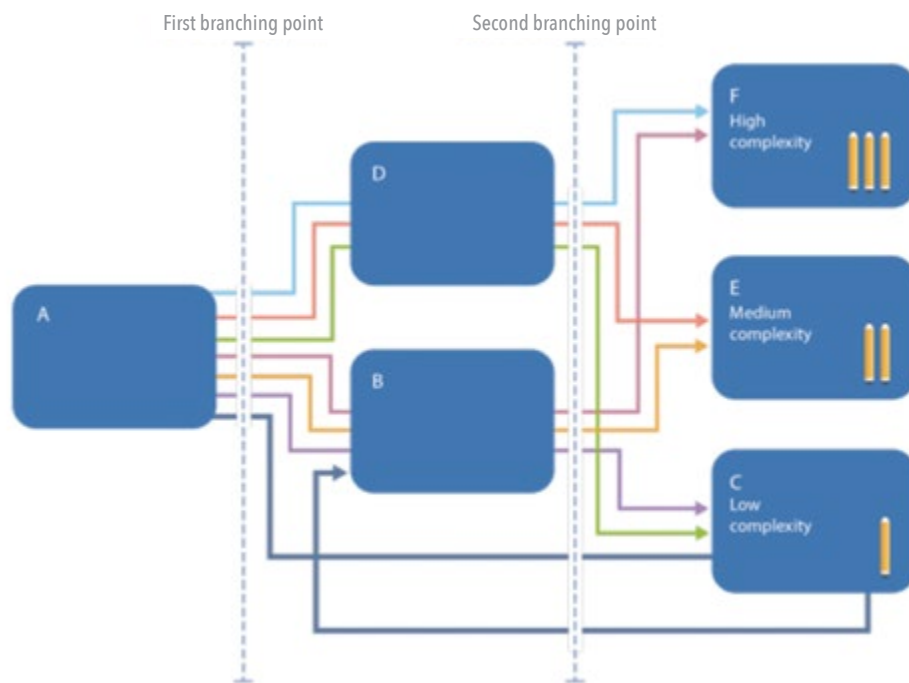
Cleo Gavagna - Level 5 in 9-12



IT HAS

been a huge honour to be part of this year's play Aladdin. I have been a narrator for the past 2 years which I enjoy a lot. Margaret has dedicated herself so much to this play. It was the longest play we have ever done! It has been a very fun one, with all the dances, songs and actions between the speeches of the characters. We hoped you enjoyed watching it as much as we enjoyed making it!

*Isabella Hebblewhite
- L5 in 9-12*



NAPLAN

looking to the future

Every year, students in Year 3 and Year 5 at Northside participate in the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy, more commonly known as NAPLAN.

by Fiona Walker (Assistant Principal)

We congratulate all the students in Years 3 and 5 for their NAPLAN achievements this year, with Northside placing at or above national average in all areas in both Year 3 and Year 5.

The NAPLAN assessment covers 4 areas of student learning - reading, writing, language conventions (which includes spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy. These tests take place in May each year, with results returning to schools in August. We congratulate all the students in Years 3 and 5 for their NAPLAN achievements this year, with Northside placing at or above national average in all areas in both Year 3 and Year 5.

Recently I attended some training about the proposed changes to NAPLAN. From 2018, NAPLAN will be transitioning to online testing. This will mean a move from traditional paper based testing to computer based testing. There are 3 main reasons for this change.

The first is that it will provide a better assessment. The move online means that tailored testing will now be possible, ensuring that students have questions that suit their performance and level of achievement. It also allows for a wider range of item types. To achieve this, there will be a number of branching points, where the test will change depending on achievement to that point. The diagram below shows how this will be achieved, with multiple opportunities for students to move up or down levels depending on achievement.

One of the main advantages of the transition to online testing will be the faster turnaround time for results. Teachers and families will no longer need to wait for months to receive the results. Receiving feedback more promptly will enable teachers to identify learning priorities earlier and tailor teaching more specifically to student needs.

In addition, online testing will improve student engagement. Research has shown that online testing is more engaging for a greater number of students. To ensure security and that students remain focused on the test whilst at the computer, a NAPLAN locked down browser is installed on all test devices, meaning that students are unable to access anything other than the test.

At Northside,
some changes
have been made
to accommodate our
increased IT needs.
A bank of computers is
now available in the
multi-purpose room,
giving the students a quiet
place to focus on
completing their
assessments.

IN PREPARATION

for this transition, schools across Australia have been taking part in a school readiness program. At Northside, some changes have been made to accommodate our increased IT needs. A bank of computers is now available in the multi-purpose room, giving the students a quiet place to focus on completing their assessments. The school readiness test focuses on the school's IT readiness and on the testing platform and no reports will be given on individual achievement. Our Year 3 and 5 students have been enthusiastic participants in this process, enjoying the chance to be the first to test out the new site.

If you wish to find out more about NAPLAN online, information can be found at www.nap.edu.au.

Fiona Walker
Assistant Principal

stepping stones

Stepping Stones has been a hive of activity over the past month. We celebrated Father's Day and had a visit from a Kindy Farm.

by Belinda De Santi (IC Room Leader)

One of the highlights of this term was celebrating Father's Day. The children were able to show the love they have for their dad by creating beautiful gifts. Individually painted tea towels, creative and original coffee mugs and clever Noughts and Crosses games were created for the fathers to treasure for years to come.

We were very fortunate to have some fathers and grandfathers visit and play with us at our Father's Day Afternoon Tea. All three rooms provided fun and creative activities for family members to participate in with their children. Spending quality time with family members has so many positive outcomes. The children are engaging in a reciprocal relationship where they can develop their cooperative skills with a mentor. This valuable time builds a child's confidence, develops communication skills and strengthens family bonds. Thank you to all our visitors, we hope you enjoyed the afternoon as much as we did.



Individually painted tea towels, creative and original coffee mugs and clever Noughts & Crosses games were created for the fathers to treasure for years to come.

Living in suburban North Shore does not always provide the opportunity to engage with farm animals, so it was a real treat for the children to have them in our Stepping Stones playground for a couple of hours.



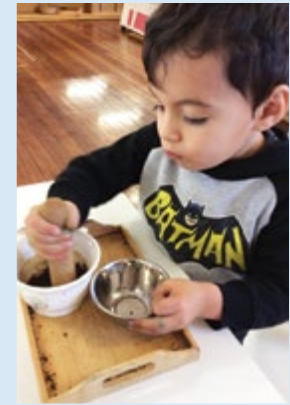


WE HAD A VISIT

from a Kindy Farm on the Wednesday 6th September, which was a highlight for this month. Living in suburban North Shore does not always provide the opportunity to engage with farm animals, so it was a real treat for the children to have them in our Stepping Stones playground for a couple of hours. All groups spent some enjoyable time learning about and engaging with the animals. The children felt their feathers, fur or wool and even had the opportunity to feed them. The smiles, squeals of laughter and curious faces reinforced for the educators the positive experience of the Kindy Farm. Children learn to interact with care, empathy and respect when they are immersed in an environment with animals. The children were also able to develop an understanding of themselves and their world through an active, hands-on experience (Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace, 2009. BELONGING, BEING & BECOMING The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia p 33).

Children learn to interact with care, empathy and respect when they are immersed in an environment with animals.





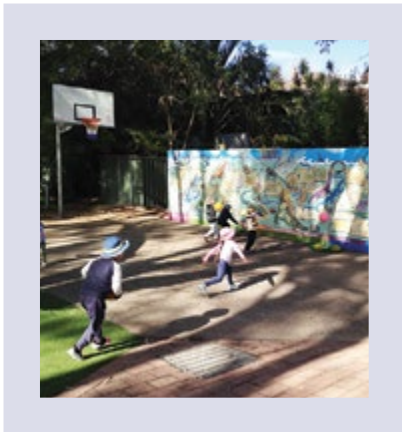
"Belonging is an integral human emotion in that it shapes who the children are and who they can become."

THE NIDO AND IC ROOMS

have welcomed many new faces in the past month and our focus has been to create the feeling of belonging in the new students. The Stepping Stones philosophy and the Early Years Learning Framework both emphasise the importance of children developing a sense of belonging so that they are able to build secure attachments with their new educators and peers, learn new routines to provide predictability and consistency to each day, and strengthen their feelings of safety and security. We are also focusing on building their confidence to explore and engage with the social and physical environments and to develop self confidence and feelings of being respected and valued.

The Casa room have been learning more about the environment in which they live - Australia. Our country provides a plethora of learning opportunities and the Casa children have engaged in a multifaceted program. They have studied the country's map, examining its States and Territories, our flag and our flora and fauna. This has been achieved through numerous experiences. Having an understanding of the world they live in allows the children to experience their important sense of belonging to a wider community. Belonging is an integral human emotion in that it shapes who the children are and who they can become. (Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace, 2009. BELONGING, BEING & BECOMING The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia p 7).





australian children's education & quality care authority assessment

This term, Northside Montessori Pre Primary and Before & After School Care underwent assessment by the Australian Children's Education and Quality Care Authority or ACECQA.

by Marina Ridley (3-6 Directress)

The Australian Children's Education and Quality Care Authority (ACECQA) are a Government body who in recent years created a framework to standardise all areas of operation and management of early childhood and out of school hours care services across Australia. The Framework which all 0-6 early childhood services works within is called The National Quality Framework or NQF. The NQF then incorporates National Quality Standards (NQS). The NQS consists of seven quality areas which a centre uses to guide them in creating a quality service.

THE SEVEN QUALITY AREAS ARE:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Leadership and service management

The NQS contains 18 standards with two or three standards in each quality area. These standards are high-level outcome statements. Under each standard sit elements that describe the outcomes that contribute to the standard being achieved. There are 58 elements in total. We adhere to the Montessori method of Education in alignment with this.

Most pleasingly,
both the Pre Primary and
Before and After School care
exceeded standards in Quality
Area 1 which is Educational
program and practice.

IF THIS SOUNDS

complicated to you, then you are not alone! It takes some time to work through to ensure compliance with each of the seven quality areas. When the school was assessed in Term 3, we had a short period of notice before the inspection. During this time, policies, procedures and practice in Pre Primary and Before and After School Care were reviewed and checked to ensure that we were meeting the quality areas. The assessor visited for 3 days. In this time, she observed classroom and outdoor environments, interviewed staff, took notes, photographs, inspected infrastructure and pored over records and policies. There was certainly no stone left unturned in what proved to be a very thorough and rigorous assessment.

Most pleasingly, both the Pre Primary and Before and After School care exceeded standards in Quality Area 1 which is Educational program and practice. This means that not only are the staff doing an amazing job in creating an optimal learning environment for your children but also that your children are experiencing learning in a great environment with highly competent and committed staff.

AS I AM SURE you can imagine, the amount of time and work invested to achieve these results is significant and it certainly takes a team to produce them. Overall we are pleased with the improvements that we have made to our service at Northside Montessori School. We learnt a great deal from the assessment process and will be working together again as a staff to improve areas in which we are working towards meeting the NQF. These areas are generally within our administrative documentation and some small but significant tweaks will need to be made.

Our next assessment will take place in 4 years' time and we look forward to showing off how much we learnt and showing that Northside Montessori is the place to be!

COMMENTS MADE

I don't know about you, but when I get an assessment report, I like to read the comments first. I would like to share with you some of the comments made by the assessor on our report:

"Educators support children to participate in collaborative learning opportunities where they are able to develop relationships with other children and adults. Through sensitive supporting relationships educators build children's capacity to manage their behaviour and communicate effectively with others. Children are valued and respected and supported by all educators."

"The premises and resources are clean, safe and well maintained ensuring that all children are able to access and participate in the program. The indoor spaces are designed to provide a flexible learning environment where children can engage with materials and learning experiences at their own pace and interest level."

"Management and educators are committed to the improvement process and building practices and the relationships developed with children and families. The statement of philosophy is consistently evident in all aspects of the service's operations and contributes to ongoing plans for the future directions of the service."

OOSH update

by Surendrini Giritharan

(OOSH Coordinator)

What a busy term it was that is coming to an end! We would like to welcome a few new children who have joined Term 3. All have settled in and are mingling well with their peers.

Our OOSH hours have been extended starting Term 3. Morning care starts from 7am and the afternoon care has been extended to 6pm to make it more convenient for all the parents who are working. A healthy breakfast with yummy choices is also being provided from 7am-7.45am every day.

Our OOSH hours have been extended starting Term 3. Morning care starts from 7am and the afternoon care has been extended to 6pm to make it more convenient for all the parents who are working.



MY TIME, OUR PLACE

In OOSH, our program is based on "My Time Our Place" and it contains a variety of activities to target every child's learning capabilities and strengths. A healthy menu is prepared each afternoon, being mindful of daily dietary requirements as well as our usual nut free policy. We endeavour to take good care of the children who have special dietary needs.

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

We rotate activities to create excitement and interest in the program but there are some activities which will always be popular. Building blocks, Lego, Snakes and Ladders, colouring in, story time and a few more are very much enjoyed by the children. Each term we do an observation on each child individually and in group settings. Parents are always welcome to see their child's observation sheet.

After a long break, we brought back cannon shoot during outside play. This has been very exciting for children of all ages and especially the new 3+ year olds!

Gathering in groups during inside activity is becoming very popular. The primary attraction is building the dinosaur forest. The younger children love taking part in this!



Our program is based on "My Time Our Place" and it contains a variety of activities to target every child's learning capabilities and strengths.

HOLIDAY INCURSIONS

Last holiday program incursions were a big hit, especially the Teddy Bear making. We will continue to run incursions with different activities for the holiday programs. The feedback received from the children and the parents was very positive.

Your feedback is important to us so please feel free to share your comments about our programs.

Finally, I would like to thank all the staff members for their commitment and support over the past term.

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

Surendrini Giritharan
OOSH Coordinator



graduate panel

One of my favourite events in the school calendar is the Graduate Panel. It always amazes me how genuinely gracious and happy our graduates are to return to Northside.

by Margaret Kroeger (9-12 Directress)

For many families, starting and continuing with a Montessori education can be a 'leap of faith'. This is especially true if you don't know other families who have made the same choice. It can seem very isolating to take the road less travelled. For the staff at Northside who have been here a long time, we know this method of education works. We have seen class after class of students flourish in a Montessori environment. For us the proof is in the pudding - in the confident, engaged and positive students we see graduate every year. For us, the leap of faith is cemented in reality. Our students are our best proof that the positive benefits of a Montessori education can be life long and significant. We are also very fortunate to have

many of our alumni return to visit one, five, ten and twenty years after they graduate.

It is always such a joy to reconnect with graduates and their families. One of my favourite events in the school calendar is the Graduate Panel. It always amazes me how genuinely gracious and happy our graduates are to return to Northside. Over years of hosting this event, some commonalities have emerged.

'Learning in Montessori was about understanding not just memorising.'

OUR GRADUATES

always reference the extraordinary Montessori materials and their ability to isolate and magnify concepts. This understanding stays with them long after they have left the school. Graduates talk about building up a muscle memory of using the materials. One 23 year old panelist talked fondly of using the puzzle pieces of the geography maps when he was 6 and how that memory helps him with geography today. Another 20 year old mentioned at a panel that Math formula like volume of a square based pyramid was so easy to recall in high school as he could picture filling the metal material with sand and comparing the volumes with other prisms and pyramids. Instead of learning by rote he could recall his experiences and the formula was quickly accessible and innately understood even years later. He told us of his joy in discovering through hands on exploration with Montessori. He said "Learning in Montessori was about understanding not just memorising. That's stayed with me. I want to understand not just get a mark or a grade."

REAL COMPETITION

He also spoke about competition. While many people say Montessori is a non-competitive environment, he did not agree. He spoke about feeling very competitive with himself. *"I always wanted to improve and do better. Not better than the person next to me but better than myself. That's real competition - to keep growing and trying harder. At high school I never understood why people would sabotage others - hiding library books so others couldn't find them. That made no sense. You just need to be the best you can be. Learning in Montessori was often a group thing. You helped each other. You got stronger because you worked together. You helped friends sometimes and other times they helped you. Learning wasn't about jealousy or beating someone else - it was about really understanding."*

THERE ARE other commonalities too. Our graduates tend to have a strong connection to particular passions in life. Whether as a hobby or a career, they tend to have the courage to pursue what makes them happy. Our graduates take on a wide range of careers from stunt woman to professional soccer player to museum curator to human rights lawyer working at the United Nations. They have found what enthuses them and have pursued it with a passion. Another aspect that also shines out at the Graduate Panel is that our students tend to take ownership of their lives. Rather than being at the mercy of events, our graduates are proactive in questioning and searching for meaning. They also tend to live with gratitude. They appreciate those around them. Simply due to their presence at the Graduate Panel they are demonstrating gratitude for their Montessori roots. I hardly remember my primary years but these young people speak so warmly about their time at Northside. Grace and courtesy and developing an 'attitude of gratitude' are cornerstones of a Montessori education. In 3-6 grace and courtesy are embedded within a child's daily experience. From thanking the child who helped bake and serve the bread to the shaking of hands hello each morning, gratitude becomes an innate habit. In Primary our curriculum is founded on Dr. Montessori's 'Great Stories' such as the Coming of Life. These stories and lessons are predicated on the idea that everything has a 'Cosmic Task' to help others and to be grateful for all that has gone before. I see that so tangibly in our graduates.

THE MONTESSORI LEAP

So for all those who are currently taking a 'leap of faith' please attend our Graduate Panel and education evenings. Book into an observation - not just with your child's class but with older classes too. Speak to the parents of our older students from 9-12 and talk to our Directresses. This 'Montessori leap' is truly a lifelong and authentic gift to your child and to the world that will be.

Our graduates take on a wide range of careers from stunt woman to professional soccer player to museum curator to human rights lawyer working at the United Nations.

update

FROM OUR 6-9 CLASS

We have had a very eventful and busy Term 3 in our new 6-9 room.

by Janene Johnson (6-9 Directress)

It has been such a wonderful term in our new room. The space is so open and light and the children love being with each other and working together. New friendships have been made. The children are collaborating on many projects and there is always a productive buzz in the room. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sarah, Soo and Sandra for helping to make the new environment work so well. Everyone, children and adults, have been enthusiastic, flexible and excited. It has been a very positive transformation.

In week 7, Claire Fenton joined our class as a Co-Directress. She has a wealth of Montessori experience and many of you know her from when she has done casual work at the school. I worked with Claire for a number of years and she is a very passionate and caring Montessori Directress. Claire even taught my daughter many years ago. We are so excited to have her join the team and we know that having her with us will greatly enrich the learning environment.

The highlight for the term was undoubtedly the production of Sinbad and the 7 Voyages. The children were amazing and they were so excited to perform. They worked very hard to learn their dances and make their costumes. No-one suffered from stage fright and their confidence and pride in their achievement shone through. A special mention must go to Lachlan, Roman, Enrique, Jack and Lucas for the fabulous narration. I am sure all the parents, families and friends enjoyed watching the production as much as the children enjoyed performing.

The Father's Day Breakfast was a great success and it was wonderful to see so many fathers and carers in the classroom enjoying watching their children in their 'workplace' and also being taught.

ON 31ST AUGUST

we celebrated Dr Maria Montessori's birthday. We discussed her early life and training and what makes a Montessori education so special. Dr Montessori was known for her belief that world peace was possible through the education of children.

Establishing lasting peace is the work of education; all politics can do is keep us out of war.

(Dr Maria Montessori)

At this time, with all that is going on in the world, it is comforting to know that our children and future generations of children educated in a Montessori system, could change the world.

We hope you have a peaceful and safe few weeks while school is out and we look forward to seeing you all in Term 4.

Janene Johnson, Claire Fenton, Sarah Barton, Soo-Jim Heo and Sandra Sin.

"Establishing lasting peace is the work of education; all politics can do is keep us out of war."

DR MARIA
MONTESSORI

WHAT'S ON...

in september & october



23 Sep - 1 Oct - Macquarie Centre - Kids Yoga Classes

STORY TIME

WITH BERKELOUW BOOKS HORNSBY

Kids can enjoy this special reading group, featuring the best in children's literature every Wednesday during September. 10am-10:30am, Westfield Hornsby, Level 3, outside KidStuff.

CROCODILE ENCOUNTERS REPTILE SHOW - ST IVES SHOPPING VILLAGE

Get up close with lizards, snakes, turtles, a saltwater crocodile & more! Plus have your photo taken with them! Monday 2 October to Friday 6 October. Shows at 10am, 11.30am and 1pm. Level 1. No bookings required.

KIDS YOGA AT MACQUARIE CENTRE

Kids yoga is great fun for children's minds, bodies and spirit. Classes combine traditional yoga techniques with breathing exercises and mindfulness to create a unique experience that makes them feel good both inside and out. For children aged between 5 - 9 years. 23rd September - 1st October. Mums and bubs yoga classes available too! To book visit macquariecentre.com.au.



FESTIVAL OASIS AT CHATSWOOD CONCOURSE

Part of the Emerge Festival for 2017 there will be free school holiday activities for the kids each day including Rangers on the Run, face painting and screening of 'A Bug's Life' on the big screen. Kids can read from the wonderful pop-up library and learn how to hoop dance. Thursday 27 - Saturday 29 September, 10am-5pm.

WALK & SQUAWK AT SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK

Come for a walk around the Armory with our BirdLife Discovery Centre volunteers to meet some of our feathered neighbours and learn their calls as well as a secret about each bird. 28 September 10am-11am & 11.30am-12.30pm. To book: sydneyolympicpark.com.au

HALLOWEEN AT CHATSWOOD MALL MARKET

The mall market will become a playground for little ghosts, ghouls and goblins this Halloween with a specially themed afternoon of kid's entertainment. Friday 28 October, 3.30pm-9pm. Don't forget to dress up for a chance to win best dressed!

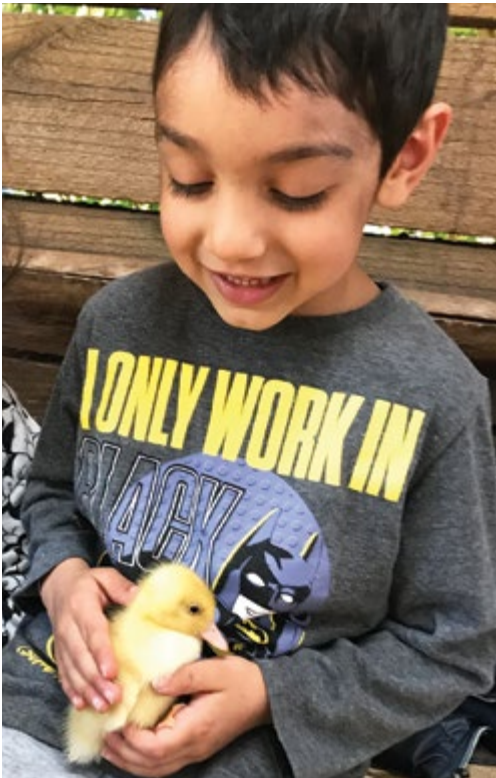
a day at the farm

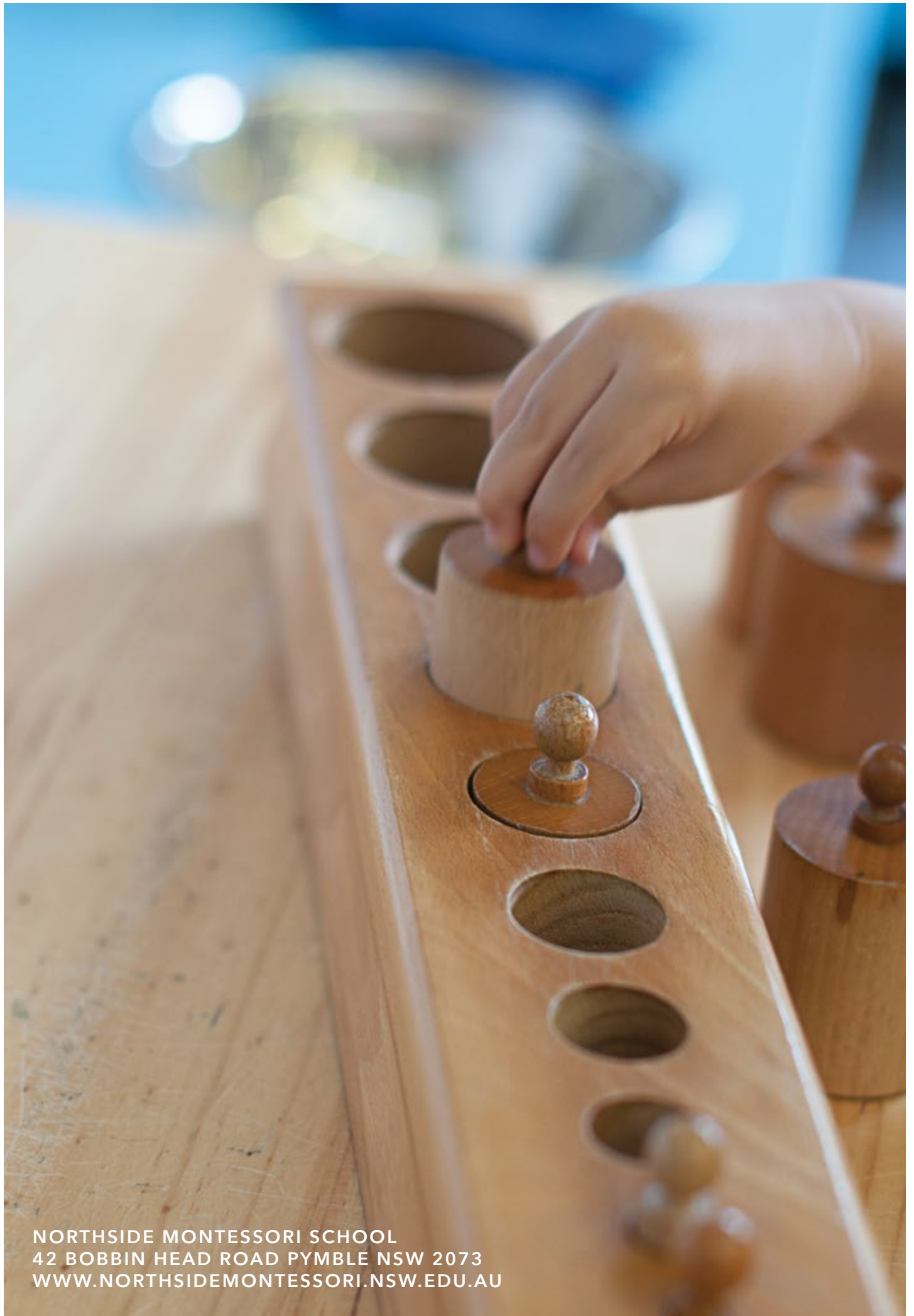
OUR OUTING TO GOLDEN RIDGE ANIMAL FARM THIS TERM

WAS SO MUCH FUN! The children loved feeding the very hungry goats, sheep and donkeys. We cuddled newborn ducks and chicks, milked the cow, bottle fed baby goats, marvelled at the size of the pigs and gobbled at the turkeys.

Photos by Veronica Morales & Melissa Lopresti







NORTHSIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL
42 BOBBIN HEAD ROAD PYMBLE NSW 2073
WWW.NORTHSIDEMONTESSORI.NSW.EDU.AU